The Ontology of Duration, Intuitionism
and Transcendental Empiricism

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 3, 2004
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Abstract

I begin by contrasting Bergson's conception of time, as presented in *Time and Free Will*, with the conception of time presented by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason.

Secondly, I highlight the key developments of Bergson's theory of duration, selecting the essential points from the texts, *Matter and Memory*, *Duration and Simultaneity* and *Creative Evolution*. I, then, clarify what Bergson's intuition means, by juxtaposing it with instinct and the intellect, while proving its superiority as an alternative that incorporates the best of both.

I continue in the forth chapter, with an analysis of Deleuze's reading of Bergson, whereby he derives his concepts of difference and repetition, and lays out the steps of intuition as he interprets them. Finally, I argue that in Deleuze's position of transcendental empiricism, we can see how Bergson provides a radical empiricism used to modify the transcendental project of Kant.

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis to:
the Turnbull, Mckenzie, and Fautley families,
I would also like to acknowledge the support of:
Rosanna Wideman, Darryl Deciccio,
Mark Foster,
Jason Wierzba, Kane Faucher
Jeffery Chalk,
Allan Gustafson,
Ilker Eke,
Jean Lallier,
Ethan Aspler,
Geoff Mckarney
Eckhart Schmitz and Family,
Mike's Place,
All the Professors in the Dept. of Philosophy
at Carleton,
and especially Bela Egyed
whose commitment to philosophy,
guidance, forcefulness,
and intensity
has significantly shaped
and inspired me.

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Introduction

The philosophical debate on the nature of time has become prevalent in our modern era. The nature of time has always been a topic of central importance to metaphysics, as well as a challenge to human understanding. If there is any special or defining value to be attributed to the current debate regarding the nature of temporality, it is based on the unique expression and character employed, structuring the problems addressed within. Certainly, the specific problems surrounding the discourse on time, in any era, can be said to pose a different kind of question: a question that has been produced currently, unlike it has ever been before. A sign, then, marks the manifestation of the problem for our time, resulting from a differentiation of a past that we have made our own. The forces that have brought this question forth, making it different, will continue to remake it again and again anew, as philosophers further strive to comprehend change, movement, difference, evolution, history and the vital forces of life. All these fundamental concepts come to reflect each new idea of time constructed, in reply to the questions contemplated, and the problems encountered. Thus, the idea of time is symptomatic of its event, which affects the sense of all the concepts connecting with it.

At the end of the eighteenth century, time took on a particularly important role in the philosophical epistemology of Immanuel Kant. Time was given new relevance in the laying out of the groundwork of knowledge, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant maintained that the pure form of time was the primary condition upon which the possibility of appearance, representation and knowledge in general, were made to depend. The project Kant proposed was revolutionary for its time, while being emblematic of his period. The critical turn that Kant's transcendental idealism began, attempted to establish the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, in order to demarcate the proper domain of human knowledge. It must be acknowledged that the conception of time for which Kant argued was central to his

endeavor. Kant argued that space and time were the forms of intuition that made the receptivity of sense possible. He also argued that along with the categories, forms of understanding, they were necessary conditions for knowledge in general and for the synthetic unity of representation. However, in order to explain how these two faculties, namely sense and understanding, were related, Kant had to posit the imagination as an intermediate. The imagination was responsible for the reproductive synthesis that was supposed to link the concept to the empirical contents received by sensibility and grounded in the forms of intuition. The role of the figurative synthesis of the imagination involved the reproduction of the past, which was paramount in the synthesis of an objective unity of representation and a subjective unity of self-consciousness. In other words, this dynamic relationship between the faculties depended on the temporal relations and determinations the transcendental subject could reproduce. Thus, the possibility of grounding transcendental idealism and its account of knowledge in empirical reality pivoted on the temporal schemata and the reproductive synthesis of memory that used them. The categories were made to legislate, and the schemata were used to prepare the empirical intuitions for concept application. The schemata were created to link specific concepts to space and time, but these concepts were assumed, not proven, nor was their genesis ever explained. Accordingly, all of Bergson's thought on time and memory may be interpreted as an attempt to solve the problems that Kant created as a result of his structuring of the transcendental project.

To continue, it is evident even in his earliest writings, although written over one hundred years later, that Bergson is responding to Kant. The way in which the question of time had occurred to Kant seems to overlook an essential aspect of its nature, one which Bergson was inclined to expose. There is a thread that runs through Bergson's texts, showing the direction of his thought, from the introduction of a psychological account of duration (in *Time and Free Will*), to its juxtaposition and extension to the physical (in *Matter*

and Memory), and finally, to its development into an ontology of duration (in *Creative Evolution*).¹ In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson deals primarily with establishing a psychological account of duration. Duration is ascribed to the temporalizing syntheses of consciousness, within which our intensive and qualitative experience of the world changes. The book's contribution was to discover and to describe a non-spatial understanding of time internal to consciousness. In *Matter and Memory*, our attention shifts to the question: Does duration extend to things? Do things have their own duration in virtue of being what they are? In this work, Bergson attempts to resolve the dualism he had advanced between psychological duration and physical space, set up in the earlier work. He claims that duration underlies psycho-physical relations as different degrees of tension, contracted within a single duration. However, Bergson again expands duration in *Creative Evolution*. He becomes interested in explicating ontological duration, a duration which is absolute, omni-present, and coexistent with being; not just defining human beings, but defining all beings, as well as applying to the unconscious being of the past. All beings and all time past are included in this open and all-encompassing conception of ontological duration, which accounts for history and evolution in the 'event' of its passage.

In terms of Bergson's corpus, *Time and Free Will* contributes evidence for the significant claim that "there is duration" and that this real, lived duration is time. Concurrently, he explains the difference between time conceived as duration, which is indivisible, and time conceived spatially, which is segmented. Bergson appeals to our intuitions about the nature of time, by first asking, "How do we experience time?" He does not begin by asking, "How do we understand this time that we experience?" If we intuitively place ourselves in the radically continuous movement of time experienced as our actual conscious life, Bergson argues, then we will agree that the time of being-in-itself is that of

¹ Keith Ansell Pearson makes this observation about the progression of Bergson's thought, in *Philosophy and The Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and The Time of Life*, p. 35-36.

pure duration. Bergson argues that the real duration of our conscious lives has the attributes of heterogeneity, continuity, intensity, quality and indivisibility. In contrast, he criticizes the spatial conception of time, which has the properties of homogeneity, discontinuity, extensity, divisibility and quantifiability. If the time that is actually experienced, namely duration, is fundamentally different than the way in which it is understood or represented, then it is reasonable to conclude that time, in so far as it exists, in a representation we have of it, is not actually real. The symbolic representation of time is a distorted image of real duration. Time, thus, becomes extended and quantified by being spread out and internally segmented from itself into a number of mutually externalized constituents.

Furthermore, in *Matter and Memory*, having established that there exists a real psychological duration, Bergson embarks upon an analysis of how all our mental events and cognitive functions are accounted for by the internal movements in one duration, a contraction of moments together. All the different psychological events in consciousness can be explained by the capacity of consciousness to conjoin the moments of duration together according to various degrees of tension. Bergson is thus content in this text to set the scope of his project to delineating the strata of consciousness. He proves that knowledge and action are made possible by duration, and most importantly, that present perception is made actual by recollection. Memory is the key, because for Bergson our individual memories are made possible by an act of pure recollection, whereby the virtual past becomes actualized in the present. So there is an impersonal time, as well as, a psychological duration. The virtual is the pure past, or the past in general, the impersonal time of an immemorial or involuntary recollection. The virtual is a memory, which never has been, one that pre-exists every present and is responsible for the realization of memory-images in perception, the differentiation of our individual past, and the actualization of every potential action. This pure past or the 'virtual', Bergson claims, is necessary for consciousness and its processes.

For it is necessary that there be a past that is real without itself ever having been wholly actual, but which continually becomes so. Every individuated past is a plane of this pure past expanded or contracted to a different degree, and provides the virtual conditions through which each individual act of recollection is made actual.

Creative Evolution, then, confronts the question of ontological duration. Bergson addresses the question: How can we account for the differences within the strata of beings (species) and their evolution? He claims that these differences of evolution are explained by the continuous internal differentiation and divergence in the one ontological duration. Duration is thus formulated as an ontological principle. It does not just apply to the temporal stream of consciousness in the mind or to the thousands of vibrations of which a thing is composed; rather, it applies to what all existence has in common, that is, being. Bergson thus comes to confront the ontological question of being in time, and duration is the way in which he explains how a being that endures continuously throughout time is constituted in pure becoming.

Consequently, it is apparent that Bergson, still hovering in the background of the contemporary inquiry into the nature of time, is indeed a significant figure, whose presence is felt and whose works are often re-appropriated in modern discussion. Many of the most notable philosophers and physicists of our time have felt the need to relate their arguments on time to Bergson's *oeuvre*. The list of the most prominent theorists includes Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, Deleuze, Bachelard, Badiou, Poincaré, Barbour, Russell, Whitehead, James, Reichenbach, Piaget, Einstein, and Bohm. Thus, Bergson remains a pervasive force in the discussion of time.

To begin this formulation, in chapter one, the focus is to demonstrate how the spatial representation of real time subjects it to an abstract mechanics, meaning that our abstract idea of space (conceived as a homogeneous medium) is made to underlie the movement and is used as the grid making its measurement (or quantification) possible. The model of space, therefore, is erroneously confused with the movement itself, without taking into account the duration of the being experiencing its own change. The Kantian conception of time spatializes and homogenizes time, making it quantitative, extensive, successive, discontinuous, and determined merely as a series of instants along a line, while only recognizing within it differences of degree. Bergson provides evidence for his perspective that duration is more true to our actual experience of internal time consciousness: continuous, heterogeneous, constantly different in kind, intensive, and purely qualitative. Although time is not to be understood spatially, it is possible for us to understand and explain how matter tends towards spatiality through its constitutive and primary temporal relations.

Next, in chapter two, Bergson's development of an account of psychological events through the functions of memory is discussed in detail; it is shown that each cognitive function, such as perception, habit, auto-recognition, non-auto-recognition, and attention, relies on the various forms of memory. Evidence is also provided for the claim that all psychological events are an actualization of their virtual conditions, by discussing the 'ontological memory' upon which all individual acts of recollection depend, according to Bergson. It is this ontological memory that allows Bergson to place being in the past; it is this being of the past that he calls the virtual. Paradoxically, he holds that this virtual past is contemporaneous and coexistent with, as well as pre-existing, the present. The virtual is self-preserving, unconscious, non-representable, indeterminate, simple, and indivisible; it is actualized only through its internal self-differentiation. Duration provides us with a new notion of being, difference and identity, as well as an account of the emergence of novelty in

the present and its passage. The ontology of duration that Bergson develops provides us with a purely positive account of being, which is superior to other conceptions that base their ontology on negation.

Furthermore, in chapter three, the epistemological consequences of the ontology of duration are delineated. What does this new conception of being, difference, and identity mean for knowledge? How does our method for doing philosophy become radically reconfigured? The method of intuition is clearly a return to the richness of things-in-themselves. Intuition problematizes our experience, so it becomes riddled with anomalies the intellect cannot automatically recognize. When these differences, which are non-conceptual and empirical, are relieved from the tendency to make them resemble themselves, brought about by the perpetuation of their identity in the sameness of the concept, they instead instigate a modification of the concept. The importance of this chapter is to describe what intuition is and how it allows us to reabsorb intellectual consciousness in duration.

The fourth chapter then addresses the Deleuzian interpretation of Bergson, specifically with regards to how Deleuze derives a notion of internal difference and a concept of difference, from Bergson's philosophy. Three concepts that Deleuze takes from Bergson are discussed: difference in-itself derived from Bergson's duration, repetition for-itself from Bergson's account of matter, and a method of philosophy derived from Bergson's concept of intuition. Both difference and repetition are properly understood by tracing their Bergsonian roots and both are concepts Deleuze has located in Bergson's works on duration. The connection between difference and repetition is expounded in detail. The three aspects of Bergson's method of intuition that Deleuze identifies are shown to make actual the thinking of difference and repetition.

Finally, in the fifth chapter, Deleuze's position of transcendental empiricism is put into perspective as an adaptation of Bergson's method of intuition. Deleuze's philosophy of transcendental empiricism is argued to be Bergsonian in nature, and is interpreted as a revision of the Kantian transcendental project, making important amendments to it. Deleuze also enacts a critique of representation that relies on the relationship of difference and repetition Deleuze derives from Bergson's account of duration and matter. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is demonstrated to be a consequence of a superior empiricism that he locates in Bergson's philosophy, which is then used to reconstitute and complete the transcendental project Kant had started. The transcendental project is relieved of its commitments to transcendence, in order that the transcendental conditions for actualization can be re-grounded in the pure actuality of the real, empirical, non-conceptual differences, immanent to sensible experience. What results from transcendental empiricism is a new image of thought, made actual by a new sensibility of signs.

Kant's Spatialization of Time and Bergson's Duration

Kant's great mistake was to take time as a homogeneous medium. He did not notice that real duration is made up of moments inside one another, and that when it seems to assume the form of a homogeneous whole, it is because it gets expressed in space.²

...we can only represent time to ourselves in that we affect ourselves by describing space and grasping the manifold of its representation.³

* * *

According to Bergson, Kant was wrong to subject time to a spatialization. The difference between the Bergsonian conception of duration and the Kantian conception of time is that Kant claims the priority of time (inner sense), but ends up subjecting it to space, thus, giving space priority; whereas, Bergson actually maintains the priority of time by giving duration an existence truly independent from space. For Kant, the form of space imposes itself upon the form of time because spatial determinations get supplanted within time, thereby conferring upon time features essentially spatial. Contrary to Kant, Bergson reverses the priorities and holds time as primary, claiming that it is time that gets projected in space. Bergson characterized his own philosophy of duration as an "inverted Kantianism".⁴

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson attempts to establish the independence and self-sufficient nature of time as duration, by showing how its essential characteristics are distinct from those of space. It will be shown how Bergson argues that time is essentially different from space, by contrasting two distinct types of multiplicities, namely, qualitative and quantitative multiplicity (which have been adapted from the distinction Riemman made

² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 232.

³ Immanuel Kant, *The Leningrad Reflexion on Inner Sense*, International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, Issue No. 115, Sept. 1989, p. 253.

⁴ Milic Capek, *The New Aspects of Time*, p. 71.

between *continuous* multiplicities and *discrete* multiplicities).⁵ Bergson also argues that our idea of space and discrete, or quantitative, multiplicity is in fact, dependent upon our conception of a continuous or qualitative multiplicity. This is an inversion of the Kantian position, because instead of time being subordinated to quantitative spatial relations, it takes primacy, making space dependent upon temporal relations. Bergson demonstrates that to account for the idea of space, in fact, a qualitative differentiation unique to duration is necessary.

Specifically, Bergson's main criticism of Kant's conception of time is that it conceives time as a homogenous medium, rather than a heterogeneous multiplicity. Kant is led to conceive of time as a homogenous medium, according to Bergson's analysis, because his treatment of time is modeled after his account of space. What Kant's conception does to time is to break it up into discrete, mutually exclusive, and a-temporal parts, which remain in relations of juxtaposition to one another, completely immobile and discontinuous. Bergson argues for a conception of time that only *becomes* spatial, and is not at root homogeneous. Time, in Bergson's view, tends to become homogenized and rendered spatial, as a result of the way it gets represented, expressed, and objectified. Bergson argues for a non-spatial temporality seated in consciousness; he calls it "pure duration", in its opposition to space. After contrasting pure duration and space, ultimately, Bergson reveals how duration can be treated, or discussed, in two ways: as *time in itself* or pure duration and as *time materialized* or concrete duration. This distinction is believed to be an embryonic form of the virtual/actual distinction latter explicated and developed in *Matter and Memory*, which is fundamental to the evolution of Bergson's thought with regards to the synthesis of time,

⁵ "Either therefore the reality which underlies space must form a discrete manifold or we must seek the ground of its metric relations outside it, in the binding forces which act on it", says Riemann and quoted by Morris Kline in *Mathematical Thought From Ancient to Modern Time*, p. 893.

enabling us to grasp the dynamic relationship between human consciousness and the unconscious, between memory and perception.

Accordingly, Bergson draws on his analysis of the parallel treatment of space and time, preformed by Kant, in order to demonstrate what results from this confusion: a reduction of time to space, and consequently, the collapsing of the two. Bergson maintains time has a tendency to become spatialized while still maintaining that when confused with time, space distorts our conception of pure duration. It is important for us to track Bergson's arguments regarding how the confusion between space and time manifests itself within our understanding, so as to find the means to understand the two as distinct from one another, and to dispose of the confusion, once and for all. This work, however, is best done in regards to the separation of space and time, by drawing out their differences, through the purification of each from the other. This will, in the end, contribute to clarity with which to understand their fusion and synthesis. Bergson does not maintain that space and duration are opposed to one another, although he initially assigns them opposite characteristics in order to show they are different in kind. It will eventually, in fact, become clear that the two, space and time, are actually both the same composite. Space becomes explained as a product of duration, which becomes extended through the relaxation of its internal tension.

To continue, in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, time is dealt with in various contexts, but nowhere more directly and explicitly than in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. The importance of time, and, especially, its role in making possible the intuitive awareness consciousness has of its self, its inner states and the representations within, should not be underestimated in the Kantian project. Time, according to Kant, is the pure form of all intuitions, and is the "a priori formal condition of all appearances in general"⁶. The whole

⁶ Immanuel Kant, CPR, p. 180.

Kantian project of delimiting the conditions for the possibility of experience rests, therefore, on time as the ground and form of all appearance in general. No knowledge of experience in general would be possible without this primary form through which things are made to appear.

Furthermore, in Kant's formulation and exposition of time as the form of inner sense, by giving time the role of ordering the relations of our representations in our inner states, the responsibility Kant assigns to time is evident. Time, he says, "...cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it belongs neither to a shape or a position, etc., but on the contrary determines the relation of representations in our inner states."⁷ Kant here distinguishes between the positions or shapes determined as spatially distinct through outer sense, and the temporal determination of the relations of representations through inner sense. This separation of space and time suggests that Kant intended time to be independent from the extended figures that get represented within it. However, he also states in the sentence directly following, that these shapeless inner intuitions are given a form by being represented in a sequence along a line. In other words, time gets treated as analogous to space by being represented.

And just because this inner intuition yields no shape we also attempt to remedy this lack through analogies, and represent the temporal sequence through a line progressing to infinity, in which the manifold constitutes a series that is of only one dimension, and infer from the properties of this line to all the properties of time, with the sole difference that the parts of the former are simultaneous but those of the latter always exist successively.⁸

It is clear that, for Kant, the difference between the properties of the line used to represent time and the properties of time in general is that the parts of a line are simultaneous and the parts of time in general succeed one another. Therefore, Kant characterizes time in such a way that makes it subject to being represented only by means of its parts being made to sit

⁷ Immanuel Kant, CPR, p. 180.

⁸ Immanuel Kant, CPR, p. 180.

side by side on a line as simultaneous with one another, when in truth he admits that its parts must exist successively. Kant admits that time is divided into parts which succeed one another, meaning that when one part is present, the one that will follow is yet to come, and therefore, is not yet. If the order of time is ruled by succession and yet gets represented as points along a line, which are simultaneous with one another, then the representation distorts the actual successive character of the progression of time. Furthermore, this distortion of time, by being represented as a line, is a result of its spatialization. Only points in space are said to be simultaneous, in fact, this is the fundamental tenet of Newtonian container space: all the points that make up space are absolutely simultaneous with one another. When simultaneity is applied to time, it takes on an inherently spatial character, and if this method is the only means by which time might be represented, it should be avoided because it leads to the confusion between space and time. Bergson refutes this subordination of succession to simultaneity and time to space, saying, "...If we introduce an order in what is successive, the reason is that succession is converted into simultaneity and is projected into space."

In contrast, it is well known that Kant had held on to the priority of inner sense, and that there is a tension within his writings caused by his making claims that seem to contradict inner sense priority. Hoke Robinson, in an article entitled "The Priority of Inner Sense", discusses the tension between the priority of inner sense and the priority of outer sense. Robinson provides a case for both positions of priority and a possible reconciliation between the two. He cites various passages in Kant's first *Critique* that explicitly reject the view that time as inner sense is given priority over outer sense.⁹ First, Kant states in section twenty-four *Of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*,

...we must always derive the determination of the length of time or also of the positions in time for all inner perceptions from that which presents external things to us as alterable; hence we must order the determinations of inner

⁹ Hoke Robinson, "The Priority of Inner Sense", p. 166.

sense as appearances in time in just the same way as we order those of outer sense in space...¹⁰

The evidence suggests Kant held that a determination in time could only be distinct by assigning it to a position and treating it as an extended interval of duration, which he believes to be necessarily derived from the external presentation of things altering in outer sense. In a footnote at the end of this section (§ 24), Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood draw attention to how the problem of inner sense plagued Kant up until the end of his life, saying, “The distinct claim that changes in time and the determinate duration of intervals between changes in time can only be empirically known on the basis of periodic changes in objects in space is emphasized throughout the drafts of the “Refutation”...”¹¹ This may point to the fact that Kant himself was bothered and was unsure as to how to resolve this difficult issue, which makes the changes within time depend upon the empirical knowledge of changes in outer sense or space, consequently undermining and possibly compromising altogether the priority of inner sense. The relevance to Bergson’s criticism of Kant is that the changes within time are not of themselves knowable or determinate, unless they are first empirically intuited through the form of space. This provides evidence for Bergson’s charging Kant with the spatialization of time, because changes in time are nothing without corresponding changes in space, which give them character and definition. How could time, then, retain properties of its own, distinct from space? That it cannot is Bergson’s point, that space’s homogeneous and punctiform character is applied to time due to Kant’s inability to understand time as having a distinct nature of its own. It will be shown how Bergson remedies this matter, after ample evidence is provided for the claim that Kant abandons his thesis of inner sense priority by the implications of his own statements in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which spatialize time.

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, CPR, B 156, p. 259.

¹¹ Guyer and Wood say this in regards to the problem of inner sense on p. 727, In CPR, note 43 appearing on p. 259.

Accordingly, the implication of the above passage (i.e., B 156) quoted from Kant's *Critique* is that the order of inner sense and the order of outer sense are the same, meaning that the states in each stand in one to one correspondence to each other. If the determinations of inner sense depend for their clarity on the spatial determinations in outer sense, then outer sense, not inner sense as is usually assumed, is given priority. In other words, Kant privileges space over time, and time only gets determined through objects empirically given in outer sense, the form of which is space. For Kant, the problem posed is evident: what role does time really get to play in ordering the relations of representations in inner sense, if temporal distinctions depend on outer intuitions of space?

Again, in the *Second Analogy*, Kant gives evidence for the same claim regarding the order of inner sense being necessarily derived from outer sense. He states, "...I must therefore derive the subjective sequence of apprehension from the objective sequence of appearances, for otherwise the former would be entirely undetermined and no appearance would be distinguished from any other."¹² This is another way Kant expresses the derivation of the temporal order of representations in inner sense from the empirical determinations received in outer sense through the form of space. In fact, the subjective sequence of apprehension in inner sense is supposed to be necessarily derived from the objective sequence of appearances given in outer sense. Kant goes even further in claiming that the subjective sequence of apprehension in inner sense would be "entirely undetermined", if not derived from the determined objective order of outer sense. It seems that Kant thinks that for temporal determination to be possible in inner sense, there must be some essential content provided by outer sense, which is empirically determined through the form of space. This means that, for Kant, *temporal determinacy is dependent upon spatial determinacy*, and that the position and extension of an object given, empirically and represented through the

¹² Immanuel Kant, CPR, A 193/B 238, p. 307.

manifold of outer intuition, is what makes it given at a distinct time. Time itself, for Kant, is subjected to the form of outer intuition and therefore spatialized.

Moreover, Kant maintains that the objective reality of the categories, or the possibility of experience in accord with them, cannot be understood or be demonstrable without outer intuition. What is particularly interesting for the purposes of this thesis is what he says about the category of magnitude; "...the possibility of things as magnitudes, and thus the objective reality of the category of magnitude, can also be exhibited only in outer intuition, and that by means of that alone can it subsequently also be applied to inner sense."¹³ Magnitude is thus confirmed in its applicability and presence within outer intuition and is then applied to inner sense. Magnitude, then, is applied to time after being determined in space, and, therefore, spatial magnitudes are mapped onto time, a time which inherits the extensive character of space and comes to be differentiated only quantitatively.

It is clear that Bergson reproaches Kant for what he perceives to be an error on his part with regards to his conception of time, which makes it a homogeneous medium like space; "Kant's great mistake was to take time as a homogeneous medium."¹⁴ Does Kant really make time a homogeneous medium? What evidence is there for Bergson's claim?

First of all, Kant clearly states that time does not itself alter, meaning that time is eternally the same; surely, he must say this because, for him, time is an *a priori* form of intuition which makes the appearance of change possible in experience, without itself changing. If time as a form of intuition did perpetually alter its form, then would one be able to know it as a form at all? To what would one appeal to explain this alteration of time itself? Would one not have to appeal to experience, and then would time not cease to be an *a*

¹³ Immanuel Kant, CPR, B 293, p. 336.

¹⁴ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 232.

priori form of intuition, but rather become an *a posteriori* form of intuition? If time as a form of intuition is not *a priori*, then it would be derived from experience, and therefore could not be a condition for its possibility. This is why Kant must say, “time itself does not alter, but only something that is within time.”¹⁵ However, this claim makes time homogeneous, because if time itself as the form of inner intuition never alters, then it is the same throughout, meaning it always conditions and constrains that which appears within it in the same way, thus imposing upon experience a temporal sequence which is homogeneous. This implies that Kant’s version of time would have no difference within itself; time could not pass with a different tempo or velocity, but would pass by constantly leaping from instant to instant, state to state. Things can change and pass away within time, but this does not affect the homogeneous medium, which encompasses these movements. Consequently, time as an *a priori* form of intuition is like a container in which all the events of time occur.

Secondly, it is possible to make sense of this claim concerning the homogeneous treatment of time, in that Kant’s treatment of time and space are analogous, with quite minute differences between the two. This is only relevant in so far as it can be proven that Kant’s conception of space is for the most part identical with his conception of time, meaning that if it is agreed that he homogenized space, then, it may be discerned that time gets homogenized as well. In the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, Kant says: 1) that neither space nor time are empirical concepts, 2) that both are necessary representations that ground intuitions, (the only difference being that space grounds all outer intuitions and time grounds all intuitions in general, including outer ones), 3) that both are not discursive or general concepts, but are pure *a priori* forms of sensible intuitions, and 4) that both are represented as infinite given magnitudes.¹⁶ It is apparent from the above summary that space and time are both necessary representations that ground intuitions, and that they are both necessarily given as unlimited in

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, CPR, A 41/B 58, p. 184.

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, CPR, A 23/B 38 – A 32/B 48, pp. 174-179.

order to make the appearance of a number of spaces or times possible in experience. Space as the ground of outer intuition, together with time as the ground of inner intuition, according to Kant, provide an all-encompassing space and time making the appearance of multiple spaces and times possible as limitations therein, via an original representation conceived as “infinite given magnitudes”.

When discussing this point in his commentary on ‘sensible conditions’, Henry E. Allison says, “...there is nothing to indicate that Kant construed the infinity of space any differently from that of time...”¹⁷ Allison never directly refers to time as a homogeneous medium, but after just having drawn the parallel between both accounts of space and time as infinite, given magnitudes, he then draws attention to the ground space provides for a number of distinct regions to be differentiated within itself, characterizing it as an all-encompassing homogeneity. Accordingly, Allison then implies that time as well as space is conceived by Kant as a homogeneous medium through which appearances must arise, in so far as it is an infinite given magnitude.

In summary, a time, for Kant, can only be made distinct from another by a quantitative spatial differentiation. Time, in terms of the Kantian model, then depends on spatial differences for its divisibility and measurability. A moment is defined by its difference from its predecessor, and the difference can only be established between two states of spatial positioning. Bergson’s criticism, however, is that these spatial positions leave out, no matter how close or multiple, an un-traversable interval between each of them, which means they never can constitute a temporal continuum; and, due to their essential immobility, they could never accurately re-enact or account for the fluidity of consciousness.

¹⁷ Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, p. 94.

Bergson is sympathetic to the Kantian formulation of space in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*; he says, "Far from shaking our faith in the reality of space, Kant has shown what it actually means and has even justified it."¹⁸ Bergson here refers to the unique reality Kant gave to space, by establishing it as an a priori form of sensibility, giving it an existence independent of its contents. This is the famous Kantian distinction between the *form of representation* and the *matter of representation*. Bergson discusses a problem that arises as a result of the Kantian distinction between the form of space and its contents. Given that the contents of sensations are inextensive prior to being brought under the form of space, the problem is how could the form of space add anything to a multiplicity of inextensive sensations to make them, from that point on, appear extensive. It seems that no amount of inextensive sensations could be combined to constitute something of an extended nature that takes up space. Bergson concludes, "For their co-existence to give rise to space, there must be an act of the mind which takes them in all at the same time and sets them in juxtaposition: this unique act is very like what Kant calls an a priori form of sensibility."¹⁹

Homogeneity, for Bergson, is primarily a spatial characteristic, for it is space by definition and only space that is the same throughout. It is apparent within Bergson's definition of space that it is that which is conceived as a homogenous medium, and that which allows for a number of identical and simultaneous sensations to be distinguished. Space is therefore the principle of quantitative differentiation:

For it is scarcely possible to give any other definition of space: space is what enables us to distinguish a number of identical and simultaneous sensations from one another; it is thus a principle of differentiation other than that of qualitative differentiation, and consequently it is a reality with no quality.²⁰

¹⁸ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 92.

¹⁹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 94.

²⁰ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 95.

Furthermore, space is applicable to material objects because objects are perceived in it; objects are in fact given qualitatively in perception along with the medium of space. Bergson distinguishes between *space conceived* and *extensity perceived*²¹. One's idea of space as it is conceived by the mind is abstract and consists in being composed of identical points, like the positions or empty place holders in a three dimensional grid. The idea one tends to formulate of space, making it out to be a homogeneous medium, is an instrument used to measure distance and calculate position, by imagining this model idea of space to underlie the observations made of objects within it. This idea of space is much different than the actual extensity one perceives, which is contoured, more or less dense, never empty, and filled with many qualities and movements.

In contrast, one needs not expend any effort to symbolically represent material objects in order to count them. Material objects are as they appear, localized in space, meaning one only has to think them one at a time to count them as individual unities and then think them altogether to grasp them as a sum. This process of grasping spatial composites as unities is analogous to our understanding of number. Every number is the sum of the units it contains within it, just like the objects of the material world in so far as one grasps them as unities in space, are the combination of their parts.

However, this method of *quantitative differentiation* applicable to objects observed within the medium in which they are given, that is, space, should not be applied to one's purely affective psychic states and mental images, according to Bergson. Consciousness, rather, is subject to a different kind of differentiation altogether because psychic states are not given in space, and therefore, are not distinct in the way that objects in space are distinct. In space, objects and their parts appear mutually exclusive; whereas, states of consciousness

²¹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 96.

run into and through one another or “permeate” one another, as Bergson states. The psyche, for Bergson, is then not divisible like objects in space are, but is, rather, differentiated or made distinct according to a principle unique to its terrain; a *qualitative differentiation* is needed when distinguishing within the sphere of consciousness. Whereas the unities or wholes one perceives in space are said to consist of their parts, just like numerical sums, the whole of our psychic life is changed in kind by the elements which change within it. Consciousness has cognitive functions and affective psychic states within it that are intimately interconnected and integrated, like the organs and nervous system of a human being or the cells in a living organic whole. In point, when consciousness is treated as if it consisted of a number of parts which could be divided from one another and counted, its essential vital nature is lost. Quantitative differentiation over-stepping its bounds and crossing over into consciousness is a result of one’s having to represent one’s states to oneself symbolically, so that they are countable, and so that they may appear to correspond to what one perceives and by which one is affected in the material world. The tendency to treat psychic states as quantifiable and subject them to space can be explained by the tendency to correlate these states with what one takes to be their causes, which are perceived to be localized in space. Bergson develops two kinds of multiplicity according to the two different kinds of differentiation, the one applicable to material objects and the other applicable to consciousness. He says, “...there are two kinds of multiplicity that of material objects, to which the conception of number is immediately applicable; and the multiplicity of states of consciousness, which cannot be regarded as numerical without the help of some symbolical representation, in which a necessary element is space.”²²

Moreover, Bergson says that quantitative differentiation is actually reliant upon qualitative differentiation to give its units a difference to be countable; if something was

²² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 87.

entirely the same through and through, you would think no part of it could be distinct enough from any other to be picked out and grasped as separate from it. Bergson does not deny the reality of space; he states, "There is a real space, without duration, in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness."²³ Space, for Bergson, exhibits simultaneity only. The single way moments can succeed one another is for a consciousness to retain its past as present. The whole problem stems from the attempt to find a place for duration in space; Bergson says, "To put duration in space is really to contradict oneself and place succession within simultaneity."²⁴ In so far as our internal experience is concerned, it seems that our ordinary understanding of the succession of our inner psychic states relies upon us representing them symbolically to ourselves as separate and therefore countable, which already presupposes the representation of space. Bergson warns against the abstraction of time from duration, claiming, "It is true that, when we make time a homogeneous medium in which conscious states unfold themselves we take it to be given all at once, which amounts to saying that we abstract it from duration. This simple consideration ought to warn us that we are thus unwittingly falling back upon space, and really giving up time."²⁵ In other words, we spread our psychological states out over the homogeneous medium of space which is made to underlie them; meaning, in order to understand them as succeeding one another, we give them the appearance of an extendedness in time by laying them out on the same plane side by side, simultaneously, which serves as a universal measure to quantify each as enduring over a certain length of time and to outline the boundaries of each state contiguous with the one that precedes and the one that follows. Bergson states,

For if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be presumed that time,

²³ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 110.

²⁴ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 227.

²⁵ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 98.

understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space.²⁶

Here one can gather that Bergson introduces one of the problems with treating both space and time as homogeneous mediums, the problem being that they could not be conceived as distinct any longer. Bergson concludes this to be the outcome: If time is taken to be a homogeneous medium, it merely becomes a derivative of space, and therefore, reducible to it.²⁷ Homogeneity being the lack of qualitative difference means the same throughout, and as Bergson states, "...it is hard to see how two forms of the homogeneous could be distinguished from one another."²⁸ How could two homogeneous mediums be qualitatively distinct?

Why does Bergson attribute a unique kind of succession, which he calls, pure succession, only to consciousness? In point, it is because succession is only possible for a conscious being with the ability to retain the past by contracting not separate mutually exclusive states, but elements, which permeate and interpenetrate one another, within the present.²⁹

To continue, understanding the succession of consciousness as a series of simultaneities, amounts to the most common attempt at representing change by a series of still shots. Surely, it is a futile endeavor to reconstruct a fluid movement that has within it mobile segments, using the juxtaposition of immobile images. No number, no matter how great, of instantaneous images captured of a real movement, could be combined to recreate the continuity of the actual movement itself. Bergson affirms, "... we cannot make

²⁶ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 91.

²⁷ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 99.

²⁸ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 98.

²⁹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 101.

movement out of immobilities, nor time out of space.”³⁰ No matter how close, these increments of time or these instantaneous still shots are placed together, they would neither adequately reconstitute nor appropriately represent the actual movement. Bergson discusses how the mathematical model attempts to account for temporal continuity, found in the fluidity of motion, by increasing the number of simultaneities, by reducing the size of intervals it leaves between the points it plots on a time line. He says,

Mathematics may, indeed, increase the number of simultaneities and positions which it takes into consideration by making the intervals very small: it may even, by using the differential instead of difference, show that it is possible to increase without limit the number of these intervals of duration. Nevertheless, however small the interval is supposed to be, it is the extremity of the interval at which mathematics always places itself. As for the interval itself, as for the duration and the motion, they are necessarily left out of the equation.³¹

The essential point for Bergson is that the radical continuity of concrete movement in experience resists its own reconstruction and re-composition via the understanding. When one represents a movement symbolically to oneself, one treats the space traversed by a body in motion as divisible, and therefore one places it at different positions at different times; but one does not realize that by plotting motion with a series of points on a line, one makes it impossible for us to close the gap between each simultaneous instant, and to account for the transition from one to the other. The problem itself is very old and was first drafted by Zeno of Elea in a series of paradoxes.

The problem of an infinite regress occurs when attempting to account for the synthesis of experience in terms of successive positions or to construct it from a number of homogeneous mediums; between every position of a homogeneous medium one must presuppose a new and prior synthesis to account for the connection between these points or units, thus further breaking down every division into homogeneous parts *ad infinitum*.³²

³⁰ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 115.

³¹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 119-120.

³² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 111.

Moreover, time is fundamentally different from a homogeneous medium, for Bergson, and is subject to a unique kind of distinctness and differentiation, meaning that the relations among its elements or parts are not the same as those applicable to numerical composites. The parts of an object in space are subject to being countable, whereas the parts of pure duration are not. The temporality of our psychic states cannot be divided as the objects in space, because they do not endure one at a time. In fact, Bergson claims that psychic states are not strictly speaking quantifiable; rather, they are running together and interpenetrating each other. What Bergson objects to, is that space is made to turn and apply its homogenization to consciousness, or more accurately stated, consciousness is projected into space and mistakenly thought to consist essentially of the same relations as external objects. In his view, the homogenization of time is really just space trespassing on pure consciousness; “we may therefore surmise that time, conceived under the form of a homogeneous medium is some spurious concept, due to the trespassing of the idea of space upon the field of pure consciousness.”³³

Consequently, the notion of ‘pure duration’, which Bergson defines in contrast to space, is not homogeneous but rather purely heterogeneous, meaning that the elements of duration are always different in kind. Duration changes its metric principle every time it gets divided. Duration is continuous and non-discrete, and therefore, not in itself subject to externality, but internally differentiated qualitatively; none of its states can actually be earlier or later, until they become represented as separate, *via* space. The spatial division of duration is a tendency humans have in dividing up their conscious life into instants that correspond to states of the external world. Bergson claims that the moments of duration, when subjected to space, can be divided by their relation to the states correlated to the outside; “There is a real duration, the heterogeneous moments of which permeate one another; each moment,

³³ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 98.

however, can be brought into relation with a state of the external world which is contemporaneous with it, and can be separated from the other moments in consequence of this very process.”³⁴

Accordingly, the way one tries to understand movement by symbolically representing it to oneself is not the way it is *lived* or *acted*. The states of consciousness, when allowed to live or approached at the level of pure duration, are not separate from one another; the former state is not divorced from the present one, because the pure duration of consciousness “...forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole...”³⁵ The past is so intimately linked to the present in the flow of conscious duration that it cannot be segregated from the present; there is a holism, which applies to all the moments of one’s life. The organic whole of duration is internally responsive to itself, so any change in the whole is reflected in every part. The entire soul, Bergson thus claims, can be reflected in any one of its states³⁶.

In contrast, the problem with the Kantian conception of time is that by spatializing time, the internal realm of the psyche is subjected to quantitative differentiation, depriving consciousness of its continuity and the interconnectedness of the states within it. If conscious states were always understood and represented as discrete or numerical multiplicities, quantitatively differentiated, then they would lack the movement and the qualitative differences with which we experience them. The possibility for understanding the intimate inter-dependence of internal states is dependent upon one’s ability to refrain from succumbing to the tendency to subject the movement within consciousness to quantitative relations. Imposing quantitative relations upon consciousness segments it and

³⁴ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 110.

³⁵ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 100.

³⁶ “...the states of consciousness, even when successive, permeate one another, and in the simplest of them the whole soul can be reflected.” In *Time and Free Will*, p. 98.

freezes it, making it impossible for us to account for the transition from one of its states to another. If mental life is divided up like the material world of objects into discrete and mutually exclusive parts, one would place its states in juxtaposition to one another, thus giving each state a definite place in time, and thereby isolating each one from the times that precede and follow it. The implication is that it becomes impossible for us to understand the phenomena of the *passage of time* that we regularly experience within consciousness.

These considerations of the Kantian conception of time are not meant to provide a knock down argument against this conception. However, this attempt to substantiate Bergson's claim that Kant spatializes time provides a critical springboard to enter into a discussion of Bergson's duration juxtaposing it to space. Nonetheless, to be fair to Kant, one must acknowledge that he did not intend for time to be reduced to space. Rather, he meant for time as inner sense to ground all spatial determinations as outer intuitions, but in so doing, he makes time dependent upon space for its distinctness and determinacy. Time, then, is just like an empty, internal container of the mind, which the spatial determinations of the outside world come to be inserted and embedded within. Time, thus, has no form without space. Consequently, one can maintain that the spatialization of time occurs because the Kantian understanding and epistemology of representation are imbued with spatiality. Bergson's objection to Kant's treatment of time is that space is applied to consciousness, making the internal stream of consciousness subject to the same quantitative differentiation that the external world and objects in space are subject to. This is a grave mistake, according to Bergson, because many of the properties essential to consciousness are eliminated. Consciousness, for Bergson, does not admit of any spatial division or quantitative differentiation, because it is wholly different in nature than things in space. Consciousness is pure duration, and duration has a set of characteristics opposed to space. Duration is continuous, heterogeneous, and each of its parts permeates the whole. With his notion of

duration, Bergson both defines and provides a means of discussing the synthesis of an organic, vital consciousness, a consciousness which is grounded in its functions, its powers to do and affect, and its method for enacting these functions through the contractions of memory. Pure duration and consciousness purified of homogeneity and space, pluralizes the topography of the psyche, whereby different strata of pure consciousness correspond to different tensions within its moments. Consciousness can take on many forms according to its expansion and contraction of the past. The tensions within consciousness, according to the expansion and contraction of the past, will be discussed, in the next chapter, which will address how the notion of duration, introduced here, first becomes a psychological theory, and then, an ontological theory of the virtual.

The Ontology of Duration and the Virtual

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In the first chapter, two ways of approaching time have been contrasted. One requires that time be judged by change in spatial position; time becomes the interval in which space is traversed, from one place to another. Under this conception, time is divisible, just as the space is assumed to be divisible, into units, measurable and countable. One can say it took five seconds to travel such and such a distance. Here, one's understanding of time is solely reliant upon one's conception of space, and depending upon how one structures one's idea of space, one's understanding of time will follow suit. Each of these various space/times will be accompanied by a set of problems in understanding their manifold interrelation; undoubtedly, one's attempts to conceive of these foldings in space/time will have common downfalls, especially if one insistently continues to accept a space-dependent time and if one characterizes space as homogeneous. Current models of space³⁷ have, for the most part, abandoned the tendency to assume space's linearity and homogenization; instead, it is affirmed that space is heterogeneous and that spaces have a time of their own. If space is radically pluralized, so then may time be; but how would time have properties, processes, and functions unique to it, if it were always dependent upon space to define a set of relations with which philosophers might then work in understanding their intuitions about time? We could ask the somewhat simple-minded question: Why is it that no matter what abstract spatial diagram one draws or imagines in order to demonstrate and aid in understanding the passage of time, one fails to adequately picture or visualize the plurality of its elements, their internal cohesiveness, and the radical continuity of their transition? It seems that one loses something essential to understanding the nature of time, when forming an idea of it, by

³⁷ An example of an account of space that does not treat space as linear may be found in non-Euclidean geometry. A space in geometry that revises Euclid's foundational axiom of parallelism, constructs a model of space that is curved. The homogeneity of space was still assumed by Riemann, but Einstein's relativity theory, seems to give space the quality of being heterogeneous, because two events cannot be separate or distinct without being qualitatively distinct space/time continuums. Philip Turetzky makes this point in *Time*, p. 210.

allowing it to be marred with spatial properties. Nonetheless, after obtaining similar results from each one of the failed attempts to conceive a space independent time, one still rationally insists that it must be possible. Time thus presents a persistent and eradicable problem: How can we understand time without spatializing it, if the only understanding which we have at our disposal is permeated by spatiality? It seems that one's idea of time is inconsistent with one's most basic intuitions about one's experience of it. A new way of understanding these intuitions regarding the fundamental nature of temporality must be defined.

The focus of this chapter will turn to the transformation of Bergson's theory of duration. The task will be to follow it through its development from a psychology to an ontology. Bergson's ontology of duration cannot be correctly understood without grasping the complex relation between duration, memory, difference and the virtual. It will be necessary to dissect these relations, in order to successfully trace this development in Bergson's thought. In making this transition from psychological to ontological duration, Bergson must confront and contend with his form of dualism. *Time and Free-Will* left Bergson with the problem of duality between duration and space, between the continuous and discrete, between consciousness and extended physical matter. The account of the psycho-physical relation, proposed by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, gives consciousness the ability to bind together the many micro-rhythms of physical duration in the body. The flowing stream of conscious duration then, is a product of the changing tension between the many temporal movements of the body, which are condensed into its awareness. Bergson's probing of the duration of the spirit and consciousness leads him to an explication of memory. Memory provides the infiltration of the past in the present, constituting the duration of present perception in consciousness. The dualism usually posed between the psychical and physical, between spirit and matter, is reinscribed by Bergson to consist in the relations between pure memory and pure perception, between past and present, between

unconsciousness and consciousness, and between ontology and psychology. Bergson's development of the virtual/actual relation reframes the problem of dualism; it pushes him to explain how the past can come to constitute the actual present perception. It is the appeal to ontological memory and the process of the actualization of the virtual, which explains how the pure being of the past creates a present, completely different and novel. The theory of the virtual and the process of its actualization through the internal self-differentiation of duration is Bergson's solution to the dualism between pure recollection and pure perception, corresponding to past and present, duration and space. He shows that in practice, perception is always dependent upon the movement of actualization, progressing from pure recollection or the virtual to the recollection of a particular past whose memory-images come to aid the present situation and career with the perception-image.

Further, in Bergson's theory of psychological duration, recollection is constitutive of present perception and its novelty, and memory-images are capable of effecting differences in the perception-image. Memory-images, whether consciously recalled or unconsciously reproduced, give an element of distinctness to the perception-image. They either make it recognizable immediately by a habitual reproduction of the past, or, by an effort of the mind, are recalled to solve a problem created by the force of actual, sensible, but unrecognizable differences within experience; that is, when recognition fails. From Bergson's account of attentive recognition a question can be drawn: How does pure recollection send memory-images to be inserted into the perception-image, thereby causing a difference in how the perception-image is disclosed and constituted? Is it not a matter of what image one's perceptive faculties will reveal in accord with the sensible qualities it may pick out because of the multiple involvement of recollection? The heart of the issue is to explain how the virtual becomes actualized. The relationship between memory and perception relies upon an ontological memory, namely, pure recollection, unconsciously exhibiting an actual force of

the past in-itself. The past is called forth to constitute psychological consciousness; it responds to a problem with the entirety of its eternal being, and in turn makes being become different in-itself. Actualization is a tendency of the virtual, which conditions the contraction of the present perception, and consequently, the psychological duration of consciousness. The past virtually coexists on an infinite number of planes, one of which must be selected to inform the present situation, as well as to guide the infusion of it with memory-images. A plane of the past is the entire past contracted to a degree, with defining moments that are unique to each level. The more expanded this plane of the past, implicated in present perception and supplying it with memory-images, the more elements of difference it brings to bear upon the present. Consequently, the greater the tension held by the past in relation to the present, the clearer the details become which perception discloses in the image, and the deeper one probes into what Bergson calls "the strata of reality". The present that consciousness lives continuously is the most contracted point of one's entire past; that is, the virtual, which is the past that is constantly differentiating itself and actualizing novel tendencies in the present. The differentiation and actualization of the virtual is what causes the passage of the present, as well as, the actual differences therein. The present does not become past, but is already always the whole past contracted and condensed into a unique present. There is no separation between the past and the present because the two are contemporaneous; they both subsist in an organic whole.

In point, duration is memory. Memory is what makes the present endure. Memory is essentially a capacity to retain the past and an ability to continually reproduce it in the present. Psychological memory is the capacity consciousness has to contract past moments within the present, so as to prolong the present perception and inform action (anticipating the future), thereby making the present endure over an interval. Memory then is what makes the experience of our conscious life in the present have duration. Duration is a product of the

immanence of the past in the present, making the present incompatible with the durationless instant. The life of consciousness flows continuously, and uninterrupted; it is not composed of fits and starts; it does not consist of a succession of atemporal points. Consciousness, in fact, is defined by duration; and an individual consciousness is defined by its unique rhythm of duration: an ability to contract many past moments into the present. Consequently, for Bergson, it is essentially the capacity to retain and to utilize the past, through remembering, then, which defines consciousness.

It should be noted here that on this account, memory is fundamentally a power attributable only to spirit, which coexists in matter. The retention of the past, therefore, is not only a capacity of consciousness, but the recollection of the past, allowing for the contraction of it into a present, is also a capacity of all beings. Of course, inorganic beings have this capacity to a much lesser degree than organic beings, and conscious beings to a much greater degree than organic beings. There is a distinct possibility that Bergson's theory implies a spiritualization of matter. Thus, under his view, it may be appropriate to say that all beings are conscious to a degree corresponding to a greater or lesser capacity that each has to retain its past, no matter how elementary its power to do so may be. This is a basic tenet of Bergson's ontology, namely, that all beings retain the same eternal past and contract it into a unique present by the selection of a particular past, which defines the nature of their actual experience. In summary, Bergson's position is that a cell and a molecule are conscious to a very small degree; they both sustain an internal rhythm of duration, by retaining and reproducing the past, which is what enables both of them to endure throughout time.

Additionally, in *Matter and Memory*, Bergson distinguishes two poles between which concrete perception occurs, namely, *pure perception* and *pure recollection*. Pure perception is defined as, "...a perception that a consciousness would have if it were supposed to be ripe

and full-grown, yet confined to the present and absorbed, to the exclusion of all else, in the task of molding itself upon the external object.”³⁸ Bergson makes explicit his intention that this definition of a pure perception is a preliminary definition, which proposes only a theoretical limit, whereby perception is said to reveal an immediate and instantaneous view of matter as homogeneous and composed of parts mutually external to one another. In fact, Bergson relegates pure perception to the realm of things, themselves like a refraction of light within matter, immediately revealing itself to itself. He claims, “Perception, in its pure state, is, then, in very truth, a part of things.”³⁹ It is through the interaction of matter that its ‘image’ is revealed to pure perception.

Thus, the ‘image’ of matter, according to Bergson, is not merely an appearance of the thing-in-itself, like Kantian representation. Pure perception, does not disclose an image of the thing-in-itself, which lurks behind it, hidden by the veil of appearance. The image is all we have of things; therefore, there is no reason to distinguish the essential nature of a thing from the image we perceive of it. Bergson clearly takes the view that Kant’s distinction, between appearance and things-in-themselves, is not justifiable according to our immediate experience. Matter for Bergson is an image, and the deeper one dives into what matter is, by dividing it up further and further, attempting to get to the bottom of it, one only succeeds in finding different images, which define it. The image and matter are intimately bound up with one another, so much so that they are inextricable. It does not make sense to ask what the real image of a thing is because all the images of a thing perceived are real; each one is as real as any of the others. Matter therefore is in reality a plane of images that move.

In contrast to pure perception, pure recollection is defined as the past preserved in itself, in its most relaxed state and on its most expanded plane. This past of pure recollection

³⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 33.

³⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 64.

is detached from the necessary determination provoked and demanded by the present situation; it is entirely ineffectual without the prolongation of its useful effect being reinserted into a present action. Without present perception, then, memory has no means of becoming useful; therefore, it remains unconscious, indeterminate, powerless, and stuck in the past. Pure recollection is the virtual. It is the limit of the past most removed from the plane of the present.

To continue, it is through this purification of perception from the influence and interjection of memory that Bergson establishes that perception and recollection in their pure forms, contrary to what many have held⁴⁰, are actually different in kind, instead of merely differing in degree. As a result of his assigning pure perception to matter and pure recollection to spirit, and claiming them to be different in kind, Bergson evokes a traditional dualism.

...as pure perception gives us the whole or at least the essential part of matter (since the rest comes from memory and is superadded to matter), it follows that memory must be, in principle, a power absolutely independent of matter. If, then spirit is a reality, it is here, in the phenomenon of memory that we may come into touch with it experimentally.⁴¹

It is evident that Bergson maintains a dualism between matter and spirit, pure perception and pure recollection, pure past and pure present, although he endeavors to demonstrate throughout *Matter and Memory* their commensurability in concrete perception. The Bergsonian dualism was initially set up, in *Time and Free-Will*, through the distinction between duration and space, as two different kinds of multiplicities. Dualism is again given attention by Bergson in his next major work (*Matter and Memory*), but revised through the

⁴⁰ David Hume held this view that memory differs from perception only by its degree of vivacity. Under this view, memory is a reproduction of an original impression perceived, which must be weaker in intensity and affection, than the original impression. See *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed., Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty is a more contemporary advocate of such a position. In the *Phenomenology of Perception* and his essay entitled, "The Primacy of Perception", he argues that the work memory gets assigned, in terms of recognizing former experiences in the present, is already done in perception itself. Thus, according to him, memory is merely a derivative of perception.

⁴¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 73.

corresponding distinctions between pure perception and pure memory, matter and spirit, strictly for the purpose of its confrontation.

It is Bergson's notion of the virtual and actual and his revolutionary reconfiguration of the relationship between the past and present that allow him to overcome a dualistic philosophy. Actual perception is never pure; it is always mixed with recollections, and thus, our experience of present consciousness is always affected by the virtual past. Bergson affirms both that the past and present are different in kind, and that the present is the most contracted degree of the past. This seems to imply a contradiction, namely that the past and present, like memory and perception, are both different in kind and different in degree. These contrary propositions should, however, be interpreted as moments in the evolution of his method, instead of interpreted as implying inconsistency or a lack of soundness in Bergson's argument.

In order to dispel a possible misunderstanding of the role duration plays in Bergson's philosophy it might be helpful to follow a suggestion made by Deleuze.⁴² According to Deleuze's account Bergson begins with pure duality, the moment when duration and space, past and present, matter and spirit, perception and memory are identified as divergent tendencies, which are different in kind. This is followed by "balanced" or "neutral" dualism, which is when these differences in kind are recognized, not merely as two divergent tendencies, but as different degrees of the same tendency. For example, in reality space and duration are a composite, and space according to Bergson is really a tendency of duration to extend itself. This means that the pure dualism is dissolved because the two differences in

⁴² Deleuze presents a description of the steps in Bergson's resolution of dualism. Dualism is really a false problem for Bergson; and he shows that the original opposition existing between two tendencies is always reducible to one dominant tendency, of which the original two then become contrary expressions. Dualism is, then, merely a means of differentiating contrary tendencies that express different kinds of difference within the different degrees of difference itself. See *Bergsonism*, p. 92-94, for a detailed account of Deleuze's account of how Bergson deals with dualism.

kind are really two divergent directions of one tendency, namely, duration. Neutral dualism, then, necessarily leads to monism according to which all the differences in kind coexist as degrees of difference within the virtual; that is, a single time. All the degrees of difference coexist in a single nature or kind. In other words, Bergson's theory of the virtual removes the contradiction between dualism and monism, allowing him to hold both positions without jeopardizing the consistency of his philosophy. Dualism does not exclude monism, because out of any two tendencies identified, one can always be defined in terms of the other, which reduces it to monism. Bergson does not return to the same kind of dualism, but shifts from a *reflexive dualism* to a *genetic dualism*. The difference between these two moments of dualism can be seen in the transition from a "decomposition of an impure composite", namely the separation of the two tendencies duration and space, to a "differentiation of a simple or pure", namely the differentiation of divergent tendencies within the totality of the virtual.⁴³ The dualism that reappears after its first form is different in the sense that it does not oppose divergent tendencies, but rather differentiates them as internal to the virtual. The first form of dualism is reflexive because it relies on a reflection of the composite of experience and one's ability to separate it into its pure components, which one naturally opposes to one another. The form of dualism that results differentiates tendencies as the genetic elements found within the virtual and does not make any tendency exclude any other.

Furthermore, both purified recollection and perception are essential to our concrete perception, though since they appear so frequently to mirror one another in experience, it is difficult to tell them apart. For Bergson, "...perception, however instantaneous, consists...in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; in truth, every perception is already memory..."⁴⁴ Moreover, their usual assimilation does not show that they differ only by degree. Bergson's main criticism of his philosophical predecessors is that they badly analyze

⁴³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 96.

⁴⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 150.

the composites of experience. By failing to distinguish the difference in kind between memory and perception, they confound the two when analyzing the mixtures of experience; that is, they are not careful enough to see that experience itself is a mixture of memory and perception that are themselves truly distinct in nature. Memory is not just a weaker state succeeding the more intense original perception. The two do not differ merely by their degree of intensity because they are different in kind. One would think that if the two were only different by degree then the formation of the memory would follow after the formation of perception. Because Bergson holds that they are different in kind and that memory is essential to the formation of concrete perception, he must claim that they are both formed simultaneously. The formation of memory is not after the formation of perception, the former does not succeed the latter: "The formation of memory is never posterior to the formation of perception; it is contemporaneous with it."⁴⁵ In Bergson's account of memory-perception, there is a doubling between the actual and the virtual⁴⁶; the perception-image is mirrored in the memory-image, which illustrates that the one is not formed after the other. Bergson, as set forth in *Matter and Memory*, offers a synopsis of this "splitting" between memory and perception, past and present, virtual and actual:

...the memory is to the perception as the image reflected in the mirror is to the object in front of it. The object can be touched as well as seen; it acts on us as well as we on it; it is pregnant with possible actions, it is actual. The image is virtual, and though it resembles the object, it is incapable of doing what the object does. Our actual existence, then, while it is unrolled in time, doubles itself in this way with a virtual existence, a mirror image. Each moment of our life offers two aspects: it is actual and virtual, perception on one side and memory on the other. It splits as and when it is posited. Or rather, it consists in this very splitting....⁴⁷

One can gather that memory and perception are different in kind because they are formed in the same movement proceeding in two divergent directions that split off one from the other. This process results in two aspects of existence, a virtual image, which through reflecting the

⁴⁵ Henri Bergson, 'Memory of the Present and False Recognition', *Time and The Instant*, p. 47.

⁴⁶ The virtual is the pure past or pure recollection, which is constantly becoming actualized in present perception.

⁴⁷ Henri Bergson, 'Memory of the Present and False Recognition', *Time and The Instant*, p. 51.

actual, doubles our existence. Bergson maintains that each moment of our lives consists in this splitting of the virtual and actual, memory and perception, and both have their influence in the formation of the other. In other words, perception could not be formed without the contribution memory makes, and memory could not be formed without the influence of perception (the same holds true for the virtual and actual, the past and present). Saying that they are contemporaneous with one another means that they exist and change together.

Additionally, Bergson expresses two functions or aspects of memory in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*: "...memory in these two forms, covering as it does with a cloak of recollections a core of immediate perception, and also contracting a number of external moments into a single internal moment, constitutes the principal share of individual consciousness in perception..."⁴⁸ Both these aspects of memory, *recollection-memory* and *contraction-memory*, effect the compression of the present or, as Bergson says, "a contraction of the real", by prolonging a plurality of past moments into one another. This is why every perception is said to endure or to have a specific duration, because duration is the fusion of past moments that are contracted in the present, making the present an interval or temporal span, as opposed to an atemporal instant. Contraction-memory is dependent upon recollection-memory to select past moments, which suit the present situation and come to fill the interval there. One must be able to recall and then condense; in fact, contraction would not be possible were it not for recollection. Consciousness in a sense is just this ability to retain and reproduce the past in the present, to hold a number of moments in tension with one another. The immediate activity exercised in the present is bought at the price of difference, because recollections come to overlay perception covering its details and highlighting its significant features, to allow the immediate recognition of the object and an immediate response enacted. The more expedient one's response needs to be in relation to an object, the

⁴⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 34.

fewer of its details one has time to grant one's attention. The more immediate then one's actions are or need to be, the more memory comes to mask differences in the objects of experience. In other words, one's interests, especially those that are vital, affect the extent to which recollections come to cloak present perception and the difference inherent within it.

Specifically, habit-memory and image-memory are two kinds of memory that Bergson discusses in *Matter and Memory*. They are both conditions for concrete perception and action. Habit-memory is motor memory. It is the body's way of knowing how to act in relation to something with which it has come into contact before. This memory is acted as opposed to being represented; it repeats instead of imagines.⁴⁹ Image-memory, on the other hand, records all of one's experiences, one's whole personal history, leaving out no detail. This memory is factual and autobiographical. It is what records everything that happens, every moment of one's life, every place to which one has been, every sound, every feeling, and retains each sense in an image. However, these memory-images are representations that lack the real action of their object; they exist in a virtual space imagined, but may come to inform action and prepare us for affectation.

Furthermore, these two memories, together, found two kinds of recognition, namely an auto-recognition and an attentive recognition. Bergson distinguishes between these two ways recognition occurs as follows:

...recognition...must take place in two different ways. Sometimes it lies in the action itself and in the automatic setting in motion of a mechanism adapted to the circumstances; at other times it implies an effort of the mind which seeks in the past, in order to apply them to the present, those representations which are best able to enter into the present situation.⁵⁰

Auto-recognition is a habitual reproduction of the past, *via* pre-made, or pre-formed, concepts. The habit-memory, that automatic recognition is built upon, always results in the

⁴⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 78.

enactment of a movement proceeding from the object, meaning that the object gives rise to one's immediate response in relation to it, because of one's previous encounters making one familiar with it. This type of recognition does not require any image to be consciously recalled, but relies on the unconscious reproduction of the past within the present as an already set up mechanism, which is spurred into action by the object. Attentive recognition is only necessary when auto-recognition encounters a problem; in other words, the memory-images that are usually automatically recalled in response to a stimulus are inadequate in seamlessly merging with the perception-image. This situation would be one where recognition as it has been built up through past experience fails; our pre-made concepts do not work to give us an immediate response. Thus, without an immediate response available in accord with habit, there exists a gap or interval⁵¹ wherein the mind may make its effort to recall useful memory-images to enable us to choose a suitable course of action. As a result, the novelty of our experience creates this problem for recognition and the understanding, requiring a unique act of recollection to evoke only those memory-images that will give light to and fit with the perception-image, according to a particular interest. Attentive recognition, then, proceeds from the subject by representation;⁵² it recalls memory-images that may be useful in assisting the disclosure and grasping of an object.

Accordingly, Bergson's account of attentive recognition is significant because it leads to the forming of his notion of actualization, which is central to his explanation of how pure recollection constitutes the present and the novelty or difference that perception reveals within it. It is because attentive recognition requires an effort of the mind, appealing to past experience and re-evoking memory-images, that it, consequently, sheds light on the issue of how recollection functions. Bergson explicates the virtual and its coexistent planes with this

⁵¹ The 'interval' is a becoming conscious, which is a gap that opens between stimulus and response, allowing for an effort of the mind to recollect images that may help it decide a course of action. We will look more closely at Bergson's characterization of consciousness as a 'hesitation' in the third chapter.

⁵² Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 78.

question in mind. Attention is really what allows us access to the depth of reality. With the ability to concentrate upon the details of an object and indefinitely enlarge the various moments of it, one may increase the tension within one's own conscious duration. By attending to an object differently, one can, thus, make it yield to us an image of itself different in quality from any one had perceived before, as well as, make it reveal intricacies of its nature with a new vibrancy. With his elaboration of the role of attention in recognition, Bergson explains that the same object can be recognized differently, meaning, it can be perceived as having qualities it had not been made to disclose before. In summary, perception, then, is profoundly influenced by the memories which reflect and give definition to it. It is through memories that perception is made to reveal a different image of reality.

Additionally, Bergson explains our distinct perception as a series of circuits between the perception-image and the memory-images, where the perception-image may disclose certain qualities or details depending upon which one of the various levels of the past, more or less contracted, with which the object is in circuit. He explains, "Our distinct perception is really comparable to a closed circle, in which the perception-image, going toward the mind, and the memory-image, launched into space, careen the one behind the other."⁵³ The closed circuit between the memory-images, which are called up to reflect the perception-image coming from the object, can take place on many different stories or planes of the past, depending upon which level of the more or less contracted-expanded past is implicated in the process of recognition. However, Bergson is quite explicit that the various circuits of attentive recognition implicating different levels of the past have nothing in common but their object. This is what allows him to claim that the same object can be attended to in many different ways and thus recognized differently, while still maintaining that these varieties of attentive recognition have an objective consistency. The objective consistency

⁵³ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 103.

stems from it being the same object that is recognized in a variety of ways, with different qualities. Just because the object is perceived with different qualities, depending upon the memory-images that are recalled to reflect or illuminate its properties, does not mean that this alteration proves the subjective nature of our perception. Bergson says that the circuit between the mind and its object is closed and any movement to another circuit of higher concentration must be composed of elements entirely different from that of any other. The whole past, not just a portion of it, is implicated in the perceptive recognition of an object and depending upon which plane this function is carried out, the defining features of that level of the past and its memory-images, change completely.

...an act of attention implies such a solidarity between the mind and its object, it is a circuit so well closed that we cannot pass to states of higher concentration without creating, whole and entire, so many new circuits which envelop the first and have nothing in common between them but the perceived object.⁵⁴

In this passage, it is implied that the virtual is the whole past, that it creates a closed circuit between memory-images and the perception-image, and that it coexists on an infinite number of planes which are all defined uniquely by a completely original set of singularities. These singularities are like that particular past's defining features, remarkable points, or pivotal moments. Bergson clarifies the effect that the different planes of our total past and the unique set of memory-images, which each plane tends to actualize, may have on perception:

It is the whole of memory...that passes over into each of these circuits, since memory is always present; but that memory, capable, by reason of its elasticity, of expanding more and more, reflects upon the object a growing number of suggested images – sometimes the details of the object itself, sometimes concomitant details which may throw light upon it.⁵⁵

The greater the expansion of memory and the widening of the virtual plane, becoming contracted within the present, the greater the number of images it may bring to reflect upon the details of the object. Attention is responsible for creating the object anew, and attains this through its utilization of the elasticity of our memory, which by each expansion claims

⁵⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 104.

⁵⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 104.

access to deeper strata of reality. "...the progress of attention results in creating anew not only the object perceived, but also the ever widening systems with which it may be bound up; so that in the measure in which the circles...represent a higher expansion of memory, their reflection attains...deeper strata of reality."⁵⁶ Accordingly, one can realize the importance of the virtual and the actualization of memory-images for Bergson's epistemology: the expansion of the virtual allows for the multi-layered depth of the real to be apprehended.

Where are these recollections? Bergson argues against the brain as the traditional storehouse of memories, and, by using examples of aphasias, proves that recollections may be inaccessible due to a lesion in the brain, but are not therefore lost. Evidence to prove this is plentiful according to Bergson, in the many cases where victims of such brain damage may regain the ability to remember memories, which appeared to be absent for a long period of time. The lesion in the brain may affect our ability to recall certain regions of the past, but they are not therefore destroyed forever. If the memories themselves were in fact stored in the brain they would be lost for good by the damage, but they can still be retrieved when the lesion is removed, which corroborates Bergson's claim that the memories are preserved in themselves, i.e., in the virtual, and not in the physical matter of the brain. Bergson's position is that recollections are preserved in themselves, in the eternal past. The virtual is just this place, which is no place at all, where the past is preserved in-itself, an unconscious, inactive, and indeterminate realm detached from the necessary activity of the present.

At the beginning of chapter three of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson describes the process of recalling an image from one's personal history, "Whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act

⁵⁶ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 105.

sui generis by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera.”⁵⁷ Thus, the process begins, according to Bergson, by a unique act of detachment from the present, whereby a leap into ‘the past in general’ is carried out, before a specific segment of this entire past is then narrowed upon or selected. This process of detachment is a relaxation of the tension between the past and present; the past becomes more expanded as the relaxation increases and the slackened tension with the present decreases our ability to act in it. The ‘past in general’ to which Bergson here refers is the virtual coexistence of the past that is not yet actual, but constantly becoming so through the process of actualization.

Actualization, should not however be confused with this leap into the virtual coexistence of the past. The ‘evocation of the image’ or the recollection, is not the same as the ‘leap’ into the pure being of the past in general. Bergson describes two simultaneous movements through which the virtual comes to reply to the demands of the present: one is *translation* and the other *rotation*.

...memory, laden with the whole of the past, responds to the appeal of the present state by two simultaneous movements, one of translation, by which it moves in its entirety to meet experience, thus contracting more or less, though without dividing, with a view to action; and the other of rotation upon itself, by which it turns toward the situation of the moment, presenting to it that side of itself which may prove to be the most useful.⁵⁸

There is a distinction within the process of actualization between translation and rotation: the first, denotes a movement of the entire past coming to meet experience, which effects the more or less relation of its contraction into the present, and the second, refers to a movement whereby this whole past turns toward the present the side of itself, which is most useful; in other words, it divides itself with a view to action.

⁵⁷ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 133-134.

⁵⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 168.

In point, the importance of virtual coexistence must be stressed and emphasized. Deleuze points out that, in *Time and Free-Will*, Bergson was limited to a conception of duration defined in terms of succession, whereas, in *Matter and Memory*, he elaborates the definition of duration as coexistence.⁵⁹ Duration is succession only relatively speaking, according to Deleuze, meaning, “coexistences [are] referring back to space”, when they are said to consist in a series of moments succeeding one another. Ultimately, Bergson develops his conception into a notion of absolute duration, which loses its need to refer back to space. Virtual coexistence means that repetition is reintroduced into duration and this repetition is not a ‘physical repetition’ of matter, but rather a ‘psychic repetition’ of the spirit and memory. Virtual repetition is a repetition of all the levels of the entire past. These are ontological regions of the past in general, coexisting and repeating on all the stories of contraction-expansion, which are all enveloped in the virtual cone of the unconscious.

The place where we seek our recollections of the past is, then, in the past itself. It may be said that Bergson’s account of the act of recollection is dependent upon a primary psychological act, but the leap into the past, in general, marks the movement over to the domain of ontology. The leap into the past, with which every act of recollection begins, is characterized as an ontological leap because for Bergson, being is in the past. Being is of the past, not a particular past, but the eternal past in general, that past which has never been present. As Deleuze says, the shift in Bergson’s work from psychological duration to ontological duration through the act of recollection is a genuine ‘leap into ontology’: “We really leap into being, into being in-itself, into the being in itself of the past. It is a case of leaving psychology altogether. It is a case of an immemorial or ontological memory.”⁶⁰ Psychology pertains only to the present, and therefore, when one detaches oneself from the

⁵⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 57.

present and delves into the past, one leaves the realm of psychology and enters the unconscious being of the past. Deleuze brings our attention to the abandonment of psychology that occurs as the first step in any act of recollection: "...the psychological is the present. Only the present is "psychological"; but the past is pure ontology; pure recollection has only ontological significance."⁶¹ It is apparent that there is a tension here between the past and present, which extends over to a tension between the psychological and ontological domains. The theory of the virtual or the pure past has great significance for our understanding of Bergson's ontology, as well as, its intersection with the present or psychology. In sum, the past is that which continually, through recollection, brings being to the present, and the virtual is that which constitutes psychological consciousness and its perceptions.

Furthermore, the past, for Bergson, is that which has being, and the present is that which is becoming and therefore is not. It is not in the sense that it is never finished or complete, but is always transforming itself as an opening to the future. This pure past, or the 'past in general', is ontological duration. It is not a particular past but a timeless past that makes possible the passage of every particular present. The past is not, like in other traditional philosophies, banished to non-being. It seems rational under the common, conventional, view of time to suppose that the present is that which has being, and the past is that which has already been, has passed out of existence. The same would hold true of that which has not yet happened, of the future. In that case, the present would be stuck, as it were, between two non-beings. The non-existent would then have to be said to pass into existence in the present and then out of existence again, becoming past. However, how, then, could this passage by way of a dialectical movement from non-being into being and out of being into non-being again, be explained? This is a problem reminiscent of Parmenides' question:

⁶¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 56.

How could being come to be from non-being? It could not, if the only being acknowledged was that of being present; if only the present had being, this being would be eternally present and would never come to pass, for how could it emerge from its opposite, that which by definition lacks being. Many philosophers have presumed that being is only in the present, for example, Aristotle and St. Augustine⁶². The significance of Bergson's philosophical enterprise can be seen in this one move, whereby he places being in the past. This placing of being in the eternal past is what defines the virtual.

Moreover, the novelty of Bergson's theory of duration lies in remodeling the relationship between the past, present and future. In his theory, the past and present are not separated from one another, and do not mutually exclude each other; instead, they are said to penetrate one another. Bergson arrives at what at first glance seems an odd, or even counter-intuitive, conclusion; because of the paradox of the passage of the present, he claims that the present would never pass if it had to wait for another present, because it must pass for a new present to arrive, implying that even if it hesitated ever so slightly, resisting its transition, that it would never pass at all. In other words, if it was not already past at the same time as it was present, its passage would be strictly speaking, impossible. Thus, Bergson proves that the past and present are contemporaneous with one another.

Specifically, Bergson in his paper, "Memory of the Present and False Recognition", uses the commonly experienced phenomenon of false recognition as an example, to show how the contemporaneousness of the past and present can be witnessed. Robin Durie notes

⁶² In the *Confessions*, Book Eleven on The Mystery of Time, St. Augustine assumes that being must be in the present. He says in section XIV, "...if nothing were, there would be no present time." We can also see that his division of the present into three, the past-present, present-present and future-present, relies on this assumption of the presence of being. This is apparent in Augustine's reply, in section XVIII, to his question; where *are* the past and future? He states, "If wherever they are they are future, then in that place they are not yet; if past, then they are no more. Thus wherever they are and whatever they are, they *are* only as present." For Augustine, then, if the past and future were not placed in the present then they could not be, because it is only the present, which has being.

the importance of Bergson's discussion of 'false recognition', in his paper entitled "Splitting Time: Bergson's Philosophical Legacy"; it is a special case in which by the failure of recognition we come to experience the way time truly is in itself. As he says; "In false recognition, therefore, we live through the very movement of time's passing, which consists in the contemporaneity of the past and the present, the overlapping of the actual (perception) and virtual (memory). In false recognition, we thus catch a glimpse of time itself."⁶³

The experience of false recognition, to which Bergson refers is an event which has been widely observed and studied throughout the history of psychology by many reputable psychologists. Bergson describes 'false recognition' as an experience where one feels that one is "...living again, down to the minutest details, some moments of his past life."⁶⁴ It is the nature of this phenomenon to witness oneself acting, as a spectator of inevitable deeds, which repeat exactly the successive moments of a portion of their past. The intense feeling of this 'inevitability' seems to detach subjects from their action; they can see themselves acting, but do not feel in control of willing their own action. Rather, they are likely to perceive their automatic responses from outside, as other than their own, while all the time, anticipating what follows as though they knew what was about to happen because they had lived it once before.

The importance of this phenomenon can be seen in Bergson's explanation of it. He explains how the mirroring, which takes place between the virtual and actual, usually occurs even though the person is unaware. This is because the reflected virtual image is identical to the actualized perception image; whereas, the person experiencing 'false recognition' becomes aware of the virtual double accompanying their actual existence prior to its

⁶³ Robin Durie, *Splitting Time: Bergson's Philosophical Legacy*, p. 163.

⁶⁴ Henri Bergson, 'Memory of the Present and False Recognition', in *Time and The Instant*, edited by Robin Durie, p. 36.

actualization because of the distance that comes to be inserted between them. Normally, there is no difference or separation between the two; the virtual reflects exactly every detail of the actualized perception image; and so they are experienced together, as one, due to their convergence and congruence. We become conscious of the virtual double, which always accompanies the actual. One who suffers the experience of false recognition then is aware of the virtual double pre-existing its actualization in the present perception and action. Thus, their actions and perceptions determined in the present seem to be anticipated by the virtual double recalled from their past. They are presented with the virtual image of what is about to happen, what is about to become actualized. In fact, the feeling of the inevitability of their actions, is witnessed by them, as beyond their control, because by the time they catch a glimpse of the virtual image, it has already begun its actualization. They therefore cannot alter their fate, or what is happening to them. Their actual perceptions and actions are, thus, virtually determined. What becomes actualized is the past. The former experiences usually recollected unconsciously by them and executed habitually, in this scenario, have become conscious and yet are enacted with the same determinateness. Accordingly, Bergson's explanation of the phenomena of 'false recognition' demonstrates how the virtual past comes to embody itself in the actual present.

However, as Deleuze states: "...Bergson is not content to say that there are only differences in degree between the recollection-image and the perception-image.... *While the past coexists with its own present, and while it coexists with itself on various levels of contraction, we must recognize that the present itself is only the most contracted level of the past.*"⁶⁵ The present therefore in an important sense is the past, that is, the present is the most contracted degree of the entire past. It appears thus that the past and present are now of the

⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 74.

same kind. “What Bergson shows us is that past and present are of the same kind, that is, belong to the same multiplicity.”⁶⁶

In summary, each present is qualitatively distinct in kind, yet this difference or heterogeneity of the present does not imply a discontinuity of time or a break in duration. Duration is radically continuous; it diverges or alters without severing itself off from itself. The being of duration rather retains its internal cohesiveness throughout its continuous differentiation. Gaston Bachelard, in a paper titled, “The Instant”, argues against the two fundamental characteristics by which Bergson’s duration is defined: continuity and heterogeneity. In the way Bachelard presents duration, it is apparent that he fails to conceive both these qualities of duration together as consistent. He rather holds that duration is a homogeneous and quantitative multiplicity, because he defines it as a number of instants (with no duration) brought more or less closely together by perspective.⁶⁷ Duration is heterogeneous according to this definition, but its difference results from both the phenomenon of perspective, drawing instants together to different degrees, and the number of homogeneous points it encompasses. Bachelard, unfaithful to Bergson’s definition, redefines duration in terms of the ‘instant’ and he, thus, makes duration discontinuous in doing so. He says, “Time can only be observed solely in instants; duration....can be experienced solely in instants.”⁶⁸

On the other hand, in *Duration and Simultaneity*, Bergson gives duration the power of enveloping itself. This means that it may separate itself out into different fluxes or flows, while also retaining the ability to concentrate itself in a single current.⁶⁹ One may perceive many different durations at once. One may perceive water flowing, the wind blowing and a

⁶⁶ Robin Durie, *Splitting Time: Bergson’s Philosophical Legacy*, p. 161.

⁶⁷ Gaston Bachelard, “The Instant”, in *Time and The Instant*, ed. Robin Durie, p. 77.

⁶⁸ Gaston Bachelard, “The Instant”, in *Time and The Instant*, ed. Robin Durie, p. 77.

⁶⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson’s Conception of Difference*, p. 50.

bird flying simultaneously. Any number of durations may be encompassed in a single duration; and, although, by an act of attention, one or another of these durations may be singled out by attention, none is truly separated from the totality they are enveloped within. Those durations, that a duration may be divided into, make that duration many, but they do not destroy or corrupt the unity or radical continuity of that duration. Bergson describes the way attention can cut out portions of duration and separate them, by, for example, focusing on the bird flying or the wind blowing. What is just as important to realize, however, is that one can perceive a number of durations at the same time through an undivided act of attention. Bergson says,

I call two flows “contemporaneous” when they are equally one or two for my consciousness, the latter perceiving them together as a single flowing if it sees fit to engage in an undivided act of attention, and on the other hand, separating them throughout if it prefers to divide its attention between them, even doing both at one and the same time if it decides to divide its attention and yet not cut it in two.⁷⁰

Here Bergson suggests a duration, which can both be differentiated by attention, while not succumbing to a division into discrete parts. Our conscious duration, then, has the power to incorporate many durations within it. Thus, we may perceive many movements occurring within our environment at once, and without separating them off from one another, they all are enveloped within our duration. Bergson does not limit this power that our conscious duration has to internally envelop the moments of environing matter to those movements that are in the immediate vicinity of our body. He, in fact, wants to extend this power of duration to reflect within itself the entire physical world:

To each moment of our inner life there thus corresponds a moment of our body and of all environing matter that is “simultaneous” with it; this matter then seems to participate in our conscious duration. Gradually, we extend this duration to the whole physical world, because we see no reason to limit it to the immediate vicinity of our body.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, p. 51.

⁷¹ Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, p. 45.

From this passage, we can get a sense for how duration, through its internal difference is attributed the power to encompass the totality of the physical universe, meaning that all durations that can be differentiated are encompassed within one universal or absolute duration.

In summary, Bergson's position is that there is only one duration. This entails that all durations coexist in one duration, that is, they all are differentiations of a single universal duration, which is continuously different in kind everywhere in itself, for all time. Because duration is endowed with the power to encompass itself infinitely, Bergson may hold both a position of monism and one of pluralism; in fact, with his conception of qualitative or virtual multiplicity, he provides a way that the one and many may be reconciled and their opposition eliminated.

It is here that the Bergsonian and Kantian conception of time seem to resemble one another in certain specific respects. The Kantian conception of the pure form of time consists in it being an infinite given magnitude encompassing all definite determinations of time within, and this indeterminate form is said to define all definitive times as limitations therein. In this light, the Bergsonian conception of duration may be said to approach the Kantian position on time, and may even owe something to it. However, it must be maintained that under Bergson's conception of ontological duration, time is not merely a form of intuition, but an attribute immanent to being itself.

In conclusion, the ontology of duration is one that affirms the plurality of being in becoming. Difference is what being produces whatever its nature, and being is what it is, in virtue of becoming different in nature or kind. Every being is an internal engine differentiating its tendencies to act, continually living the evolution of its alteration and

difference from that which it has been, through the real movement of duration.

“...[D]ifference marks the real dynamic of being—it is the movement that grounds being.”⁷²

Being becomes what it is by becoming different, but does so simply as an expression of its nature, thus affirming its divergent tendencies to become different. Deleuze develops this idea further, that being is the repetition of elements that occur within pure difference or difference in-itself, which never actually repeat. Bergson's ontology of duration maintains that the eternal past of the virtual is coexistent with being, as well as constitutive of both; being present, and becoming different or new, which is the condition of the present's passage into the future. The epistemological consequences that this ontology implies will be explicated in the following chapter on Bergson's conception of intuition.

⁷² Micheal Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, p. 2.

The Method of Intuition

Intuition gives us the thing whose spatial transposition, whose metaphorical translation alone, is seized by the intellect.⁷³

...the main task of intuition is to de-spatialize...⁷⁴

* * *

In the previous chapter, the ontology of duration, its relation to difference and its affirmation of a continual creation immanent to being in-itself were clarified. If one agrees that Bergson has established a novel ontology of duration, a conception of being in becoming, then what becomes of knowledge? How is epistemology going to be affected by such a radically different approach to being, one where the entire past is always regenerating a novel present? Intuition is Bergson's solution to the problem he discovers in intellectual knowledge. Intellectual knowledge has great difficulties in grasping duration, whereas intuitive knowledge does not have these difficulties. Intuition, in fact, goes beneath the intellect and grasps the real dynamic of actual living duration; it makes knowledge of duration not only possible, but actual. The natural advantage of Bergson's intuition as a modality of knowing is that unlike the Kantian epistemology, it does not impose pre-made forms onto sensibility. Intuition immediately apprehends a thing coming to be as a constant evolution of its form, rather than viewing it as a mere re-instantiation under a general form, which persists in time, the same. The knowledge intuition provides is of a kind that does not claim to be exhaustive or complete, universal or absolute. Intuition makes claim to a knowledge that is much too precise to be generalized and yet is tentative because it is becoming further elaborate as sensibility changes with its object.

⁷³ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 71.

⁷⁴ Milic Capek, *The New Aspects of Time*, p. 71.

To begin with, Bergson revolutionizes philosophy with his method of intuition; he allows knowing to be reunited with action and continually re-grounded in material differences, avoiding the natural pitfalls of the intellect. In his eyes, the intellect has clung to the static and immobile image of reality and the reproduction of this image by way of resemblance and over-generalization. Bergson's philosophy takes on a new role with his development of intuition as a method. Philosophy is not opposed to science, but assists it by inventing problems, which motivate the identification of differences in kind within being. Thus philosophy can be said to naturally compensate or counteract our tendency to intellectualize experience and cover over its inherent proliferation of difference. Intuition is Bergson's solution to the problem caused by the gap between intellect and instinct. Instinct is an unconscious active repetition of the past, like a habitual action. The intellect comes to the aid of instinct, when instinct stumbles across an obstacle it cannot immediately avoid or maneuver around. The intellect re-evokes the image of potential actions, based upon the various analogies it can make between its present and its past experience, in order to assist in making the decision as to what action is most appropriate to the circumstance. The re-evoking of the past, however, is a problem if the past is reproduced the same as it was and given the same influence as it had once before, because the novelty of the present is not reducible to any image of the past which resembles it. This is to say, the present cannot be made to fit into the ready-made forms reproduced from past experience without the elimination of the present's novelty. That which the intellect represents as possible action is too general and abstract and not specific enough to really be useful, because it does not suit or display an attunement to the fervor and continuous alteration of the real, concrete, and durational present. This is why one must say that for Bergson, the conditions of possible experience are the intellect's method of becoming conscious of stable entities that it may shape and manipulate. In other words, objects are what it is able to force its will upon and, for this reason, are treated as though they are inert, static, permanent, and enduring with the

same form, meaning they are understood as identical reproductions of a past identity that has gone unaltered. The conditions of possible experience make experience appear conformable and formed in light of certain characteristics or properties, those being immobile, discontinuous, discrete, quantitative, and mechanistic. Illuminated by the general categories of the understanding, experience is possible, but, for Bergson, what is possible is general and abstract, and does not become real because it is only an afterimage of what has been. The possible does not explain how experience 'becomes' real, or what is its genesis. It only presents us with a number of conceptions of how it would be derived from our understanding of how it already is or was. These faults of the possible are due to the fact that it can never explain the specificity of the reality it claims to condition, because the particularity of the real is much more robust and detailed than the generality of its prior projection, as a possibility, admits. How could the minutest variances in the real be explained or even broadly accounted for by a general condition? These slight differences in the real are sensed, but are not understood, and, in fact, are omitted from experience, by being brought under the general conditions of possible experience. Bergson wants to establish a way in which we can speak about the specific relation of differences and their generation within the real, without making their reality depend upon an origination from what, by definition, lacks existence, that is, the possible. On the other hand, "What is about to come?" is more a question of what we can actually do now. It is for the demands of action and life that Bergson rephrases the Kantian question: What are the conditions of actual experience? In sum, they are virtual conditions according to him because there is no way to describe them, without speaking as though they have already begun to actualize themselves.

Before beginning a general outline of what Bergson's conception of intuition is, it will prove to be advantageous for one to first address the distinction he draws between

instinct and intellect, after which it will be clear as to what role intuition can play in mediating between these two distinct methods of action and divergent tendencies of knowledge. Instinct and intellect designate two distinct modes of acting and knowing, according to Bergson, but are not therefore to be viewed as entirely separate faculties. In Bergson's words: "...all concrete instinct is mingled with intelligence, as all real intelligence is penetrated by instinct."⁷⁵ Accordingly, the two must be combined in reality, and although they are expressions of divergent tendencies, performing different functions, in truth they should be understood as functioning together and complementing each other.

Furthermore, instinct and intellect present us, according to Bergson's theory of evolution, with two divergent tendencies of action and knowledge, as two kinds of responses to one original problem. He intends that his analysis of instinct and intelligence brings out the difference between these two tendencies of knowledge and of action, in order that we might combine their various functions and graft them upon one another. But even more significantly, Bergson claims these two faculties to be dependent upon one another; each bringing to the other what it cannot provide for itself: "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them."⁷⁶ This is the problem for Bergson: How can these two divergent tendencies be brought into a reciprocal adaptation? "...if intelligence is charged with matter and instinct with life, we must squeeze them both in order to get the double essence from them..."⁷⁷ Expressed this way, it seems that Bergson not only wants to understand matter and life, but desires to come to a new understanding of their combination in 'living matter'. If the intelligence gives us access to a knowledge and method of action dependent upon the physical view of inert matter, and instinct, on the other hand, gives us

⁷⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 136.

⁷⁶ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 151.

⁷⁷ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 178.

access to a mode of knowledge and action which is firmly grounded and re-grounded in the vital, then Bergson's intuitive project is to see how matter is rooted in the vital impulse essential to life from which matter came. It is Bergson's project in *Creative Evolution* to clear a path between instinct and intellect, a path which will allow intuition to gain from the benefits both faculties have to offer.

To elaborate, one of the major differences between these two kinds of knowledge is that instinct acts what it knows, without thinking about it, whereas the intellect consciously thinks what it knows without acting it. Bergson indicates that the difference between these two kinds of knowledge lies between knowledge acted and knowledge thought: "In short, while instinct and intelligence both involve knowledge, this knowledge is rather *acted* and unconscious in the case of instinct, *thought* and conscious in the case of intelligence."⁷⁸ The difference here between instinct, unconscious and acted, and intellectual knowledge, thought and conscious, is significant because it marks the temporal continuity of instinctive action and the apparent discontinuity within the conscious thought of the intellect.

This distinction can be further elaborated by being placed between the automatic and the accidental. Instinct can be described as the unconscious coherence of the act and the idea, which is automatically executed through habitual response mechanisms. The intellect, on the other hand, can be described as the distance between the act and idea that gives rise to conscious thought, which appears accidental because it only appears when instinct is ill equipped. Bergson describes what an instinctual action is:

When we mechanically perform an habitual action, when the somnambulist automatically acts his dream, unconsciousness may be absolute; but this is merely due to the fact that the representation of the act is held in check by the performance of the act itself, which resembles the idea so perfectly, and fits it so exactly that consciousness is unable to find room between them.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 145.

⁷⁹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 144.

Instinct is acted, meaning that there is no space between the act and the idea, that the inception of the idea is no different than the act that manifests it. Instinct is at the same time an unconscious temporally continuous action with no foresight; it is an automatic response triggered by the similarity of circumstance not requiring the appearance of consciousness. The intellect, on the other hand, consciously thinks about what to do; it is as Bergson says, "...the deficit of instinct, the distance, between act and the idea, that becomes consciousness."⁸⁰ Consciousness thus actually appears as an accident at the moment when act and idea separate. When the action of the instinctive and of the automatic runs into a problem, the question "What is the appropriate action?" arises for consciousness. It is consciousness that addresses the problem, 'How to act?'; whereby the knowledge of what to do, the conception of the idea, appears to be distinct from and to precede, the action that manifests it. Bergson states that, "...action is the instrument of consciousness"⁸¹, in other words, consciousness serves a purpose: to direct action. Consciousness, for Bergson, coincides with the emergence of a fundamental problem. When one does not know how to act; when those readily available mechanisms of the body are not triggered into immediate action; when it becomes possible for us to consciously think about what to do, instead of just doing what we have done before; when the situation does not admit of analogy with past experiences; this is when consciousness appears. When acting immediately and automatically becomes problematic, consciousness answers the challenge by representing a number of possible or potential actions. With the advent of intellectual knowledge, consciousness comes to represent the world in light of how it conceives itself endowed with the power to act upon it, in other words, it is based on its actions in its past experience. Bergson states, "...consciousness seems proportionate to the living being's power of choice. It lights up the zone of potentialities that surrounds the act. It fills the interval between what

⁸⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 145.

⁸¹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 179.

is done and what might be done.”⁸² More than one action becomes possible because consciousness reveals a zone of possible actions, or potential activities, which could not have been thought, if it had been consumed, or preoccupied, by instinctive action. In its ‘hesitation’, consciousness convinces itself that it has a choice.

Instinct and intelligence are both forms of innate knowledge, in the sense that they both exercise and put to use knowledge without having learned it first. Bergson uses the example of a baby at its mother’s breast; the baby has never seen the breast or learned to suck from it, but is guided by its innate knowledge. The difference between instinctual and intellectual forms of innate knowledge provides us with another point of contrast between instinct and intellect. Both have different objects to which their innate knowledge is attuned. Instinct has the innate knowledge of a definite object because it knows particular “things”; whereas, intelligence exhibits an innate knowledge of no object in particular because it knows only “relations”. The relation of things is what intelligence knows innately, not the things themselves; its knowledge is therefore imbued with an air of generality, because its categories of experience are universally applicable to things in general, but it knows no particular object. Bergson maintains that these general categories are an unavoidable result when analyzing thought because, in fact, they are the relations of which the mind makes use: “...In whatever way we make the analysis of thought, we always end with one or several general categories, of which the mind possesses innate knowledge since it makes a natural use of them.”⁸³ Bergson mentions some of the general categories that intelligence naturally makes use of, which include cause and effect, resemblance, and content/container.⁸⁴ The set of these generalized relations is what allows a systematic knowledge to be possible. Bergson, following the Kantian distinction between the form of knowledge and its matter,

⁸² Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 179.

⁸³ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 148.

⁸⁴ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 148.

defines the form of knowledge as, "...the totality of the relations set up between these materials in order to constitute a systematic knowledge."⁸⁵ Matter is the 'given', that elementary state of experience disclosed to our perceptive faculties. Bergson differs from Kant only in that he attempts to give an explanation of these categories. He agrees with Kant that the form, apart from the matter, can be an object of knowledge.⁸⁶ However, Bergson claims that one must not understand these forms of knowledge as if they were things possessed by oneself, they are rather 'contracted habits'. In other words, these *a priori* conditions into which experience comes to be inserted are not states of things or states of consciousness, but rather each signifies a mode of directedness, what Bergson calls a 'natural bent of attention'.⁸⁷ These natural bents of attention are really relations to which we have become accustomed through their habitual repetition in the course of evolution.

Nonetheless, one must note that Bergson frames the question differently than Kant. He is concerned, not with establishing the general conditions of our knowledge and our experience, but with how these conditions of experience disclose only those properties which are deemed significant and advantageous, by our practical interest in them: "...the question is whether certain conditions, which we usually regard as fundamental, do not rather concern the use to be made of things, the practical advantage to be drawn from them, far more than the pure knowledge which we can have of them."⁸⁸ We can see from this remark in *Matter and Memory*, that Bergson is far more inclined to make the question, regarding the conditions of knowledge, center around how they are a function of 'the use to made of things', rather than revolving around whether or not a pure knowledge of these conditions is possible. Bergson does not contest the claim that the conditions of experience are knowable, nor does he want to argue about which conditions were true that others proposed before him; he does

⁸⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 148.

⁸⁶ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 148.

⁸⁷ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 148.

⁸⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 187.

however, disagree about what essentially a condition of experience is (how it is characterized) and what purpose it serves. Bergson takes an empiricist approach to the conditions of experience, because his primary interest is not knowledge; but rather, his chief interest is with the practices or tendencies of human nature and nature in general, which have led to a certain kind of knowledge.

Furthermore, as two divergent modes of knowing, instinct and intelligence attain a very different sort of knowledge. Bergson states that instinctive knowledge gets at a thing's being, immediately grasping the materiality of its object; it knows 'what is' and often acts this knowledge unconsciously.⁸⁹ On the one hand, instinctive knowledge is expressed in categorical propositions; and, on the other, intellectual knowledge is expressed in hypothetical propositions. The intellect obtains a conditional knowledge; if such and such is the case, then such will be the case. Whether it is the relation of part to part, object to object, or conclusions drawn from premises, intellectual knowledge bears essentially on the relation between a given situation and the means of utilizing it.⁹⁰ The primary function of the intellect is to see the way out of difficulties brought about by any circumstance; its job is to provide the most appropriate answer to the questions experience poses in the endless series of problems it provides for us.

Both these modes of knowing have their domain and are limited in what they can and cannot attain. Instinct may know an object or part of an object intimately and fully, which is implied in its accomplished action; yet it can only know one single object or a restricted part of it. Instinctual knowledge is highly attuned to different objects or parts of them because it treats everything as unique and individual. Its way of knowing omits the possibility of generalization; and it gains from this the advantage of exercising a profound precision, as

⁸⁹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 149.

⁹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 150-151.

well as an integration within the whole of living matter. It does not have the ability to extend its knowledge indefinitely to a number of objects; whereas, intellectual knowledge, with its focus on general relations, does extend to an indefinite number of objects. Intellectual knowledge, however, pays a heavy price; for what it gains through the extension of its form, it loses in regard to content. It appears to be a rather empty knowledge. Bergson classifies intellectual knowledge as empty, saying intelligence, "...possesses naturally only an external and empty knowledge; but it has thereby the advantage of supplying a frame in which an infinity of objects may find room in turn."⁹¹ The intellect, then, holds nothing but the empty form of knowledge, which expresses the tendency of life to externalize itself and generalize its knowledge over the totality of a transcendental field. By adopting the ways of unorganized matter, inert and solid, the intellect can get a point of view on matter from outside, and ensure that all things appear clearly and distinctly, broken into discrete parts. The intellect's consistent treatment of matter as inert, solid and broken into discrete parts, assures that matter appears malleable according to our human will. Matter is represented in such a way that it does not reveal any power to resist our desire to shape it; it rather appears to present no major obstacle to the needs of our will because it is not attributed a will of its own.

Accordingly, it is the natural advantage of instinctive knowledge that the immediacy of its action relies upon an unconscious reproduction of the past in the present, repeating contracted habits or tendencies driven by the forces of a vital impulse. Instinctive knowledge retains a natural advantage over intellectual knowledge, because it does not deny matter a life and will of its own. In fact, the immediacy of instinctive action testifies to its adaptation to individual forms of life, as well as to its inter-connection with the forces of living matter.

⁹¹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 150.

Instinct "...is molded on the very form of life"⁹², according to Bergson. As organic life forms, as biological beings, humans are bodies composed of millions and millions of engrained, instinctual movements that they neither have to consider nor by which need they be distracted. It is as if life itself learned long ago how to sustain itself. It is not necessary, then, to pay attention to many of the functions of the body; they are automatically executed in accord with our vital needs.

Instinct flows and integrates within the whole continuity of living matter, enacting the production and adapting to the confrontation of difference, whereas the intellect treats everything as solid, inert, immobile, discontinuous, discrete, mutually exclusive and juxtaposed. This is why they both have different advantages and disadvantages, because they both have a different object. Consequently, instinct and intellect function as though one has for its object the living, and the other, the dead.

The intellect primarily constructs and fabricates with a view to action; it is responsible for the industry of our being, molding inorganic, inert, matter into usable material. In this way, the intellect organizes matter by directing our will to exert its power by stamping its form upon the material universe. Bergson maintains that life itself externalizes itself, taking on the illusion of its permanence and immobility for the purpose of being able to make use of matter. Life gives inorganic material to the organism to assist in the industry of its being. He states,

Life, not content with producing organisms, would fain give them as an appendage inorganic matter itself, converted into an immense organ by the industry of the living being. Such is the initial task it assigns to intelligence. That is why the intellect always behaves as if it were fascinated by the contemplation of inert matter. It is life looking outward, putting itself outside itself, adopting the ways of unorganized nature in principle, in order to direct them in fact.⁹³

⁹² Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 165.

⁹³ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 161.

The function of the intellect is, "...to act and to know that we are acting, to come into touch with reality and even to live it, but only in the measure in which it concerns the work that is being accomplished..."⁹⁴ We see clearly from this quotation that the intellect is concerned primarily with the work to be accomplished; it focuses on that which a material may be used for or that which something can be made into.

Intelligence, according to Bergson, in its more completed stages, becomes manifested in invention. The form which our past experience has taken becomes useful once more by being brought back to the present in reform. The past thus is recast into new molds, reinventing and actualizing in a useful way that present which had already at one time been past. Clearly, Bergson regards intelligence and invention to be inextricably bound up with one another: "No doubt, there is intelligence wherever there is inference; but inference, which consists in an inflection of past experience in the direction of present experience, is already a beginning of invention. Invention becomes complete when it is materialized in a manufactured instrument."⁹⁵ The manufacturing of instruments is what makes human intelligence so developed as compared to other species, who innately find use for the things around them to their benefit, but do not, as frequently and as easily as humans, fabricate their own tools to suit a particular need. With this ability to manufacture artificial objects also came the capacity to continually modify the method of their construction in order that the product of the process was suited to a novel purpose and demand. Intelligence is defined, by Bergson, as follows: "... (Intelligence,) considered in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools, and of indefinitely varying the manufacture."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 191.

⁹⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 138.

⁹⁶ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 139.

Accordingly, the intellect seems to understand clearly only that which can be separated into a number of discrete parts. Bergson says, "Of the discontinuous alone does the intellect form a clear idea."⁹⁷ It naturally breaks things down into their essential atomic constituents to understand of what they are made; yet it encounters difficulty when speculating on how these pieces relate, whether we take the pieces to be moments, objects, representations, or physical atoms the point still holds. If the relations are already established, then how do we know that things are not just made to fit our established schema for understanding and discursivity? If the intellect cannot conceive of the continuous clearly, of the true nature of duration that flows in consciousness and in matter itself, then the intellect, although practically oriented, is doing us a disservice in presenting it as discontinuous. Figuratively speaking, the intellect acts with a knife, and it actually does cut experience into pieces. It enacts this fragmentation-segmentation of reality consistently, according to a set of principal relations which it naturally generalizes, so that their application may be extended to all things. Why these relations? In short, they make experience appear as manageable; that is, subject to a natural law of mechanism that makes the sequence of events seem predictable, and that makes objects appear as constituted of a number of components, which means these parts can be manipulated or fashioned into objects of our desire.

The problem however with the set of general relations is that their function is to subject experience to appearance through a unity of representation, which distills only a static image of the continuous and mobile reality that underlies the unified representations of experience. The principle of the unity of representation has a significant role to play in distorting duration by way of its representation. "Of immobility alone does the intellect

⁹⁷ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 154.

form a clear idea.”⁹⁸ The intellect, then, not only cuts up experience, but in so doing, it arrests the fluidity of its alteration. By contrast, in intuition, experience is fully continuous and mobile—it becomes. Although, experience is made out to be discontinuous and immobile by the very nature of the way in which we grasp, describe, and represent it; in-itself, it should not be attributed either of these characteristics.

Aside from the intellect’s lack of ability to grasp the continuous and mobile, it also is deficient in comprehending the new. The intellect reduces to a recombination of old parts what Bergson held to be an essential feature of life itself, namely the novelty constantly produced by the interplay between the vital forces of nature. Clearly, the inadequacies of the intellectual faculty are not unrelated; that is, the intellect cannot manage to account for the new because it cannot conceive of real, continuous becoming. Bergson expresses the interrelation of these different disorders of the intellect, stating: “The intellect can no more admit complete novelty than real becoming...”⁹⁹ It is important for us to understand the significance of this point about novelty in terms of Bergson’s account of history and evolution. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson spends considerable time accounting for how pure difference or novelty is inherent in our experience. One of his major contributions shows that an entirely new constitution of the past was necessary in order that the completely novel could enter the domain of perception. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson again fixes on this theme, by focusing on how novelty and difference are generated through the natural creative potential, inherent to life and continuously observed throughout the divergent veins of evolution. Bergson’s analysis, in this work, of what the intellect is lacking is a diagnosis of the limitations found in our understanding of pure difference. Intuition, on the other hand, presents itself as an attempt to transgress the bounds of the intellect. Bergson further explains the flaws of the intellect pertaining to its conception of *novelty*, which reduces the

⁹⁸ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 155.

⁹⁹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 164.

new to a repetition of the old. Showing how this account of the new depends upon a commitment to the deterministic view of history and evolution, Bergson states: "...the intellect lets what is *new* in each moment of a history escape. It does not admit the unforeseeable. It rejects all creation. That definite antecedents bring forth a definite consequent, calculable as a function of them, is what satisfies our intellect."¹⁰⁰ The intellect is only satisfied with a calculable function from definite antecedent to consequent, which implies that there is no room for the influence of any external or undefined sources, according to its standard. It argues from one state of affairs to another, without first asking how events cause, move and determine what happens. Events however cannot be adequately explained by listing their antecedent conditions. If one believes in creation as an evolutionary force, and is motivated to explain the occurrence of completely new phenomena throughout history, as Bergson was, then one must answer how a model of causation presupposing a closed system of well defined terms, could account for any element of novelty. It is not obvious how it could do so. At best, it could generate new combinations of the same old terms, for a time, until it ran out of possible reconfigurations; and, then, it would repeat a cycle of combinations forever. This is not to be taken lightly; the implications may be drastically different for history and evolution, depending on how one proposes to explain the novel. Either we have a closed system, which repeats the same terms and events (a closed loop), or we have an open system, which is slightly less determinate and less calculable, but able to redefine itself to introduce into its internal structure a genuine and unique difference. One, in fact, can view legitimately Bergson's whole development of the theory of duration and his attempt to rid time of its spatial confines as an attempt to explain how actual differences, novelties of entirely different kinds, enter sensibility, perception, experience, life, history and evolution.

¹⁰⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 163.

Moreover, the problem with the intellect is that it denies life; it conceives of itself as firmly anchored in a set of universal categories, which act as the molds through which reality is made to appear, and, consequently, within which it appears to fit. No doubt, the phenomena of experience may be used as supporting evidence for the very molds that have made their appearance possible. However, the form that the intellect imparts to one's experience, by way of the understanding, arrests the movement inherent within real duration. Therefore, although it provides a service by making one's experience appear in discrete parts with permanence and stability, at the same time, it is also a hindrance, because it makes all that is understood by way of its forms conform to a static, spatial, and mechanistic model. In truth, just the opposite is the case; the real is dynamic, temporal and indeterminate, and best described in terms of duration. Consequently, the being in becoming endures by repeating the process of differentiation that is the natural tendency of living.

If one is to sum up Bergson's diagnosis of the intellect, it is best described as the tendency to grasp the dead. According to the very approach it takes to life, it misses what is essential in the vital, that is, difference or novelty. Bergson expresses this point: "We are at ease only in the discontinuous, in the immobile, in the dead. The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life."¹⁰¹ If the intellect is characterized, as Bergson says, by a natural inability to comprehend life, it is because it lacks a conception of the continuous, mobile, indeterminate and new (pure difference). What method of understanding, then, is left for us to explore, which, contrary to the intellect, has a close affinity with the living? Instinct is the obvious choice, but it is unconscious and thus not a good candidate for a grounded knowledge of the living. An epistemology that does not misconstrue the vital must be able to reflect on that which only instinct knows through action, thus bringing it into the realm of consciousness. This can be accomplished through intuition.

¹⁰¹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 165.

Bergson claims that intuition may serve to compensate for what the intellect lacks. The limited intellectual capacity of the human mind, according to Bergson, has led to the confusion of space and time; humans have developed the intellectual habit of representing their experience using categories, which subject experience to spatial discreteness, thus destroying its continuity. Intuition then, is for Bergson, our great hope; he believes that it may restore the intellect to a more fluid form, which does not deny or distort the temporal and differential relations fundamental to reality. He says,

...intuition may enable us to grasp what it is that intelligence fails to give us, and indicate the means of supplementing it. On the one hand, it will utilize the mechanism of intelligence itself to show how intellectual molds cease to be strictly applicable; and on the other hand, by its own work, it will suggest to us the vague feeling, if nothing more, of what must take the place of intellectual molds.¹⁰²

One can gather from this passage that intuition does not rid itself of the intellect, but instead, as Bergson reveals, intuition utilizes the mechanisms of the intellect to demonstrate their problematic application. Intuition then undermines and criticizes the intellectual molds, while also surpassing them.

Furthermore, in an essay titled "Philosophical Intuition", Bergson asserts that intuition does not require the transcendence of either the senses or consciousness: "For, in order to reach intuition it is not necessary to transport ourselves outside the domain of the senses and of consciousness."¹⁰³ Intuition is an internal differentiation, bringing sensible intuition to consciousness, without the help of representation *via* the filter of general categories. It is an immediate apprehension of the sensible, which is brought to consciousness through reflection.

¹⁰² Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 177.

¹⁰³ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 'Philosophical Intuition', p. 127-128.

Patrick Hayden, referring to Bergson's *Creative Mind* says,

...Bergson himself made clear, intuition is not simply a "relaxing of the mind" allowing instincts or feelings to take over from conceptual and intellectual consciousness. On the contrary, the movement is the reverse, in that intuition supersedes instinct by means of the intelligence, reaching a profound state of reflection upon life and the living world, not by trying to place itself outside this living world but by placing itself firmly within it.¹⁰⁴

Intuition is much more than being consumed in feelings, as Hayden suggests; intuition, for Bergson, is far from a return to the instinctual and an abandonment of the intellectual consciousness. Intuition, rather, marks a return to the instinctual, while raising to reflection and consciousness, the sensible differences of living matter.

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson defines intuition; he says, "...it is to the very inwardness of life that *intuition* leads us—by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely."¹⁰⁵ Here, Bergson says that by intuition he means disinterested instinct, which is not unconscious like most instincts, but rather becomes self-conscious, and capable of expanding its attention indefinitely to differentiate the object it reflects upon. He says intuition is disinterested instinct because, if its interest was already defined or established it would be acted and unconscious, instead of being instinct consciously reflected.

Hayden emphasizes that, "intuition is a method reclaiming immanence," and, following Deleuze's *Bergsonism*, he claims this means that intuition is a method "rigorously founded on experience." Intuition is a reclaiming of immanence because it does not depend as a mode of knowing on the application of transcendent categories, which are detached or abstracted from experience. Firmly implanted in the experience of movement and difference in duration, intuition immediately apprehends the sensible. Intuition does not rely on any

¹⁰⁴ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: The Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 176.

illusions of transcendence to obtain knowledge; it need go no further than the internal depth and richness of experience to determine the transcendental conditions specific to the immanently differential nature of the actual present. These transcendental conditions, to which intuition has access, are virtual in nature, and actually determine present experience by becoming actualized.

Bergson's *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, more specifically its second introduction, entitled "The Stating of Problems", provides us with what seems to be the clearest and most systematic account of his conception of intuition, relating at the same time to duration. In this essay, Bergson admits that even he was hesitant at first in using the word 'intuition', due to the common confusion that occurs when the term intuition is used to describe a mode of knowing. The origin of this confusion, he claims, is the setting up of an opposition between intelligence and intuition by previous philosophers.¹⁰⁶

Accordingly, the difference between intuition as conceived by previous philosophers, and Bergson's conception, is that intuition for his predecessors meant an immediate apprehension of the eternal, whereas, "...for (him) it was a question, above all, of finding true duration."¹⁰⁷ Those philosophers, who assigned to intuition a special power of knowing, generally, recognized the limited powers of conceptual thought for capturing the essence of the mind, and, as a result, maintained that the faculty of intuition was needed as a supra-intellectual faculty beyond the intellect. However, this implied more than just that intuition was non-intellectual, but also implied that it must occur beyond time. In other words, while the intellect was said to function in time, any supra-intellectual faculty would have to function outside time; therefore, the knowledge it was said to attain had to be eternal. It is clear that Bergson does not share this perspective. For him, intuition is supra-intellectual, but

¹⁰⁶ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 30.

this does not entail that intuition is outside time, or that its goal, knowledge, should be sought in the eternal. On the contrary, for Bergson, it is of utmost importance to rediscover what the nature of time truly is, what real duration is. This is what his method of intuition is designed to do. In the following passage, Bergson explains how his intuition diverges fundamentally from those that held it to be non-temporal:

Numerous....are those who have spoken of a supra-intellectual faculty of intuition. But as they believed that the intelligence worked within time, they have concluded that to go beyond the intelligence, consisted in getting outside of time. They did not see that intellectualized time is space, that the intelligence works upon the phantom of duration, not on duration itself, that the elimination of time is the habitual, normal, commonplace act of our understanding, that the relativity of our knowledge of the mind is a direct result of this fact, and that hence to pass from intellection to vision, from the relative to the absolute, is not a question of getting outside of time (we are already there); on the contrary, one must get back into duration and recapture reality in the very mobility which is its essence.¹⁰⁸

According to Bergson, then, it is not the case that we need to get outside time; in fact, our intellect, by force of habit, has already removed us from real duration, and it is the case that we must recover from this debilitation by reinserting ourselves back into real duration. Intuition is that which allows us to rediscover the living dynamic of the real, that is, duration, prior to the representational distortion to which it is subjected, via the spatializing tendencies of the intellect.

Bergson's development of a supra-intellectual intuition can best be understood in contrast to the Kantian infra-intellectual intuition. Bergson, in *Creative Evolution*, uses the Kantian position as a foil to outline his own position on intuition. Kant held that intuitions are sensuous and cannot extend beyond the bounds of the understanding, the intellect. However, the matter of knowledge, the sensible, was for him extra-intellectual, he "...attributed an extra-intellectual origin to the terms between which the relations are

¹⁰⁸ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 30-31.

established.”¹⁰⁹ The matter, which comes to fill the molds that are the conditions of intellectual knowledge, that is, the content that instantiates these general relations, was not derived from an intellectual source. The intellect ensured the agreement between this extra-intellectual matter and its form, by imposing its form on all sensuous intuitions. This move, on Kant’s part, made all sensuous intuitions conform to the intellect. He took these forms of the intellect as ready-made and did not ask the question of their genesis. Nevertheless, Bergson is interested in asking how these formations came to be, and more specifically, of what use they are.

Specifically, the intuition of the vital would be appropriated by the intellect and converted into its terms, but would also extend beyond its bounds, according to Bergson. This is the reason behind his calling it a supra-intellectual intuition; intuition cannot be reduced to a merely intellectual knowledge. Intuition is a knowledge, which allows for the spirit to take possession of itself, from within itself, not like the intellect, which requires that the subject approach its object of knowledge from an external point of view. The opposition created by the intellectual approach posits an unbridgeable gap between subject and object, which under the strictly intuitive form of knowledge is a false dichotomy. Making the subject stand removed and alienated from its object is a scenario that results in the intellectual method yielding a knowledge merely phenomenal in nature, meaning it does not pertain to the thing in-itself, but instead, only attains to the appearance of phenomena mediated by the subject. Unlike this account of knowledge, which is external and phenomenal, intuition proposes to yield a superior knowledge from an internal access to things-in-themselves. Intuitive knowledge does not depend upon the mutual exclusion of subject and object for its knowledge. Intuition is prior to the division and juxtaposition of subject/object, and therefore, provides a mode of knowing that does not represent a thing,

¹⁰⁹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 358.

which by definition of our knowledge cannot be known in-itself. One can see how Bergson's intuition disobeys Kant's distinction between phenomena and *noumena*, between a thing's appearance through its representation and the thing in-itself (apart from its appearance for us). For Bergson, intuitive knowledge is not bound to the appearance of things separated from how they are in-themselves. As discussed in chapter two, Bergson invests the image perceived with full reality; there is no underlying thing-in-itself, which is made inaccessible due to the preconditions of our knowledge. It is through the promotion of sensibility that Bergson's intuition attains a knowledge of things as they are in-themselves:

...there would be an intuition of the psychical, and more generally of the vital, which the intellect would transpose and translate, no doubt, but which would none the less transcend the intellect. There would be, in other words, a supra intellectual intuition. If this intuition exist, a taking possession of the spirit by itself is possible, and no longer only a knowledge that is external and phenomenal. What is more, if we have an intuition of this kind (I mean an ultra-intellectual intuition) then sensuous intuition is likely to be in continuity with it through certain intermediaries....sensuous intuition itself, therefore, is promoted. It will no longer attain only the phantom of an unattainable thing-in-itself.¹¹⁰

It is apparent in this passage from *Creative Evolution* that Bergson's account of an ultra-intellectual intuition depends for its epistemological value upon its being in continuity with sensuous intuition. Bergson claims that continuity between the two is likely because it is sensuous intuition which becomes raised up, beyond the intellect, to an ultra or supra intellectual status. Sensuous intuition in this way is made to reveal differences in experience that are not limited to appearing through the constitutive forms that regulate intellectual knowledge.

Intuition grasps the internal differentiation of duration as a continuous, heterogeneous, qualitative multiplicity. Bergson maintains that intuition grasps that which the intellect cannot, namely the internal duration of things. It is because intuition apprehends immediately a real continuous succession of duration, where moments are not juxtaposed or

¹¹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 360.

perceived as mutually exclusive to one another, that it has access to a unique mode of knowing. Intuition as a mode of knowing gives access to the dynamic flow of inner life, prior to the mediation of experience through space and language. Bergson classifies intuitive knowledge as belonging to consciousness in its immediate and direct apprehension, which has not split its perception from the object perceived:

The intuition we refer to then bears above all upon internal duration. It grasps a succession which is not juxtaposition, a growth from within, the uninterrupted prolongation of the past into the present which is already blending into the future. It is the direct vision of the mind by the mind—nothing intervening, no refraction through the prism, one of whose facets is space and another, language. Instead of states contiguous to states, which become words in juxtaposition to words, we have here the indivisible and therefore substantial continuity of the flow of the inner life. Intuition, then, signifies first of all consciousness, but immediate consciousness, a vision which is scarcely distinguishable from the object seen, a knowledge which is contact and even coincidence.¹¹¹

Intuitively knowing is not a form of understanding, which relies upon subject/object and perceiver/perceived dichotomies. Bergson qualifies this knowledge as ‘contact’ or ‘coincidence’. How can we make sense of intuitive knowledge as ‘contact’ and ‘coincidence’? Is intuitive knowledge the coincidence of various tensions within duration and the contact of two spiritual essences (to different degrees, conscious)? Stressing the link between consciousness and intuition, Bergson suggests, “It may be that intuition opens the way for us into consciousness in general.”¹¹² If Bergson is right that intuition may open the way into consciousness in general, then it is because intuition does not divide or sever itself from that which it apprehends. For this reason, intuition may present a way for a consciousness to comprehend itself as a duration within consciousness in general (a variation subsumed within one whole duration). Furthermore, it is the case that the duration of an individual consciousness is interconnected within a dynamic set of relations with all consciousness in general, as well as with every individual consciousness in particular. Intuition grasps these tensions within the internal differentiation of duration, prior to the

¹¹¹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 32.

¹¹² Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 32.

extension of duration into spatially discrete unities. Consequently, consciousness is not individuated or distinguished from any other; it is not yet abstracted, dissociated, or detached from itself, other consciousnesses or that which it perceives. All consciousness merges from the view of absolute duration preceding the interference of space.

Bergson speaks of intuition as knowledge from within, capable of comprehending a thing's duration, including an understanding of its evolution and production, rather than taking it as an already unified representation. Bergson says, "...of a knowledge from within, that could grasp them in their springing forth instead of taking them already sprung, that would dig beneath space and spatialized time, there is never any question. Yet it is indeed beneath this plane that our consciousness places us; there flows true duration."¹¹³ Intuitive knowledge, according to Bergson, therefore is endowed with a special power, a power to grasp the generation of beings; that is, what they are becoming, rather than merely representing what they have already become (as a result or end). The productive power of being in becoming then is what intuition apprehends; it grasps the transitive and generative evolution of being from within our own conscious duration. It does not have to get outside itself to get an externalized and objective view on matter.

Bergson asserts that beings are durational in essence, that spirituality is the root of being, and that intuition is a method of disclosing how things share with us a spirituality of their own. Bergson says, "Intuition is what attains the spirit, duration, pure change. Its real domain being the spirit, it would seek to grasp in things, even material things, their participation in spirituality..."¹¹⁴. As a result of Bergson's univocal distribution of durational being, he commits to a spiritualization of matter; and it is because he makes duration a common attribute of all things, that matter in-itself becomes accessible to the intuitive

¹¹³ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 361.

¹¹⁴ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 33.

consciousness. In other words, it is because all beings are to a degree conscious; it is because there being is a unique rhythm of duration that they are intuitively knowable. It is then intuition which gives us the capacity to acknowledge the existence of durations other than our own, and thus to know beings other than ourselves. Hayden claims that affirming the existence of durations other than our own is a matter of recognizing real differences in kind and recognizing real differences in kind is contrary to the tendency which eradicates them by making them appear as instantiations under general categories of all possible experience. It seems that Hayden maintains intuition as a way Bergson escapes idealism: "...[It] is intuition as a method which allows us to recognize that there are durations other than our own that exist, that is to say, which allows us to affirm and recognize the existences of real differences in kind and avoid subsuming them under general categories (of all possible experience)."¹¹⁵ The general categories of all possible experience deny any real differences in kind, according to Bergson, meaning they deny the knowledge of the existence of beings other than the immediate knowledge of oneself. One can see as a result of the general and universal extension of the categories of the understanding across all of experience that a problem of idealism, which Bergson identifies, arises for Kant.

As long as thought is restricted to a standard set of static categories, which the understanding or intellect uses to judge experience, genuine differences in kind will not be permitted within the realm of thought. To think duration is difficult because it runs against the grain of our habits. One tends, for the most part, to think within the confines of a regulated intellect, one which assimilates radical difference to the similar. Bergson prescribes that in order to actually think the difference inherent within duration, we must refine our concepts to give them a precision they have not attained under the constraints of the intellect. In fact, "...intuition begins with the attitude of distrust for the accepted modes

¹¹⁵ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: The Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 43.

of thought...”¹¹⁶ The challenge in thinking intuitively is to think duration; that is, to think continuous difference and not re-attach ourselves to immobilities, but rather see that the static image is only an abstraction of the mobile movement, which produced it. We can identify a reversal of the intellectual tendency to reconstruct movement with a series of immobilities and the intuitive tendency to begin with movement and see only an abstract sign of the mobile in the immobile. In the following passage, Bergson makes this inverse relationship between intellect and intuition evident:

...to think intuitively is to think in duration. Intelligence starts ordinarily from the immobile, and reconstructs movement as best it can with immobilities in juxtaposition. Intuition starts from movement, posits it, or rather perceives it as reality itself, and sees in immobility only an abstract moment, a snapshot taken by our mind, of a mobility.¹¹⁷

To think duration by way of intuition is to eliminate as much as is necessary the discontinuity of thought, so as to achieve a thought that confronts the real continuous differential flow of duration. It is clear that for Bergson, “Pure intuition...is that of an undivided continuity”¹¹⁸, and by thinking in terms of the continuous differentiation essential to duration, “...we may restore to intuition its original purity and so recover contact with the real.”¹¹⁹ Intuition, above all else, is a method for the thinking of difference, designed to allow difference that is the reality of experience, to enter thought.

¹¹⁶ Milic Capek, *Bergson and Modern Physics*, p. 87.

¹¹⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 183.

¹¹⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 185.

From Bergson to Deleuze: On Difference and Repetition

To think internal difference as such, as pure internal difference, to reach the pure concept of difference, to raise difference to the absolute, such is the direction of Bergson's effort.¹²⁰

* * *

In this chapter, the discussion will be focused on responding to one general question: What does Deleuze draw from Bergson's *opus*? What follows is an explication of Deleuze's Bergsonism with special attention given to Deleuze's concepts of difference and repetition, and their root in Bergson's notions of duration and matter. Most important is the question concerning what is the "nature of difference". It is on this that we will set the scope of our inquiry. Deleuze's ontological theory of *difference and repetition* incorporates a number of concepts developed by Bergson in his descriptions and accounts of duration. It is through careful study and reconstruction of Bergson's position on the nature of time and memory that Deleuze is able to extract from his philosophy a natural development, which culminates in a notion of *internal difference and a concept of the nature of difference as such*. It will be the task of this chapter to show what steps are taken in Deleuze's account of Bergson in order to arrive at the concept of pure difference. Whether or not Bergson actually had such a concept of difference in mind, it is true that his theory of duration does entail a certain conception of difference, which is quite profound. This is why Deleuze credits Bergson with the greatest contribution to a philosophy of difference and derives the pure nature of difference from his writings on duration. Deleuze does not stop here, he also analyzes the relationship between difference and repetition in Bergson's texts, and he founds repetition as the productive power of difference, showing how it is internal to the nature of difference itself.

¹²⁰ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", *The New Bergson*, ed. John Mullarky, p. 49.

One can say then, that Deleuze takes three things from Bergson: a concept of difference, a concept of repetition internal to difference, and a method for thinking the repetition of difference, that is, the pure difference of difference in-itself. The method for thinking difference is Bergson's method of intuition, which he designed to provide a way for us to think duration and the constitutive differences within. We will find it necessary to analyze Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson's method of intuition, so we can later show in the last chapter how problematization, differentiation, and temporalization become essential to Deleuze's transcendental empiricism.

If one examines Deleuze's conception of difference, one will find it owes much to Bergson. As Deleuze says: "...Bergsonism must bring the greatest contribution to a philosophy of difference."¹²¹ In Bergson's notion of qualitative multiplicity, difference in kind is continuous and heterogeneous. Difference is created each time a multiplicity is distinguished, and this leads Deleuze to locate an internal difference and differentiation within duration. Deleuze, one can be sure, developed this idea of difference as 'internal differentiation' from his study of Bergson that resulted in two major pieces of writing, the paper, "Bergson's Conception of Difference" and the monograph *Bergsonism*. Deleuze's in depth study of Bergson's philosophical contributions provides the background for his own philosophical system, put forth in his later work, *Difference and Repetition*. Both Deleuze's notions of difference in-itself and repetition for-itself are Bergsonian in nature. One can infer that Deleuze's previous studies of Bergson inform the development of his theory of difference and repetition in the later work.

In "Bergson's Conception of Difference", Deleuze distinguishes two lines with which the philosophy of difference must proceed. One line is *methodological* and the other is

¹²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *The New Bergson*, ed. John Mullarky, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 42.

ontological. With regards to the methodology of the philosophy of difference, he says, one must begin with the determination of differences of nature between things. In order to distinguish the diversity of phenomena one must disregard the generic categories, which are used to group things together according to the similar properties they exhibit. Instead of making things fit into an already established kind, under which all things that resemble one another get subsumed, one must attend to and extract from these things their individual difference. In other words, one must disclose those differences making them distinct in nature from all things said to be of the same kind. This is a return to things-in-themselves because one does not account for each thing by appeal to something other than themselves; one does not reduce them to the other, rather one attempts to grasp them in the uniqueness of their being. Accordingly, if the being of things is grasped in their difference of nature, then, one may find that difference itself has a nature, which will provide access to being in-itself. Being in-itself produces differences of nature, which is the nature of difference.

Ontologically speaking, then, being is essentially differential in nature. What it means to exist, to be, to endure and to live is to continually become different. Through the discovery of the “nature of difference” and its formulation into a “pure concept of difference”, the being in-itself of any being will be defined by its internal difference or differentiation within this concept of difference. For all the degrees of difference are present within the nature of difference and thus may be defined by the variations in the concept of difference. This is exactly what Deleuze interprets Bergson’s contribution to be: a concept of difference in-itself, a concept that expresses the nature of difference in-itself through its infinitely differential expressions. The pure concept of difference encompasses all differences of nature as coexistent within it, as the many nuances or degrees within itself, which are the many concrete expressions and intensities of difference in-itself, a concept may be employed to express.

The whole idea of such a project begins with the assumption that philosophy can have a direct and immediate contact with things: “If philosophy is to have a positive and direct relation with things, it is only to the extent that it claims to grasp the thing itself in what it is, in its difference from all that it is not, which is to say in its internal difference.”¹²² Internal difference, then, is that upon which our grasping of things-in-themselves depends. It is a completely positive account of being—it does not define being negatively, but strives to discern that which a thing is, that which makes it different from all other things (in virtue of what it has and not in virtue of what it lacks). It is apparent that such an internal difference exists, if we suppose there to be differences of nature between things of the same kind. It is this internal difference that Deleuze credits to Bergson’s prescription of a new philosophical precision that tailors the concept to fit the object exactly; so much so that the concept loses its baggy clothes, that is, its generality and becomes applicable to one thing only for which it is sculpted. It is this ideal for philosophy, that is, the identification of the concept and object as a unity, which signifies Bergson’s commitment to a superior empiricism.¹²³ Deleuze points out that before reaching the unity of the concept and the thing, which is the expression of internal difference, we must move through a progression beginning with a discussion and analysis of differences of nature.¹²⁴ It is only by differences of nature that internal difference may be reached. The two must not be confused: “...[D]ifferences of nature between things is not yet the internal difference of the thing itself.”¹²⁵

One must emphasize the importance of the concept of ‘tendency’ for both Bergson and Deleuze. Deleuze says, “It is not things nor states of things which differ in nature, it is

¹²² Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 42-43.

¹²³ Bergson’s empiricism is superior because it does not generalize the concepts derived from experience and make them applicable to kinds, but rather allows the difference of the object to generate the difference in a novel concept, which only applies to it. This is to ground the concept in experience. Instead of the concept being something beyond experience and that which all experience is mediated through in general, it becomes a product of experience that moves beyond itself in its very development.

¹²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 43.

¹²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 43.

not characters, but *tendencies*.”¹²⁶ To get to the real differences, therefore, in the nature of a thing, one must focus their attention upon the tendencies the thing has within itself, to develop itself. These tendencies to transform and become in specific ways, that a thing may express differently throughout its duration, are what define its essence. It is the tendency, which Deleuze believes is primary for Bergson, because as Deleuze states, “a thing in itself and in its true nature is the expression of a tendency before being the effect of a cause.” In so far as things are the expressions of tendencies, they are inclined to develop in time, according to the divisions within their internal nature. A thing’s nature is defined by the tendencies out of which its essential being is composed. There are a number of divergent directions and tendencies to develop itself that a being is constituted by, all of which are informed by the being of the past (or the virtual) and constantly manifested in the actions a being takes within its lived present. The tendency is purely virtual, and it conditions the reality of our actual experience. These tendencies are unrepresentable, they are the forces of the past exerting their power upon the present, without resembling that which manifests them in their actualizations. The tendency is more primary when confronting the being in-itself of a thing because it gets at the underlying affinities certain things have to act and be affected, instead of focusing on the observations of effects taken from the external perspective and then inferring something about a prior and necessary cause. The tendency is unlike the cause in that it may have a widely varied number of expressions (admitting no resemblance between them), and it never has the same effect. The causal forces that are usually said to determine a definite result in effecting a thing’s being from the outside, and therefore directing its action, are not the decisive sources for action. Deleuze and Bergson both focus on the tendency because it attributes the decisive source of action to the internal forces immanent to a being’s nature. This means that the force acting upon a thing from the outside is not that which propels it to act in a certain way, but rather, the action is more a product of that

¹²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 44.

being's preparedness, an expression of its capacity to retain the past, and its ability to attend to the world. Deleuze defines "being" as the expression of a tendency, which can only be divided or distinguished by being contrasted with another tendency.¹²⁷ We can see in Bergson's writings that the tendency a thing has is always contrasted with another tendency the thing exhibits, yet one is always pure and dominant while the other is always impure and weak. The mixtures encountered within experience define things; and each thing is a different ratio, which expresses the proportion between two tendencies. For example, Bergson maintains that while both animals and humans exhibit the tendency toward instinct and intelligence, the dominant tendency humans display is intelligence and the dominant tendency animals exhibit is instinct. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson describes the two tendencies of perception and recollection as being mixed in our concrete perception and experience.

The reality of experience is filled with nothing but these various composites or mixtures. Everything we take for a subject of knowledge from our experience is an empirically given composite of elements. Bergson's main criticism of his predecessors is that they badly analyze the composites given in experience. They did not know how to divide these mixtures according to differences in kind, but inadequately understood them by enacting a method of division that reduced their differences to mere differences of degree. The limitation of differences of degree is that they only allow things of the same nature to differ in quantitative terms, that is, to what extent (more or less) they exhibit certain characteristics of that general nature. Because they only allowed these composites to be analyzed according to contingent or accidental differences, that is, differences of degree, they never recognized the differences of nature that were present, and which corresponded to the various tendencies inherent within these mixtures of experience. However, as we have

¹²⁷ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 46.

discussed previously, Bergson maintained that these composites of experience must be analyzed according to necessary and substantial differences, that is, differences of nature.

All mixtures must be divided, according to Bergson, into two contrasting tendencies or differences of nature. However, besides the great importance placed on differences in kind between tendencies, they are subject to the limitation of being only external differences. The two tendencies into which mixtures are divided are different in nature and even opposed to one another, implying a duality inherent within the nature of beings. The division of tendencies and differences of nature, makes the difference of each tendency or nature dependent upon its being contrasted with its opposite. This means that the difference existing between differences of nature is external because one cannot be distinguished without the other, which is separate from and juxtaposed with it. Differences of nature may be an improvement in comparison with mere differences of degree, but they are still based in an external difference and are open to the charge that they do not move beyond alterity, opposition, contradiction and the negative, that is necessary in order to attain an internal difference. “No doubt the differences of nature between the two tendencies marks a progress in relation to differences of degree between things: it nevertheless remains an external difference, a difference that is still external.”¹²⁸ The significance of Bergson’s duration derived by Deleuze is to be seen in his development of an internal difference. How does difference of nature become an internal difference?

The importance of Bergson’s duration for Deleuze can be summed up by saying that duration is the expression of a dominant tendency, namely, the tendency to differ from itself. Duration, being qualitatively distinct in-itself, internally differentiates its own intensive difference as a result of its constant problematization. The internal cohesion of the parts of

¹²⁸ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 47.

duration (that constitute the whole of duration) are compelled to be differentiated according to a different method, each time constituting simultaneously a novel past and present.

Duration always tends towards differing from itself first. The differences that are always there, in experience, ready to be encountered, signify the exertion of a force from the outside, which is only accounted for by the internal modifications of duration. The outside is the inside, because in order for the imperceptible forces of the outside to be felt or sensed, consciousness must make a fresh and wholly unique judgment and evaluation of its own inner duration. The internal dynamic of duration thus changes to mirror these unknown forces of the outside. These intensive differences tend to become realized in the actual space of the present, and extended into quantitatively differentiated multiplicities, which become the objects and substances appearing as experience, in space. However, the many forces, which lie beneath the objects of experience and the illusion of permanence they take on, are expressed through affectations as the internal qualitative changes of duration. Each force felt thus signifies a difference of nature, a nature that must become different to be felt at all. Only differences are truly sensed; in other words, that which is encountered as totally foreign to our current sensibility is that which may only be sensed. These forces of the outside are what instigate the continual evolution within the internal differentiation of duration. Duration must differ from itself; this is its primary tendency: to unceasingly differentiate its internal structure, each time according to a different method for determining difference. Each time, duration divides itself, which it constantly does, it enacts a new method which marks a novel effort of its being, a difference of its nature; and therefore, duration becomes wholly different in kind. Duration differs from itself, in-itself, so as to have a method for realizing its own difference of nature. The difference to which duration is always returning is its tendency to differ from itself.

Accordingly, for Bergson, difference of nature becomes a tendency itself. This means that, instead of understanding ‘difference of nature’ simply as the different tendencies of nature, these different tendencies of nature are understood to be expressive of one ever-present tendency, which is difference itself. Contrasted with the tendency to differ from itself, duration also has the tendency to become similar and to resemble itself. The tendency of duration to resemble itself is its tendency toward the approximation of a repetition of the same, which characterizes matter and the extension of matter within space. Through this contrary tendency of repetition, duration enacts the process of its own homogenization and spatialization. From the Bergsonian perspective, the tendency of duration to differ from itself, immediately and spontaneously of its own nature, is prior to the superimposition of resemblances that come to overlay and conceal this primary difference, which underlies them. If two main differences of nature are identified as two contrary tendencies, namely that of matter to repeat itself and that of duration to differ from itself, then it is only duration which may be attributed the tendency to differ in nature. In fact, the difference in nature therefore that was originally posited between the two opposing tendencies of matter and duration is not between two separate and mutually exclusive substances. Matter does not have the tendency to differ in nature, but first and foremost tends to repeat. The tendency to differ in nature is internal to duration itself. The true importance of this is that matter may be seen as a tendency within duration, or one difference in nature out of the many that duration may include. Duration, thus, comes to include matter and the tendency of repetition it expresses, as just one difference in nature produced by the tendency duration has to differ from itself. Deleuze says, “...If we consider all the definitions, descriptions and characters of duration in Bergson’s work, we realize that difference of nature, in the end, is not between these two tendencies [i.e. matter and duration].”¹²⁹ Deleuze recognizes an essential shift that takes place throughout Bergson’s works. This shift goes from the focus on the establishing

¹²⁹ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 47.

of differences of nature being defined as the difference between things or tendencies, and ends in differences of nature becoming a tendency or thing itself.

Difference of nature is thus no longer between two things or rather two tendencies, difference of nature is itself a thing, one tendency opposing itself to the other. The decomposition of the mixture does not simply give us two tendencies which differ in nature, it gives us difference of nature as one of the two tendencies.¹³⁰

With Bergson's development of duration and with his prioritization of time over space, differences of nature become internal to duration; differences of nature become the primary tendency of duration. It is evident from Bergson's account that duration internally differentiates itself, continuously, into differences in kind.

Duration is one of two tendencies; matter is the other. The former is difference and the latter is repetition; but in fact, matter is, for Bergson, only the last nuance of duration. Matter is the most expanded degree of duration, where its internal tension is slackened and it becomes relaxed, thus spreading out into extendedness. Inversely, duration can be defined in terms of matter, being the most contracted degree of matter, where its moments are drawn together into a continuous, simple, indivisible and heterogeneous whole. Matter is a bare repetition of the past because it repeats its past constantly, down to its minutest detail, almost entirely unconscious of its own futility. Matter, for Bergson, is what most closely approximates a homogeneous time because it tends toward a reconstitution of itself as the same throughout time. The tendency of matter to repeat itself would be unproductive if it were to achieve its own repetition because it would have attained a stasis, requiring the elimination of change, movement, time, difference, as well as, the vital forces, which make its evolution actual. Duration is what forces matter to alter and evolve. Duration is what corrupts matter from the bare or brute repetition towards which it tends. Because matter is a degree of duration and is already internal to duration, it could never succeed in stalling itself

¹³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 48.

in a permanent form that repeats, but instead, is forced to repeat difference itself. Duration in matter makes its tendency towards repetition produce difference itself. The point here is that repetition never actually occurs exactly, at least not a repetition of identical parts. It seems then that the explanation Bergson gives of the combination of matter and duration, for Deleuze, directly confronts the issue of the relationship between difference and repetition. After further clarifying Deleuze's concept of difference, a more in depth discussion of this relationship will ensue.

Duration is difference; a difference which ceaselessly differs itself from itself: Real duration is always creating anew, because it lives, it makes itself different, it strives, it dissociates itself from itself, developing its difference, dividing its nature, establishing novel tendencies for action, and realizing profoundly spontaneous potentials. Duration is difference, but a specific kind of difference. Duration is internal difference. When Deleuze asks, "What in effect is duration?" he replies, "Everything that Bergson says about duration always comes back to this: *duration is what differs from itself*."¹³¹ What were once merely external differences have become internal differences within the interiority of an absolute duration. What differs is no longer what differs from something else or other; a thing's nature is not defined by its difference from all that is exterior to it, but has become a product of how it differs from itself, from its own previous internal nature in duration. Duration, being in essence that which differs from itself, implies that it may leave nothing outside itself, that it has no externality, because that from which it differs is still a part of it: *That from which duration differs is duration itself*. Bergson's conception of duration with its internal difference, allows us to recognize substantial differences, based on the fact that a thing, person, being, substance, etc...differs from itself first and immediately. The ontological significance of these substantial differences means that becoming is given

¹³¹ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 48.

priority and being is what endures the changes of nature. Due to the constant alteration of a being or thing's nature, the internal difference is produced, and may be encountered by another being coming into relation with it. Because duration is internally responsive to itself, difference is manifested throughout its entirety, and each variation is felt, in every aspect, of every region, as an internal change of its essence or nature. This ensures that every durational being internally reflects every movement within absolute duration. A being in duration essentially depends for its existence upon its connectedness to the duration(s) surrounding it, not just those within its immediate vicinity, but, as well, those which are furthest away.

Internal difference, is the difference in nature that being produces, in virtue of being what it is becoming; by dividing itself into tendencies, differentiating its uniqueness in kind from its former state of being without separating itself from itself. Deleuze defines the notion of *internal difference* he locates in Bergson, saying, "...such is duration, defined as difference of nature in itself."¹³² The being of duration, then can be said to be that which has an internal principle of self-differentiation as its essence. Being devoid of duration would be static and permanent. Duration, then, is the time through which beings become, and without which, they could not alter from themselves. Despite the fact that duration is at times described as being 'divided', it is not, strictly speaking, divisible, if one means by 'divisible', broken up into pieces or parts mutually exclusive to one another. Duration is simple, continuous, indivisible and heterogeneous.

If duration differs from itself, that from which it differs is still duration, in a certain way. It is not a matter of dividing duration in the way the mixture was divided: duration is simple, indivisible, pure. It is a matter of something else: the simple does not divide itself, *it differentiates itself*. Self-differentiation is the very essence of the simple or the movement of difference.¹³³

¹³² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson's Conception of Difference*, p. 61.

¹³³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson's Conception of Difference*, p. 49.

Duration is indivisible in the sense that its internal relations are destroyed when they are externalized from their counter-parts; duration maintains a continuously differing set of relations amidst the elements that make it up, that are essential to what kind of being it is. Duration is always different in kind at every moment of its division or differentiation; its principle of differentiation makes it so that it can never be divided in the same way. Each time it is divided it becomes different in kind. To clarify, the word 'divided', used here, must not be understood to refer to a spatial division. Instead, 'divided' refers to a non-spatial division that is an internal and qualitative differentiation of being itself, which is the movement of difference in-itself. What is virtual comes to insert itself in the real, by this process of actualization, which is set in motion by self-differentiation. It is through the differences differentiated within duration that the being of the past becomes actualized in the present. Deleuze says, "...virtuality exists in such a way that it realizes itself in dissociating itself, in such a way that it is forced to dissociate itself in order to realize itself. Self-differentiation is the movement of a virtuality which actualizes itself."¹³⁴ The movement of the virtual differentiates itself and by this process actualizes a novel present.

The importance of duration's power of self-differentiation, according to Deleuze, is in its ability, when questioned, to lead us to a "pure concept of internal difference."¹³⁵ Bergson's notion of differentiation, Deleuze states, "posits at once the simplicity of virtuality, the divergence of the series in which it realizes itself and the resemblance of certain fundamental results that it produces in these series."¹³⁶ The simplicity of the virtual consists in that it is the being of the past, which is present as a simple, indivisible, whole. The virtual is differentiated into many different qualitatively distinct elements on different coexistent planes of the past, which are different series of past moments that interpenetrate,

¹³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 51.

¹³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 50.

¹³⁶ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 51.

and respond to one another. These divergent series are what enable difference to be realized; it is the differences between the series that tend to actualize themselves, not their resemblances. Bergson, however, does acknowledge the similarity of the results these divergent series produce, in terms of evolution. By two entirely different means, two separate evolutionary lineages may, in fact, reach a point where they obtain the same results, such as, certain anatomical structures, which resemble one another.

The notion of virtual self-differentiation within duration is really a matter of the function of memory; memory is the consciousness of difference, and it is only in humans that difference becomes conscious of itself. It is our capacity to remember that enables us to become conscious of the difference in things and formulate a concept that is tailored to these differences in the object. It is memory, for Deleuze, that “must finally give us the nature of the pure concept.”¹³⁷

Pure memory or the virtual is what gives us the pure concept of difference because it envelops all the degrees of difference within the internal variations of its coexisting degrees of contraction-expansion. The coexistence of the past under its various nuances is what brings the virtual and its plenum of difference to bear upon the actual present. The virtual, then, is the pure concept of difference because it encompasses all the degrees and intensities of difference in the concept. “Thus we can see how the virtual becomes the pure concept of difference, and what such a concept can be: such a concept is the possible coexistence of degrees or nuances.”¹³⁸ The virtual is the concept of all concepts, for Deleuze; it is what allows us to formulate a pure concept of difference in-itself.

¹³⁷ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 52.

¹³⁸ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 55.

Memory is what gives the virtual an objective consistency because memories are what enable the virtual to be internally differentiated, so as to produce and actualize objects whose reason is found in the concept. "The meaning of memory is to give the virtuality of duration itself an objective consistency which makes it a concrete universal, which enables it to realize itself."¹³⁹ The virtuality of duration becomes a concrete universal because it is given an objective consistency by memory. Memory grounds the virtual as the condition of real experience, by enabling the realization of the latent differences in the being of the past, thus making the virtual an active force, exerted within the actual present. A concrete universal is not an abstract or general concept that subsumes particulars brought under it as instantiations. The concrete universal is a convergence into a singular point of all the degrees of difference, and the different qualities that are its actualizations are defined by the internal variance within itself. The virtual as the pure concept of difference is a concrete universal, in that the concept of the conception of difference that the virtual entails defines things as the nuances or degrees internal to the concept itself. Deleuze's notion of internal difference is this unity between the concept¹⁴⁰ and the object: "Just as things have become the nuances or degrees of the concept, the concept itself has become the thing"¹⁴¹, in fact, he says, "the concept is identical to the thing itself."¹⁴² All things participate in the concept of difference as a concrete universal, and the individual and unique differences that define the being in-itself of these actualizations are realized through the internal relations differentiated in the virtual. The difference of the thing in itself, in Deleuze's account, is now the internal

¹³⁹ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 55.

¹⁴⁰ In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze presents a thorough account of the concept. In his view, concepts essentially belong to philosophy; they populate its domain. Concepts are heterogeneous multiplicities whose components are rendered inseparable from one another. Concepts are always connected with other concepts and only have meaning because they are created in relation to a problem. Deleuze says, "Concepts are created as a function of problems..." p. 16. Concepts are relative to their components, to the other concepts they are related to, to the plane they are actualized in, and to the problem they are made to address. Deleuze says, "the concept is act of thought" p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 54.

¹⁴² Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 54.

difference immanent to the concept. Deleuze reminds us of the incredible effort required for us to arrive at a purely internal difference and a pure concept of difference. He says,

We had to renounce thinking in space: the spatial distinction 'comprises no degrees' in effect. We had to substitute temporal differences for spatial ones. The specificity of temporal difference is to make the concept into a concrete thing, because things are so many nuances or degrees which present themselves at the heart of the concept. It is in this sense that Bergson has placed difference, and with it the concept, in time.¹⁴³

Deleuze emphasizes the abandonment of the spatial distinction of 'differences of degree' and the replacement of them with the temporal 'differences of kind', which in turn led to the 'degrees of difference', included in the internal difference of the thing itself and its concept. It is Bergson's prioritization of temporality, which relieves the concept and difference from its static and spatial limits.

Recollection is difference, according to Bergson, just as perception is resemblance; all one sees are resemblances and all one remembers are differences. The purest recollection, that is, the furthest plane detached from the present, the most unconscious dream-memory, would be the closest approximation to pure difference. The dreamer's dream is filled with nothing but particular differences, admitting no resemblance at all between them; he or she just continuously experiences the transition from difference to difference. Although resemblance is introduced into recollection as they approach the needs of the present, recollection is also that which "introduces difference into the present". In other words, recollection "carries difference" by constituting each moment that follows the present, as something new. Memory is thus a function of the future, for Bergson, because the present is remembered as it passes into the future, which it anticipates, based on a past that never repeats. Deleuze says, "In this way the word 'difference' designates both *the particular that is* and *the new which is made*."¹⁴⁴ This means that although the past is reproduced in the

¹⁴³ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 54.

¹⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 56.

present and contemporaneous with it, its passage, however, depends upon the expectation that the future will repeat the past and the actual failure of the future to comply with the prior anticipation of it. It is the difference that prevents the past from repeating, that is the future; novelty is the future. The memory of the present is so profound because it prolongs itself into the future and finds the future does not conform to it, meaning that it contrasts and differentiates the novelty of the future from the former present, by the difference between the two. Only beings with the capacity to remember could have the power to deviate from the past and create something novel because they are the only ones endowed with the ability to become conscious of this difference and the power to reproduce it.

It has already been said that difference is the tendency of duration, and repetition is the tendency of matter, and that there are an infinite number of degrees between matter and duration. Both, however, may be defined in terms of the virtual; matter is the relaxation of the moments that memory has contracted into the tension of duration that defines it. The contraction of moments through memory is what defines duration, and the changes of contraction and the moments within it are what make duration internally variant and different from itself. In fact, memory and the contraction of duration are what make a repetition of the identical impossible because, by enveloping different moments, it holds them in tension and makes itself different in kind. These differences in kind that are produced by the change in the internal tension of duration, effected by the various contractions of memory, are what make the novelty of the present actual. Contraction-memory “designates difference, because in its essence it makes repetition impossible, because it has destroyed the very condition of any possible repetition. In this sense, difference is the new, novelty itself.”¹⁴⁵ Novelty or pure difference would not be possible if consciousness could repeat the Same and the Identical. Difference makes this impossible. The evolution of life presupposes that

¹⁴⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, p. 56-57.

difference constantly overcomes the tendency of the eternal repetition of the Same, and that there are singular novelties that arise is a fact. Because the contractions of memory always retain and reconstitute the past in the passing movement of time within duration, difference is compounded, making the immediate present new. The new is reproduced by the inter-relations of the past(s), which are repeated differently by the various integrated contractions of memory and habit. Difference is bound to eternally return¹⁴⁶, because it is of its essence beyond itself, which ensures the renewal of the present, as well as, the pure differences disclosed within. The Same or the Identical would have no chance in surviving the eternal return; no returning would be possible, no repetition would be necessary, without the incentive to move beyond itself. If we are to retain an idea of repetition, beyond the scope of the Same, it is one which must be seen as the relating of difference to difference, one that is used to explain the intra-cyclical movements of the forces of difference. Repetition may then become a power for relating differences to differences and therefore further differentiating difference, in order to produce novelties that show difference differing.

Deleuze compares Bergson's account of repetition to Hume's account of repetition pointing out the resemblance between them. The repetition of similar cases, for Hume, does not result in anything new in the object, but rather, what is new is produced in the mind or spirit, which contemplates these instances together. The difference is made in the spirit,

¹⁴⁶ The doctrine of 'eternal return', proposed by Friedrich Nietzsche, is a central notion to his philosophy. Primarily, a doctrine of temporality, 'eternal return' was also attributed, physical, ontological, and ethical significance. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the 'eternal return' was proclaimed as man's most profound thought; it was the thought Nietzsche believed could affect the transmutation of man and the metamorphosis of the soul, in the direction of a re-valuation of humanness, i.e. the 'overman'. In Nietzsche's post humously published notes, entitled *The Will To Power*, he states, in regards to the understanding of eternal return, that we must suppose the world, "to be capable of the divine power of creation, the power of infinite transformations; it is supposed to possess not only the intention but the means of avoiding repetition..." Sect. 1062, p. 546. The passage suggests that Nietzsche did not intend for the eternal return to be interpreted as a 'repetition of the same'. This may be the most common misconception taken from Nietzsche's writings. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze attempts to rectify this misunderstanding, by presenting a convincing case that Nietzsche's philosophy is more consistent if we adopt the alternative interpretation, namely that 'eternal return' means the 'repetition of difference' (p. 48). Deleuze's view is that "we can only understand the eternal return as the expression of a principle which serves as an explanation of diversity and its reproduction, of difference and its repetition." (p. 49.)

which forms an expectation upon the contemplation of repeated instances as a function of a habit it has formed, as a result of the repetition it has witnessed. Deleuze makes the new a product of the contractions of the spirit: "...[T]he new that is produced is nothing in the objects but a 'fusion', an 'interpenetration', an 'organization' in the spirit which contemplates them, a conservation of what precedes which has not disappeared when the next thing appears, in short, a contraction which occurs in the spirit."¹⁴⁷ It is the contractions of memory within the spirit which produce the new and give rise to difference. The spirit, for Deleuze, is essentially composed of many psychic and organic syntheses, which are contractions of habit and memory that through contemplation make difference unfurl the past, spreading it out into the future, becoming actual.

Repetition is a kind of difference, and difference is a kind of repetition. Deleuze attributes this view to Bergson, when he says, "...Bergson makes an effort to show us that difference is still a repetition, and repetition already a difference."¹⁴⁸ How is repetition a difference? What kind of repetition is it that is already difference?

If repetition is interpreted as a series of identical cases with the same elements, then one instance appears, while the former instance has disappeared or faded into the past. These moments that are repeated are not drawn together, but rather remain mutually exclusive, as separate instances. We can see how the difference would be reduced to nothing, if these instances were not held together by some power of the mind. The difference of repetition would be merely a matter of different instances or cases, which follow one another, but have no ties between them. This seems quite empty and meaningless because the difference described here exists only within the interval between two identical instances, which is reducible to no substantial difference at all. Although there still may exist some superficial

¹⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 57.

¹⁴⁸ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 57.

difference in this bare repetition, it could thus only be an external difference, a difference that is exterior and indifferent to itself, a difference inferior to the internal difference of a being in duration.

In another light, Deleuze's statement regarding the embedded nature of difference and repetition makes more sense if repetition is interpreted in its connection with duration, as being the internal contractions of habit and memory within the spirit. Repetition, then, becomes the productive force continually causing difference to return. Deleuze defines repetition, in *Difference and Repetition*, as "the formless being of all differences, the formless power of the ground which carries every object to that extreme 'form' in which its representation comes undone."¹⁴⁹ Repetition, then, is the power by which the force of difference comes to undermine and de-center the form of a being and its identity in representation.

Now, difference is also a repetition, because contraction-memory creates difference by raising "to coexistence what otherwise was repeated". "In contraction, the repeated element coexists with itself, multiplies itself, we might say, retains itself."¹⁵⁰ The retention of past instances and their reproduction and coexistence with the present is what makes the difference out of repetition, drawing the new from that which is the same. Deleuze makes a significant observation in pointing out the two kinds of repetition implied in Bergson's account of matter and memory. A helpful distinction is made between 'material' and 'psychical' repetition. Material repetition is the contraction of the spirit, which fuses identical elements together. This contraction of memory brings out something new and different, as well as revealing all the degrees of this difference. Psychical repetition is the endless virtual repetition of our entire past life on an infinite number of planes, which coexist

¹⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 58.

with one another. Every act of the mind can be preformed or executed on the various strata of the virtual or pure memory, on the infinite number of stories the past is played out upon. We can see then that difference is a repetition because, first, it is a result of the contraction of repeated instances, and also, because this difference itself is infinitely varied in the psyche, in terms of all the nuances it may have and express.

Deleuze presents Bergsonian intuition as a method that produces the joy of difference: "Intuition is the *jouissance* of difference."¹⁵¹ It is important to emphasize that the pleasure is derived from the difference intuition makes in the process of its method, and not merely as a consequence of its completion. In Deleuze's words: "...it is not only the pleasure of the result of the method, it is the method itself."¹⁵² Why is intuition, according to Deleuze, the joy of difference? What joy does difference produce? If "...intuition presents itself as a method of difference or division..."¹⁵³, as Deleuze says, then how does it do so?

Is joy not the affect of the 'difference made' by intuition? The difference is real; it marks the novelty of the past liberated from the repetition of the same. Is it not fair to say that the role intuition plays in Bergson's philosophy is to differentiate real differences within the continuous and dynamic interplay of forces of actual experience? In other words, intuition's role is to articulate the sense in which every present opens a closed loop of the past and gives expression to a nuance of duration, never felt before. Consequently, this means that difference is everywhere we look. Life impulsively, of its very essence, manufactures difference everywhere it turns; every which way it may venture, it discovers the new.

¹⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference", p. 43.

¹⁵² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson's Conception of Difference*, p. 43.

¹⁵³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson's Conception of Difference*, p. 46.

Intuition, Deleuze says, “is not a unique act, it proposes to us a plurality of acts, a plurality of efforts and directions.”¹⁵⁴ It is not as if intuition were only capable of one single act, but rather, it functions through a number of different acts, efforts and directions. Intuition is a method through which duration is differentiated, through which differences of nature are distinguished, and must be capable of operating under many different methods of division. “Duration, as it is given to intuition, presents itself as capable of a thousand possible tensions, of an infinite diversity of relaxations and contractions.”¹⁵⁵ These many tensions within duration, defined by its relaxations and contractions, are the differences that intuition attempts to grasp by differentiation, according to its various methods of division.

Moreover, Deleuze also identifies two impulses of intuition. The first is the determination and distribution of differences of nature between things and their tendencies, a process of differentiation he calls “articulations of the real”. The second impulse of intuition is what Deleuze calls “lines of facts”, which are directions followed to the end; a plurality of directions, each of which expresses a distinct probability, and together converge in and integrate into, one and the same thing. One is a *differentiation*, and the other, an *integration*; the former is a method by which things are said to *diverge* from one another, that is, the way difference is distributed across being (to differentiate the differences among the natures of beings), and the latter, is the point at which all these directions within a thing converge, which defines the thing’s being in-itself and its internal difference.

In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze identifies three acts intuition performs in its method: “The first concerns the stating and creating of problems; the second, the discovery of genuine differences in kind; the third, the apprehension of real time.”¹⁵⁶ No one can deny the

¹⁵⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson’s Conception of Difference*, p. 43.

¹⁵⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson’s Conception of Difference*, p. 59.

¹⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 14.

importance of the first step in Bergson's intuitive philosophy: stating the problem as an initiation of inquiry. Philosophy is, for Bergson, first and foremost the invention of problems. By framing novel problems, one may avoid two sorts of false problems: those that do not exist, and those which are poorly, stated questions. Many common philosophical problems, held to be irresolvable and unavoidable, Bergson claims, will dissolve when put into terms of real duration. Problems, based on false dichotomies, are illusory. References to non-existent problems are plentiful throughout Bergson's texts. Bergson says that the philosophy of intuition is responsible for the disappearance of many false problems: "...[T]o the eyes of a philosophy that attempts to reabsorb intellect in intuition, many difficulties vanish or become light."¹⁵⁷ The terms used to state a problem usually imply a structural framework and a set of concepts that one must presuppose when attempting to find a solution to it. Most classic problems in philosophy have been laid out in such a way that they seem impenetrable, for example, freedom and determinism, but according to Bergson, this is just a product of the concepts used to state the problem. Therefore, if a problem is insoluble because of the way it is stated then the problem needs to be re-stated in different terms to break the deadlock. One could argue that the problem is not the same problem any longer after being converted into different terms. Many of these problems, which plague us and resist our best efforts to resolve them, for Bergson, when stated in terms of duration, cease to present us with such glaring and troublesome contradictions. False problems only appear so resilient because we have stated them in terms of space and not in terms of time. This is why the theory of duration is revolutionary for philosophy, because it creates the opportunity for old problems to be restated in terms of time, causing them to dissipate. In the same movement, the dissolution of these illusive problems clears the way for the invention of altogether new ones.

¹⁵⁷ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 270.

Now one may ask: How does the stating and creating of problems help us discover genuine differences in kind? Is it not because our intellectual and habitual understanding of experience commits a reduction of our experience to space (and thus limits the differences therein to mere differences of degree), that the problematization of this understanding may not only expose its limits, but also lead to the differentiation and apprehension of real differences in kind. Problematizing the forms of the understanding is necessary for the discovery of real difference, because as human beings we tend for the most part to cover over difference, by reproducing and reusing the same forms of understanding through which to grasp the world. The problem is that these forms originated from difference and became solidified through the passage of time, but also must have been, and continue to be, reconstituted in their interaction and contact with difference. What this means is that the forms of the understanding must be brought back to the affirmation of their evolution. In other words, the concept must be re-synthesized with the movement of time.

Generally speaking, the problem defines the scope of analysis; it structures inquiry and initiates new forms of immediate apprehension. Intuition is above all the method devised by Bergson for the production of difference and the creation of the new. Intuition's functions are: problematizing, differentiating, and temporalizing.¹⁵⁸ Problematization is only the beginning.¹⁵⁹ It conditions the method of differentiation or division of virtual tendencies, which are the expressions of a thing's internal nature. Further, the temporalizing aspect is a process whereby we apprehend the relationship and proportions between the divergent tendencies a thing has, between the differences each produces, and how the thing develops as

¹⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ The problem plays a major role in *Difference and Repetition*; it functions by opening up a differential field, whereby the intensities of difference may be felt. Problems, also, draw each of the faculties beyond their limit, and thus, force them to their transcendental exercise. The sign is a problem for consciousness, which transforms sensibility, and sets thinking, involuntarily, into motion through the idea. Even consciousness itself is linked to a problematization in Bergson's account, as we have presented in chapter three. Consciousness arises always in relation to a problem of action, which is coextensive with a hesitation or involuntary pause (making the time in which to think).

a result throughout duration. Temporalization is the apprehension of real duration, which is when the differences, that are usually experienced as irregularities, come to perpetuate a production of the new that is continuously grounded in a “thinking” sensibility. The efforts of intuition are spent in the restoration of consciousness to real duration, which, through its method, works on releasing sensibility from the constrictions of the generalized concept (and the legislative understanding), allowing sense to trans-mutate along with the sinuosities of life. Difference then presses each faculty toward necessary adaptation, and intuition eventually elevates this difference to the level of thought, through the invention of a genuinely unique and “fitted” concept. Thought then is not reproducible. It is not a “re-presentation”. On the contrary, the reproduction of the past, carried out by memory, manifests difference in thought, thereby propelling what is called “thinking”. Thinking relies on the differential field of the problem-idea and would not be possible otherwise; in so far as it is defined as a transcendental exercise, it could not be possible without the difference which spurs it to confront its incapability to think. “Beyond” is what ‘transcendental exercise of a faculty’ means; thus, consciousness is thinking only when thought becomes transcendental, when cognition reaches beyond its own limits. One is not yet thinking because thought is passive and awaits the forces which will propel its becoming-active.¹⁶⁰ If a thinking of pure difference is possible, if consciousness can reunify itself with the temporal flow of duration, it is only by way of a thorough critique, which is one that problematizes the idea of “experience in general” and questions the presupposition that the reproductive synthesis of memory will re-found the same transcendental categories over and over again. It is rather a return to the ground to question the nature of the transcendental conditions of experience, which is necessitated by the project of a true critique. If a new sensibility could provide access to the immediate apprehension of the intensive qualities of experience in

¹⁶⁰ This theme of thought becoming an active force is present within Deleuze’s writings on Nietzsche, and especially in the chapter on Critique, in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Deleuze’s account of thought also refers back to Heidegger’s book, *What Is Called Thinking?* Wherein Heidegger says in the first few pages that, “Most thought provoking is that we are still not thinking.”

duration, it is only through Deleuze's theory of sensation and his notion of "signs" that such a sensibility could be reached. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

*Transcendental Empiricism:
The New Image of Thought*

* * *

The challenge of this chapter will be to determine both how Deleuze develops his Bergsonian roots and what Bergson's concepts of difference, repetition, and method of intuition accomplish. We must ask what Deleuze contributes to Bergson and how he extends Bergson's critical project. One of the most striking examples of Deleuze's appropriation of a Bergsonian idea is his development of *transcendental empiricism* from *intuitionism*. The three steps Deleuze identifies in Bergson's method of intuition (that is, problematization, differentiation, and temporalization) are actively present within Deleuze's attack on the postulates of what he describes as the "dogmatic image of thought". The chapter's focus will center on a few of the presuppositions of the dogmatic image of thought Deleuze identifies in *Difference and Repetition*, namely, common sense, recognition, representation, and knowledge. It can be maintained that Deleuze, through his exposition of a new sensibility of signs, a notion of intensive difference, and an account of problem-ideas, continues Bergson's critical project aimed at dismantling representation, as well as extrapolating an alternative image of thought. The movement of Deleuze's critical project, which is inseparable from his transcendental empiricism was mobilized and initiated by his interpretation of Bergson's philosophical legacy. In fact, what Deleuze enacts in relation to Bergson's philosophy is its own method of intuition. In other words, Deleuze invents the concepts necessary to describe thought under this new image, which restores thought to duration, whereas Bergson really only determined the method itself, without truly being capable of executing the return to duration. Deleuze thus exposes the many implications for thought and knowledge that this new method of philosophy entails. The position Deleuze takes in regards to Kant is a kind of hybrid between a modified Kantianism and Bergsonism. It will be shown how Bergson's

critical philosophy is brought to bear upon Kant's critical philosophy, and most importantly, how Deleuze uses Bergsonism to return to the transcendental project. Deleuze finds, in Bergson's philosophy, a superior empiricism that he uses in radically recasting the Kantian transcendental philosophy, relieving it from its vestiges of transcendence in order to return to the immanent, genetic conditions, constitutive of experience.

The intimate connection between transcendental empiricism and Bergson's method of intuitionism has been noted before. Constantin V. Boundas, in his paper entitled, "Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual", says, "Deleuze's transcendental empiricism seems to be patterned after Bergson's intuition."¹⁶¹ He also claims that if Bergson's intuition is interpreted as a method of division according to tendencies or according to real differences, then "...Bergson's intuition is identical with Deleuze's transcendental empiricism."¹⁶² There is no doubt that Deleuze interprets Bergson's intuitive method as a division of tendencies because he says exactly this: "...[I]ntuition presents itself as a method of difference or division: that of dividing the mixture into two tendencies."¹⁶³ Deleuze's elaboration of transcendental empiricism follows in the same vein as Bergson's intuitionism, although it goes further in certain respects. Transcendental empiricism incorporates a theory of sensation, a free and unregulated view of the faculties, a critique of conceptual difference, while assigning problem-ideas a central role in allowing thought to think the forces of the outside. Deleuze dives deep into the meaning of what a new image of thought and a new sensibility would be for a being capable of sensing and thinking duration, which was already implicit within Bergson's writings.

¹⁶¹ Constantin V. Boundas, "Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual", *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, p. 87.

¹⁶² Constantin V. Boundas, "Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual", *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, p. 87.

¹⁶³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergson's Conception of Difference*, p. 46.

What is transcendental empiricism? Why does Deleuze consider the 'transcendental'? The reason is due to Deleuze's concern for the discovery of 'necessary conditions'. Deleuze is not concerned, however, like Kant, with the 'necessary conditions' for the 'possibility of experience', which is the motivational force behind 'transcendental idealism'. Accordingly, Deleuze calls his position an 'empiricism' because his search aims to uncover the 'necessary conditions' for the 'actuality of real experience', that is, transcendental empiricism.

Transcendental empiricism "...allows experience to act as a transcendental principle: a principle that does not set itself up outside the given in some grand position of detached judgment."¹⁶⁴ In other words, given experience is not grounded in a transcendental subject, existing prior to and resting outside of experience. The transcendental subject, for Kant, is that which grounds experience, but is not itself grounded in experience. In other words, Kant's transcendental subjectivity is prior to experience; it judges experience from outside the given because it is that which makes experience possible. However, the transcendental subject has an empirical double that appears to it just as its representations of objects in the world do. The empirical subject, then, has only a phenomenal existence made possible by its transcendental counterpart. There is, however, a hiatus between the two halves of the Kantian subject; this splitting of the subject is responsible for the alienation of both the I and the ego from one another. The "I is another", because it can never recognize itself in the identity of the empirical representation it has of itself.¹⁶⁵ We can also see how the Kantian subject, along with its transcendental principles, is made to transcend the empirical reality of experience, in his formulation of time as the pure form of intuition, which is made to define the interiority of the subject. Although Kant's account of time was quite revolutionary for

¹⁶⁴ Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, p. 88.

¹⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. viii-ix.

the reversal of the movement-time relationship it enacted¹⁶⁶, it resulted in making time internal to the subject, which meant that the empirical subject was represented in time, while the transcendental subject which made this time-determination possible, remained outside of it. How could it be that the subject transcends time, while constituting it internally? One can see what Bergson brings to Kant, in that Bergson's virtual-image is outside consciousness and still in time, implying that time is not only internal to consciousness. While Bergson, like Kant, also maintains that time is primary within consciousness, he adds to this that time is beyond the subject as well. Deleuze credits Bergson with this contribution, which can be summed up as such: "Time is not the interior in us, but just the opposite, the interiority in which we are, in which we move, live and change."¹⁶⁷ According to Deleuze, it is, "we", then, who are internal to time, not the other way around. In a sense, this statement is really not all that different from Kant's formulation of time as interiority, because time still is the form of interiority: it is just that time is much broader than the interiority of the subject. Obviously, Kant and Bergson have a very different view of the nature and function of time as a form of interiority. One could say, then, that Bergson affirms the time interior to the subject that is relative to its processes, its internal relations, and the tension within the durations of which it is composed. On the other hand, Bergson also expands his notion of the interiority of time to include the subject with its relative duration, encompassing it within absolute duration. This means that Bergson, within his philosophical account of time as duration, eliminates the possibility of a subject that transcends time. Concurrently, Bergson not only makes duration immanent to the subject and consciousness, but also makes the duration of the subject immanent to duration as a whole.

¹⁶⁶ Deleuze says that time is no longer related to the movement it measures, but rather, "movement is related to the time which conditions it." In *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. vii.

¹⁶⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, p. 82.

Furthermore, transcendental empiricism is a philosophy committed to immanence; it finds the conditions of actual experience within experience itself, just like the method of intuition for Bergson, which reveals the virtual conditions of real experience in the actual present, not having to appeal to anything beyond experience to explain it. One must look no further than the conditioned, because the transcendental conditions for actual experience are empirically given to the senses immediately. The unique empiricism to which Deleuze subscribes is concerned with the concrete richness of the sensible. Like every form of 'empiricism', Deleuze's version entails a prioritization of the concrete and 'givenness' of experience; however, Deleuze sets his empiricism apart from the others by maintaining that the *a priori* conditions of experience are themselves *a posteriori*,¹⁶⁸ meaning, the *a priori* conditions of experience are given in experience, along with it, not prior to it. In so far as experience for Deleuze is composed of uniquely constituted conglomerations of forces in differential relations with one another, there is never a repeatable instant in reality. No condition of experience is then applicable beyond that which it conditions, or beyond that singular moment to which it applies. There is no way to extract the general form of the condition from what it conditions, and thus, it does not make sense to say that the conditions of experience exist prior to what they condition. In fact, the condition and the conditioned come into existence together and are bound to one another; each responds to the changes in the other, without any resemblance being present between them.

There is a major difference here between Kant and Deleuze regarding the kind of transcendentals which each claims condition experience. The Kantian transcendentals condition the possibility of experience; that is, they make experience possible. In contrast, the Deleuzian transcendentals condition actual experience; that is, they do not merely make experience possible; they rather actualize experience. The nature of the transcendentals to

¹⁶⁸ Bruce Baugh makes a similar claim in a paper entitled, "Transcendental Empiricism: Deleuze's response to Hegel", *Man and World*, p. 140. Deleuze also says this in *Foucault*, pp. 56, 59, 60.

which Deleuze ascribes are virtual forces and tendencies that constantly develop a differential set of relations and constitute real differences within the actualizations they manifest. The difference is between the two distinctions: the possible/real distinction¹⁶⁹ and the virtual/actual distinction.

Contrasted with the possible and the real, the advantages of the virtual-actual distinction become clear. "The virtual is real without being actual, and ideal without being abstract"¹⁷⁰, is Marcel Proust's famous formula. The virtual is the being of the past, which is always present as a whole, that is, a contraction of the entire past; and it is for this reason that it is real. The present is an actualization of the virtual past; the past is really in the present. The virtual cannot lack any reality because it does not come to exist, but rather has always existed; it is eternal. At the same time as the virtual is real, it is not actual because it pre-exists the becoming of the present; no present could actualize the whole pure being of the past because it is differential in nature. It always internally differentiates itself producing a difference, which is actualized as the novel present. The virtual, thus actualizes, but is not itself ever wholly actualized; it is continually becoming actual and for this reason could not cease to do so. In other words, the virtual is inexhaustible. On the other hand, the possible is just the opposite; it is actual without being real. The possible lacks existence and therefore becomes realized by passing into existence; it is thus held to be an actual possibility prior to its reality. One conceives of all sorts of possibilities, all of which are actual possibilities in virtue of actually being conjured or imagined in the mind. Just because one may have the idea of something, which is actually possible, does not mean one knows how to realize it or how to bring this possibility into existence. What this means in terms of transcendental philosophy is that when the conditions of experience are conceived as the conditions for the

¹⁶⁹ Bergson devotes considerable time and care to a discussion of the relationship between the possible and real, and how the distinction leads to a retrograde movement of the true. See *The Creative Mind*, 'Introduction I', p. 22 and the essay entitled 'The Possible and The Real', pp. 91-106.

¹⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 208.

possibility of experience, they are not real, but rather are abstract and general. Intuitive experience makes evident that reality is not abstract and general. It is then a problem how these conditions for the possibility of experience actually condition real experience, when real experience is empirically given, concrete and particular. How does something, which is beyond experience, and that lacks real empirical existence, come to condition real experience? This is a fundamental question which confronts the Kantian project, based on Bergson and Deleuze's refutation of the possible. In fact, the possible is only conceived retrospectively, that is, after it is realized,¹⁷¹ implying, then, that the conditions for the possibility of experience could only be derived from what was given in experience and not *a priori*. This is the route first Bergson, and then Deleuze following him, travel: by making the transcendental conditions virtual, instead of possible, they become immanent to what is empirically given in actual experience. The problem of having to explain how something beyond experience can condition it, is thus avoided, because that which conditions experience is immanent to it. Actual experience, empirically given to our senses, goes beyond itself, by way of the virtual forces inherent within it. Bergson then provides a genetic account of experience, where the conditions of experience are no broader than what they actualize. In other words, the virtual conditions the actual, but does not apply to all experience or even to a number of situations; it applies only to that one actualization. After all, the conditioning tendencies of the virtual are themselves changing, becoming different as the past accumulatively swells with its perpetual incorporations of the new presents it produces. It is important to realize another advantage the virtual and actual relationship has over the possible and real relationship. As we have said, the possible must resemble the real, whereas the virtual does not resemble what it actualizes. The virtual then can condition its

¹⁷¹ The possible resembles the real, not the other way around, which is often supposed to be the case. The real does not resemble the possible, because the possible is only a projection into the past of what has already been realized. Thus the possible does not ground, bring into existence, or anticipate reality, it is rather a way we make sense of what is real after it has already happened, while also making the events appear as if they could have happened otherwise than the way they did. The possible is abstracted from the real after it is already made; it cannot therefore, explain how the real came to be. Deleuze discusses this point in *Bergsonism* pp. 97-98.

empirical actualizations, while being entirely different from them at the same time. It makes sense to say that in many cases the forces that produce an effect are not themselves like the effect they produce.

Deleuze's empiricism, which he calls 'superior'¹⁷² or 'radical' is dominant because it does not adhere to any form of transcendence, but appeals to what is empirically given to find its transcendental conditions, which force it beyond itself—to become different. Another of Deleuze's commentators expresses it this way: "...[P]hilosophy becomes truly experimental or attains its 'radical empiricism' only when it dissipates the illusion of transcendence in all its variants—only then does it free itself from the 'dogmatic image of thought'."¹⁷³ The dogmatic image of thought impedes the returning of philosophy to a radical empiricism because it abstracts knowledge and thought from what is immanent to experience. Transcendental idealism has one appeal to what is beyond experience to establish knowledge and thought, but which at the same time makes the difference immanent to experience; that is, empirical actuality, unknowable. If the radical or superior empiricism of Deleuze is a matter of dispelling the various illusions of transcendence, then what are these illusions?

The shackles of representation are what mediate experience through four criteria, each of which presupposes a notion of transcendence. These criteria of representation are identity, resemblance, analogy, and opposition. For an identity to be sustained throughout time, it must be supposed to maintain a form, which transcends the changes of the material world. Whether the identity is the self, the soul, the unity of the subject, or the identity of the object, or the form of the general concept, identity as a principle of representation presupposes a static and transcendent form beyond its content. Resemblance also

¹⁷² Deleuze discusses his superior empiricism in *Difference and Repetition*, on p. 57.

¹⁷³ John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, p. 35.

presupposes general forms or qualities, which can be compared and established as similar between their different instantiations. This enables the formulation of generic categories, which can be used to judge things as exhibiting the same qualities, features, properties, etc... The static identity of a thing is sustained throughout time by establishing the resemblance of a thing at one time with itself at another. Saying that two of anything are analogous does not imply a resemblance in quality, but a similarity in order, structure, or meaning. But still a general order or meaning must be extracted from a situation and applied to another, and this is only possible if the schematic context can be made to transcend its actual circumstance. For example, when we say that two different circumstances should be dealt with analogously, we mean that despite their differences, they can be judged in the same way or the same meaning may be derived from each. Opposition also involves transcendence, because in order for two things to be opposed there must be a positive term and a negation of it, which is its opposite, but nowhere can we find a thing which has the negation of some property. Negation itself is thus beyond experience; it does not exist and cannot, in virtue of being negative. Opposition relies on a transcendent notion of negation.

These criteria of representation all have in common a notion of transcendence, formulated by drawing the abstract and general forms of experience from experience to make them universally applicable. This is a tendency of the understanding to comprehend and grasp the world, its objects, and one's experiences according to certain general principles, relations, categories, concepts, and forms, so as to found an objective and universal knowledge. This tendency is what subordinates difference to the similar, and duration to space.

Nevertheless, the 'superior empiricism' that Deleuze locates in Bergson does not go from general forms to things or general concepts to representations, it "goes from things to

“tailor-made” concepts, molded upon the supple forms of intuition...”¹⁷⁴ This is the Bergsonian revolution to which Deleuze subscribes, whereby things shape one’s malleable intuitions, which one then uses to generate concepts to fit their particular difference. Of course, these concepts continually need to be revised throughout duration, no matter what their object, because the proliferation of empirical differences in one’s actual experience constantly make one’s concepts obsolete, and strictly speaking, inapplicable to any moment other than the one to which they originally applied.¹⁷⁵

Due to Deleuze’s appraisal of Bergson’s structural transformation of the transcendental conditions, making them into the virtual conditions of actual experience, there are certain problems with representation that become apparent, at least in so far as representation was founded on the basis of the Kantian transcendental conditions for the possibility of experience. The whole problem with representation is that it cannot affirm the difference and novelty in the actuality of the passing present or the fluidity of the concept; it relies on immobility and misconceives the forces of the living. If Kant’s representationalism can be said to entail an ontology at all, it is definitely not an ontology of becoming; the image of representation presupposes a knowledge, which is eternally the same, and thus cannot, by any means, account for its own generation or evolution. This is important because both Deleuze and Bergson push the transcendental project in this direction—to explain the genesis of the conditions of experience, to give a genetic account of how they came to be the way they are, and by what process they actually become continually different and new.

Deleuze’s critique of representation is a continuation of the limits of representation that Bergson exposes. The whole purpose of *Time and Free Will* goes to show that time

¹⁷⁴ Eric Alliez, “On Deleuze’s Bergsonism”, *Discourse*, p. 238.

¹⁷⁵ In the Preface to *Difference and Repetition*, p.xx, Deleuze says that the empiricist is the only one who could say that concepts are like things, and continually destroy and remake concepts to differentiate the untamed, wild differences of the thing in becoming.

itself is other than its representation. Representation is thus criticized for being an inadequate form of knowing duration, because duration cannot be re-presented without its form being changed in the process. Bergson holds duration to be pre-representative, and by being represented, its nature undergoes a distortion. The essential attributes of duration are reduced to spatial characteristics, in virtue of being subjected to representation. Even more to the point is Bergson's claim that duration is the time of consciousness, and representation is responsible for the misleading portrayal of conscious events as static states. There can be no doubt that Bergson dedicated much of his philosophical efforts to the critique of representation, and that his theory of duration, his account of memory and the *élan vital*, all contain efforts to establish an alternative to the representational view of cognition. *Matter and Memory* also can be interpreted as a critique of representation in that Bergson attempts to undercut representation with his neutral and common sense conception of the image as a mobile section of duration. The image is supposed to be neutral and intermediate because it lies between the representation and the thing-in-itself. Representation is the medium of the idealist; it is with what he or she has to work. The image is supposed to avoid the pitfalls of idealism by not being subject to the principle of identity and resemblance that representation presupposes, which convert the image into an immobile and self-same re-presentation. Instead, the image is posited as a dynamic free flowing multiplicity and is not conceived as having anything on the other side of itself, like a noumenal essence of the object. *Creative Evolution* goes to the root of the problem of representation by identifying the tendency of the intellect to spatialize experience, and by exposing the method and the tools that the intellect uses to form these spatial representations of the world, which are blind to the vital forces of the living. Bergson attempts to compensate for the limitations these intellectual tendencies impose upon our ability to comprehend time, life and evolution, by developing intuition as an alternative. Intuition can grasp mobility, continuity, difference, and the fluid forces of life; it can consciously do what instinct does unconsciously, and what the intellect cannot do at all.

What thought would look like under Bergson's intuition is much like the new image of thought presented and described by Deleuze from the transcendental empiricist view. The thinking of duration would mean that thought would have to give up its attachment to representation, and become the continual movement, transition and flight that stays true to difference in-itself, by showing it differing. First, it is necessary to deconstruct and analyze the main criticisms Deleuze makes of representation, before the alternative is elaborated.

Deleuze's critique of representation makes two main claims: first, that representation inhibits the thinking of difference in-itself, and second, that repetition as the productive power of difference, is, strictly speaking, omitted from the representationalist image of thought. Accordingly, both difference and repetition are misrepresented, and strictly speaking unthought, under the representational image of thought. Both these claims will be examined separately to pinpoint why representation does not allow for either the difference or repetition that Deleuze requires for his Bergsonian-based ontology and his new image of thought.

It is impossible to think the difference inherent within experience, under the traditional or dogmatic image of thought, which subjects it to the representationalist model. Deleuze says, "Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference."¹⁷⁶ It is the four criteria of representation that block the thinking of difference. The four criteria are identity, resemblance, opposition and analogy, and under these criteria of representation, Deleuze claims, "...difference remains subordinated to identity, reduced to the negative, incarcerated within similitude and analogy."¹⁷⁷ We cannot think difference in-itself because the four criteria of representation subordinate difference to the similar; they make the possibility of the appearance of difference so limited that difference can only have a very

¹⁷⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 55.

¹⁷⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 50.

restricted effect on thought. In fact, only one kind of difference is allowed to enter thought, and that is conceptual difference, which is not real difference.

Conceptual differences are not the same as real differences; there is a difference between the two that defines the being of the sensible. The concept is responsible for determining the possibility of repeatable experiences in terms of their identical form, and thus, merely determines equivalence among actualizations. The sensible, on the other hand, may be defined as the actuality of any given experience, whereby these actualities have a real difference between them, and for this reason are non-repeatable. The sensible as the reality of actualization is outside the concept, because the concept brings all actualizations under the same form making them identical, whereas the sensible is the ground of the difference between actualizations. Deleuze defines the sensible as real difference, which is non-conceptual. From the standpoint of a conceptual knowledge that is based on universal *a priori* conditions, the empirical actuality is empty; it has no content that can be grasped or recognized in the concept and, for this reason, it cannot be known. Initially, Deleuze maintains that the concept is inadequate in expressing the difference of pure actuality that is real within the sensible. This is why difference is said to have no concept. The richness of the sensible far outstretches the bounds of the concept. For Deleuze, the concept is revitalized and restored with a new power when it is made to abandon general forms, and become specified to its one and only object or relation it is made to express.

Representation does not allow for a concept of difference that grasps non-conceptual difference, but only allows for conceptual difference to be thought, which is really no difference at all. It is the confusion between conceptual difference, which representation admits; and the concept of difference in-itself Deleuze develops, that characterizes the failure of representation. Deleuze writes, "...representation, therefore, suffers from the same

defect...that of confusing the concept of difference in itself with the inscription of difference in the identity of the concept in general..."¹⁷⁸ These are not the same, 'the inscription of difference in the identity of the concept in general', does not permit difference in-itself to enter thought, in fact, difference is reduced to the identical, in the identity of the concept in general. The determinations of the concept are repeatable and non-empirical; they are identical to one another as long as they are subsumed under the same general concept, thus conceptual difference permits only resemblance based on the universal nature of the concept.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, non-conceptual empirical differences, for Deleuze, are of utmost importance, to the thinking of difference, because they are the only real differences and are usually not permitted within thought. These real differences found in the sensible provide the conditions necessary for actual experience, immanent within the empirical.¹⁸⁰ These non-conceptual empirical differences are the transcendental conditions for actual experience, as well as the conditions for the invention of concepts and their application.¹⁸¹ Without difference, then, actual experience and the creation and application of novel concepts, would not be possible. This means that Deleuze's notion of internal difference, which he develops out of his reading of Bergson, depends for its realization on these non-conceptual empirical differences, because in order for the unity of the concept and thing to be fitted, the concept must be made responsive to the differences in the actuality of the object. The concept could not become sensitive and specific to the point of adapting its form to the differences in its object, if the genesis of the concept was not made possible already by these differences. Knowledge and thought would remain plagued by transcendence, attaining only an abstract and general form, ultimately unanchored to the real empirical nature of existence.

¹⁷⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 50.

¹⁷⁹ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: the Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁰ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: the Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 16.

¹⁸¹ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: the Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 7.

Representationalism does not allow for repetition to be thought; it does not view repetition as it really is and it does not understand repetition as the 'productive power of difference'.¹⁸² Repetition is not, for Deleuze, the successive instantiation of an original identity; it is not the repetition of identical individuations, equivalent with one another. The repetition admitted by representationalism is a bare repetition, a repetition which is stripped of its real internal differences, leaving it as an incessant production of self-same units. In the repetition that Deleuze affirms, however, there is always a difference found between its elements and components, after all for him, "Repetition is the displacement of difference and not the reappearance of the identical."¹⁸³ Difference, in fact, reproduces its own difference; again and again it repeats difference itself. Repetition is the motor or force of difference; it pushes it out and pronounces it. Deleuze is clearly committed to the view that repetition generates difference, and in fact that "difference inhabits repetition."¹⁸⁴ It is important that difference is not just recognized to reside between two instances repeated; but that repetition is, as well, understood to lie between two differences. Expounding this claim, Deleuze asks if the one implies the other, "Difference lies between two repetitions. Is this not also to say, conversely, that repetition lies between two differences, that it allows us to pass from one order of difference to another?"¹⁸⁵ Repetition, then, has a power not only to produce difference, but also to move from one plane of difference to another. Repetition is as Deleuze calls it the "differentiator of difference". Arguably, there is another link with Bergson's intuition here, according to Deleuze, because repetition functions to differentiate difference, which is the second step of Bergson's method. The repetition Deleuze invests with the power of difference, thus, must not be omitted from thought, if thought is to reabsorb difference in-itself, regenerate novelty, and reconnect with the pure empirical

¹⁸² Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: the Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 6.

¹⁸³ Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: the Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 76.

¹⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 76.

actuality of real experience. This power repetition retains, when granted its true intimacy with difference, will ensure that difference is recycled and that the faculties will be constantly brought to their transcendental limit.

Deleuze's transcendental empiricism challenges us to think outside the representationalist model; that is, to think in terms other than those of representation or space. The objective is to free thought from the image that representation imposes (that is, the immobile, static, spatial, discontinuous, and externalized). Transcendental empiricism reconfigures thought, so that it becomes a 'thought without image', which means the movement of thought itself is no longer subordinate to an image, pose or visual representation. The imageless thought that transcendental empiricism introduces is a thought which prioritizes temporality over spatiality, continuity over discontinuity, and mobility over immobility. This new image implies not just a new way of thinking; it also implies a new sensibility. Sensibility is transformed throughout time in relation to the signs that express its problem-ideas and profound effects are had on the internal functioning of the faculties that constitute thought.

Deleuze distinguishes two kinds of sensation. There are sensations that leave the mind tranquil, and then, there are those that make us think. The first kind are sensations in the Kantian sense, meaning they are synthesized into a representation by the harmonious accord of our faculties exercised on the same, identical object. One must note this is precisely the representational presupposition that Bergson undermines: that the identity of the object stays the same throughout time. With this said, let us continue. Recognition occurs because it is the same object that is seen, imagined, remembered, understood, and thought. Each faculty has its own given, meaning the data it gets presented with and works on, is different for each faculty because they each have the power to act on it differently.

Recognition, thus, presupposes 'common sense', which is an accord between the faculties, whereby each recognizes its unique given as identical with the others. One definition of common sense in recognition is as follows: "...[W]hen all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object."¹⁸⁶ We can infer from this quotation that the ideal of common sense, which Kant promoted, depends upon the identity of the subject as a unifying principle, to function as the ground that unifies the faculties, thus making their accord possible. The two poles of the dogmatic image of thought, according to Deleuze, are the subjective unity of the self and its faculties in common sense and the objective unity of the object, to which all the faculties refer in recognition.

This correlation between the objective unity of the object and the subjective unity of the self is what the Kantian epistemology of representation depends upon, and this is what Bergson and Deleuze were eager to problematize. Kant presupposes that the subject is a simple unity throughout time, thus allowing the subject to identify itself with itself as the same subject. It is the process of apperception that is necessary to the formation of a unity of representation. Through the transcendental unity of apperception necessary for the unification of representations, an objective unity is produced in the form of a representation, and a subjective unity is synthesized at the same time as a by-product of the process. For Bergson and Deleuze, both the subject and object differ from themselves first and immediately because that is what it means to be: to become different in nature, through the virtual tendencies of duration. This means that the subjective and objective unity to which Kant makes representation depend are impossible because neither can be unified with itself by being identical to its prior states. If Kant had been right and this was the way representation functioned, then time would have turned out to be meaningless and inconsequential because the only knowledge we would have had is the knowledge of things

¹⁸⁶ Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality", In *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton, p. 30.

that stayed identical throughout time. The conditions of our knowledge itself would have had to be consistent as well; therefore, we could not have retained the ability to adapt to the various contents with which they were confronted.

Bergson, with his account of memory and attention, and the effects of their involvement in the disclosure of the object, breaks down the unitary and self-same identity of the object. The object for Bergson is never the same as it was; it is becoming different, continuously, in so far as it endures. It is not just that the object is different in our perception of it, but it is different in and of itself. In so far as the object is revealed to us by the memory-images we use to recognize it in a perception image, it may come to disclose different qualities to us depending upon which memory-images are called upon to inform our perception of it. There is another sense in which the object is becoming different as well, that is, in-itself, in terms of its own internal nature, which is, constantly, being differentiated and divided by itself into real and novel tendencies.

The second kind are sensations that force us to think, which Deleuze refers to as “signs”. Signs are not objects of recognition, “they are no longer even recognizable as objects, but rather refer to sensible qualities or relations that are caught up in an unlimited becoming, a perpetual movement of contraries.”¹⁸⁷ Recognition, then, has run up against a wall, when signs come into play, signifying the emergence of a problem that stifles the smooth and uninhibited functioning of thought. Recognition cannot function if it is presented with an object that does not sustain its identity throughout time, and common sense cannot function either, because if the subject undergoes changes and does not sustain itself as a unity, then it can provide no ground for the accord of the faculties. It is apparent that Bergson’s duration is implicit here in these ‘sensible qualities’, and in the ‘unlimited

¹⁸⁷ Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality”, In *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Ed. Paul Patton, p. 30.

becoming' and 'perpetual movement'. Duration, as we have already demonstrated, has these characteristics. These sensations that Deleuze describes as signs, then arise in a situation similar to the failure of Bergson's automatic recognition; and the effort of attentive recognition becomes necessary because of the problem with the regular functioning of recognition.

It is evident that the relevance and influence of Bergson's emphasis on problematization can be seen as the first step in the method of intuition, which comes to replace the failures of a knowledge that takes the problem for granted. Problematization is the force behind the evolution of thought and the progress of knowledge. When something is sensed which does not have a ready-made schema for its synthesis, *via* the faculties and recognition, and when it changes its nature immediately, this perplexes the soul and involuntarily forces it to begin to think. Thought, for Deleuze, is involuntary; it only appears to function when forced to do so; in other words, there must be a question and a problem to which it can respond. The problem is one which must completely disrupt the internal harmony of the faculties, presupposed by common sense. In fact, each of the faculties must be taken to their limit, to their transcendental exercise, in order to pass to the next, the difference expressed by the encountered anomaly or sign. Sensibility begins by going to the threshold of its capacity and beyond, then passing its product to memory, which is foreign to it; it makes memory follow in the same way, by transgressing its limit it then passes its product over to the faculty of cognition, and the difference is raised to the level of thought. Deleuze points out, however, that the relationship here between the faculties is not one of harmonious accord as in common sense; rather, each faculty is violent towards the other because its own transgression is what confronts the next faculty with its limitations. Each faculty passes its given over to the next, which comes to it as a difference to which it is not accustomed; and thus, as a result, this faculty is then pushed outside of its bounds. Deleuze

calls it a “discordant harmony”¹⁸⁸ between the faculties, whereby they spur each other to test the limits of their capacity, and by doing such violence to each other, discover and create profoundly new harmonies among them. This means that the understanding is not given dominance over the other faculties, to regulate the process of synthesis, making it occur in accord with universal and general rules or categories. Knowledge and thought are thus freed from the necessary categories of the Kantian understanding, as well as the form of representationalism, which results from it. Thought is awarded the power of the aesthetics of experience, which truly becomes reflective of the difference overflowing from the sensible. The difference made upon the receptivity of sensibility is always experienced as intensive.

Differences can be immediately and directly sensed in the sensible; these differences define the being of the sensible. Deleuze says, “Empiricism truly becomes transcendental...only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being of the sensible: difference...”¹⁸⁹ These empirical differences are unsensible from the empirical perspective, and yet they are that which can only be sensed under the transcendental perspective. This constitutes a new sensibility, a sensibility which is new every time it encounters difference in the sign. This is how empiricism becomes transcendental because the difference, which is entirely new to sensibility, cannot have any already established or easily accessible means to be apprehended; it is therefore unsensible, and yet it propels sensibility beyond its own limitations, forcing it to sense the unsensible. Deleuze also says that the unsensible is that which can only be sensed; in other words, sensibility does not even really sense if it is not forced beyond its own limits by the problem of the empirically unsensible. Deleuze describes this process for each faculty as a triple violence: “Each faculty must be borne to the extreme point of its dissolution, at which it falls prey to triple violence: the violence of that which forces it to be exercised, of that which it is

¹⁸⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 146.

¹⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 56-57.

forced to grasp and which it alone is able to grasp, yet also that of the ungraspable (from the point of view of its empirical exercise).”¹⁹⁰ It is the violence of these unaccountable forces from the outside that awakens the faculties one by one from their dogmatic slumber. The common sense regulated and normal functioning of the faculties is somnolent, and can only be temporarily thwarted by the encounter of a sign. The forcefulness, with which each faculty necessarily faces the encounter with the ungraspable, in order to reach its transcendental exercise, highlights its essentially involuntary operation. “Each faculty, including thought, has only involuntary adventures: involuntary operation remains embedded in the empirical.”¹⁹¹ This keeps each faculty from abstracting and wandering away into generality, by grounding it in empirical reality and actual difference. Each faculty waits for the sign to impel its activity: This force that it may ready itself for, but for which it could never be prepared, is what, to it, is most remarkable, different, new, free and untamed. Thought could wait dormant forever, if sensibility failed to furnish it with what becomes its sign, after being passed through the intermediate process of memory’s transcendental exercise.

The problem for thought is simply to think at all. Common sense regulates the functioning of the faculties according to certain rules, which guarantee their accord, and because of this supervening legislation, thought is usually so habitual and automatic, consciousness never needs to come into play. In fact, the normal monotony of thought cannot even be called thinking anymore. The whole problem, as Deleuze presents it, is one of creation, which requires the engendering of thought in thinking. Thinking doesn’t happen on its own, it is involuntary and must be instigated. This requires that thought confront the unthought: “...[T]hought is forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural

¹⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 143.

¹⁹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 145.

'powerlessness', which is indistinguishable from the greatest power"¹⁹² it may attain. The greatest power of thought, here described by Deleuze, reveals the meaning of the "imageless thought". The image is absent from thought when it reaches its greatest power, when it strives to think beyond its domain, confronting its limit point, as well as its dissolution and powerlessness.

¹⁹² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 147.

Conclusion

In summary, the theory of duration is defined by the problem it addresses. The problem addressed is that the way in which one symbolically represents, imagines, and conceives of time is not the way it really is. Time is not a quantitative multiplicity; it cannot be reduced to space, even if conventional science, social practice and the customary use of language, all maintain its discreteness. The truth of the matter is that one lives a life filled with change, where differences are present within every facet of reality, and where the past is remade continuously to produce the novelty of a present that passes, and in so doing, unfolds into an unknown future. In reality, time endures throughout the interval of a being's life and possibly beyond, but it surely does not jump from instant to instant; it is only misconceived because, in the past humans have not been able to sufficiently separate in their minds, time from space. The one has always been understood in relation to the other. The Kantian philosophical account of time is only one example of how time has been given a dependence on the spatializing forms of the understanding.

Furthermore, the understanding of time has been limited for too long by the concepts, categories and set of relations upon which one's comprehensive ability relied. Nonetheless, time, as Bergson claims, can be known through an alternative means, namely, *via* the method of intuition, which reveals its essential nature to be durational. Compared to the tendencies of the intellect, intuition is superior for a number of reasons. The intellect denies life, mobility, continuity and difference by imposing forms necessary for an objective knowledge. However, one must abandon these static, abstract and general forms of knowledge, fundamental to the intellect; so that one may know what it is to become and experience the new. Intuition provides us a way to contact immediately the actual forces within experience, without abstractly reducing differences in kind to mere differences of degree, and without subordinating difference to the similar by cloaking it with the same generalized concepts in

order to recognize and think it. Moreover, intuition by thinking backwards can redefine thought and reform its practice; instead of conceptual knowledge dominating, sensibility is given real priority. The forces of the sensible can be the source that initiates the production of novel concepts to express the differential elements of the virtual, which get actualized in empirical reality. The method of intuition relies on the problematization of the categories and general concepts of the understanding, which define the habitual and customary practices of the intellect, in hopes that one can install thought in real duration, where it would think nothing but the continuous, mobile and different. For humanity to get beyond its extremely limited capacity to comprehend the passage of time would be indeed a great leap forward.

Accordingly, Bergson presents us with the challenge of remounting the slope of pure duration, through his radical and revolutionary method of intuition, to which there is no simple or ready-made reply. No wonder intuition seems at times somewhat vague and difficult to grasp, considering how it moves against the grain of every one of humanity's pre-established and customary practices for dealing with time. It is fair to say that Bergson's entire philosophical programme can be narrowed down to one main task: To invent a way to return thinking to continuity and becoming, by embedding it in the movement of real duration.

Similarly, Bergson's desire to give thought a power of mastery over time, is one which Gilles Deleuze definitely shares. Deleuze continues Bergson's project, although in his own terms. Deleuze draws from Bergson's account of duration a concept of pure difference, as a concrete universal which envelops all the coexisting degrees of difference internally. The concept of difference is then able to become one with the differences of the thing-in-itself. Just as duration, for Bergson, is in matter, difference, for Deleuze, is in repetition. The contractions of memory within the moments of duration are interpreted as the various

repetitions of difference within pure difference itself. Consequently, transcendental empiricism is Deleuze's philosophical position that, like intuition, is presented as a tool to think difference in time. Based on its criteria, which all involve commitment to transcendent forms, representation or the "dogmatic image of thought", excludes the possibility of any real difference being thought. Representation therefore is opposed to the objectives of transcendental empiricism. Transcendental empiricism works with the empirically-given actuality of experience and encounters many signs that express problems with regards to the understanding of difference in the sensible. These differences, felt in the sensible, are the transcendentals or virtual conditions, making the empirical determinations of real experience actual. These virtual tendencies, that by their differentiation actualize difference, in fact, are the conditions by which the new is reproduced. Difference thus perpetuates its own repetition, not a repetition which reduces itself to equivalence, but one which can only be said to repeat difference itself. The faculties, as Kant accounts for them, will never retain the remote possibility of encountering something completely new and different, because common sense, recognizing that the faculties all work on the same object, ensures that they accord harmoniously. In contrast, Deleuze abolishes common sense, and affirms a discordance among the faculties, that allows for the opportunity of their coming into new harmonies to determine the profoundly different spatio-temporal relations encountered by intuition. To conclude, transcendental empiricism is Deleuze's attempt at formulating a new image for thought to reach a unification with difference, by constantly drawing transcendental philosophy back to reground itself in the empirically given, which takes the once transcendent-conditions for experience and then implants them in pure immanence.

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