

HENRI BERGSON: A SOLUTION TO THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM?

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Abstract

This paper aims to outline the principal philosophical dimensions of Bergson's idea of mind and its relationship to physical reality. We will examine the treatment of this long-standing metaphysical problem in the works of this philosopher, and we will show that no clear solution to this perennial question of Western thought emerges from Bergson's account of the nature of mind and matter.

Key words

Bergson, mind-body problem, *élan*, intuition, consciousness

1. Science and consciousness

Few philosophers achieved such a high degree of popularity and recognition in their time as Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Greatly admired thanks to works like *Essai sur les Données Immediates de la Conscience* (1889), *Matière et Memoire* (1896), *L'Évolution Créatrice* (1907) and *Les Deux Sources de la Moral et de la Religion* (1932), the celebrated French philosopher, winner of the 1927 Nobel Prize for Literature, developed an original approach to philosophical thinking in which his concern about the idea of “life” and its metaphysical implications was eminently underlined.

Bergson’s interest in the nature of life and its evolutionary genealogy, together with his broader treatment of classical philosophical questions drawn from the theory of knowledge, the methodology of science, and the fundamentals of ontology, necessarily had to lead him into the consideration of the inveterate mystery of the union between mind and matter. His notion of “life,” and particularly his concept of “*élan vital*,”¹ were understood as building a valuable bridge between the traditionally opposed Cartesian terms of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, and between the parallel antagonism confronting mechanism and finality. However, did Bergson actually outline a rigorous attempt at solving the puzzling mind-body problem, or did he just conceal the ultimate difficulty faced by any ontology behind his speculations about the nature of living forces?

Bergson addressed the elusive connection of matter and spirit in numerous articles and books, some of which expressly dealt with this apparently insurmountable abyss that seems to fracture the universe. The first difficulty that emerges is epistemological. According to Bergson, the nature of the positive sciences is the

principal impediment for the philosopher: “*la science positive a pour fonction habituelle d’analyser. Elle travaille donc avant tout sur les symbols (...)*”.² But this primarily analytical goal darkens the correct frame in which the philosophical treatment of life and spirit should be placed. Modern science is a daughter of mathematics and it remains infused with its spirit, for it seeks to measure reality.

Inspired by the idea of the unity of nature, a majority of philosophers has tried to represent “*cette unite sous une forme abstraite et géométrique*”.³ Some of them, compelled by the ubiquity of the law of conservation of energy, have denied the efficacious power of the will. But the spirit cannot be measured⁴ and it is dubious that the law of the conservation of energy is actually obeyed in the realm of consciousness.⁵ Moreover, the mathematical language used by the natural sciences is incapable of grasping the “*durée*,” as Bergson will remark in one of his last publications.⁶ The concept of time that can be found in sciences like physics and astronomy does not point to “*durée*” in its deepest sense but to a relationship between fixed quantities, to “*un rapport entre deux durées, un certain nombre d’unités de temps (...), un certain nombre de simultanéités.*”⁷

Following a perspective which resembles Wilhelm Dilthey’s thought,⁸ Bergson believes that analysis is unable to grasp the intimate nature of the phenomenon of life. The principle of causality which shapes our scientific view of the world evokes a series of regularities which have been observed in the past. However, there is no reason to believe that this principle might be applied to the realm of mind. The facts of consciousness are not related in a causal manner as happens with external phenomena. Empirical facts, so to speak, reproduce themselves into a homogeneous space and may be subsumed into general laws, whereas deep psychological facts “*se presentment à la conscience une fois, et ne reparaîtront jamais plus*”.⁹ Analysis detaches itself from

intuition, but life can be apprehended only through intuition, through our “placing ourselves” in life as it is. This movement demands the abandonment of any relative viewpoint in order to reach “*l’objet lui-même*”¹⁰, liberated from any subjection to symbols, like the ones used by the positive sciences in their intellectual assault on the structure and functioning of physical nature.

For Bergson, consciousness is inextricably connected with memory,¹¹ while the unconscious retains nothing from its past: it constantly perishes and resuscitates. Consciousness is capable of anticipating the future and it is “*avant tout mémoire.*”¹² Unlike the body, confined into a perennial present, consciousness is aware of the past,¹³ and “*quand je dis ‘je’ ou ‘mois’, je fais d’abord allusion à un être qui est affecté en ce moment d’une certaine manière, mais je pense aussi à mon histoire passé (...). Ce que je suis est en grande partie ce que j’ai été.*”¹⁴ It joins that which has been and that which will be. Although consciousness is “*incontestablement liée au cerveau chez l’homme,*”¹⁵ to maintain that the brain is indispensable for consciousness is not intellectually clear. The thesis of the equivalence of brain and consciousness (according to which “*tout état de conscience correspond à un certain ébranlement des molécules et atomes de la substance cérébrale*”)¹⁶ is seriously mistaken and ultimately leads to contradictions,¹⁷ even if it permeates a significant part of modern philosophical thinking.¹⁸

The elucidation of cerebral structure and mechanisms does not allow us to understand the nature of consciousness. A psychological fact can determine its concomitant brain state, but the opposite thesis does not hold, because “*au même état cérébral correspondraient aussi bien des états psychologiques très divers.*”¹⁹ And “*précisément parce qu’un état cérébral exprime simplement ce qu’il y a d’action dans l’état psychologique correspondant, l’état psychologique en dit plus long que l’état cérébral.*”²⁰ More eloquently, “*il y a infiniment plus, dans une conscience humaine, que*

*dans le cerveau correspondant*²¹ and “*la vie de l’esprit déborde de même la vie cérébrale,*”²² so that “*considérés en eux-mêmes, les états de conscience profonds n’ont aucun rapport avec la quantité*.”²³ Therefore, the brain cannot determine thought.²⁴ Against the materialist thesis, perception “*dépasse infiniment l’état cerebral.*”²⁵ Any form of psychological determinism implies an associationist conception of mind and it must be rejected.²⁶ However, and in opposition to the idealist stance, the French philosopher claims that “*la matière déborde de tous côtés la représentation que nous avons d’elle.*”²⁷ Correlation should not be confused with causation: brain and mind show solidarity, not equivalence.²⁸

According to Bergson, both realism and idealism lead to irreconcilable contradictions in their treatment of the relationship between consciousness and matter. The realist identifies mental representations with material movements inside the brain, as if the external world were reproduced inside the cerebral cortex, in some sort of “*chambre noire*”²⁹ (an intelligent anticipation of Kenny’s “*homunculus fallacy*”³⁰), but he subtly surrenders to idealism: although he conceives of everything in spatial terms (as *res extensa*), he still places representations and cerebral states in parallel, as if they constituted two different substances. A “*parallelist*” depiction is forced to oscillate between realism and idealism, and inexorably leads to incongruities, due to its assumption of certain metaphysical hypotheses which cannot be proven, like the understanding of causality in purely mechanical and mathematical terms and the idea that in order to reach the “*thing in itself*” beyond its representation it suffices to reduce the imagined representation into its “*mathematical*” components.³¹

In the context of the contemporary idea of “*multiple realizability,*”³² it is interesting to notice that Bergson thinks that, even if our science of the brain and our psychology had achieved its highest and most sophisticated degree of development,

*“nous pourrions deviner ce qui se passé dans le cerveau pour un état d’âme détermine; mais l’opération inverse serait impossible”*³³, because we would have different, equally appropriate mental states (one might wonder if the inverse thesis is not true: namely, that various cerebral states could be involved in a same psychological fact). The movements articulating the act of thinking do not exhaust its ultimate essence, for thinking is far subtler than a soliloquy in which one speaks to oneself³⁴.

2. Intuition, *durée*, and life

The insistence upon the importance of intuition is a constant in the work of Bergson. Already present in some of his earliest works like *Essai sur les Données Immediates de la Conscience*,³⁵ as well as in his latest writings³⁶, it lies behind his criticism of the psychology of John Stuart Mill, Hippolyte Taine and other exponents of a naturalistic approach to the study of mind, who conceive of internal life as an aggregate of chemical elements.³⁷ However, emphasis on intuition shows one of the most relevant difficulties of Bergson's apparent "solution" to the mind-body problem, for what does this reliance upon such an elusive notion actually imply? According to the French philosopher, an analytical approach cannot reach the 'I'. It barely stops at the "states of the 'I'". The analytical perspective tries to find the 'I' within its psychological states, but is unable to arrive at the 'I' itself, because the latter becomes reduced into a series of symbolic representations. It loses its "wholeness". Any constructivist perspective which attempts to look for the object by "joining" its separate, decomposed fragments is condemned to losing the entire picture of that which it seeks to understand. This perspective artificially reconstructs the psychological fact under examination as the result of the association of ideas and impressions, confusing "*l'explication du fait avec le fait même*."³⁸ As Bergson remarked in one of the courses on psychology that he taught at Lycée Henri-IV in 1892-3, an empiricist theory of abstraction is prisoner to a vicious circle involving abstraction and generalization.³⁹ The 'I' is regarded as "*un vain fantôme*."⁴⁰ The resemblance with recent authors like Thomas Nagel is clear.⁴¹

However, Bergson's discontent with any analytical, empirical treatment of the 'I' and consciousness in general ("*qui dit esprit dit, avant tout, conscience*")⁴² does not

encourage him to advocate rationalism or Kantian formalism,⁴³ and still less Berkeley's idealism.⁴⁴ Rationalism, in his view, reifies the 'I' as "*un lieu où les états se logent*"⁴⁵, as a spiritual substance which tends to shape another world of potentially infinite nature and scope. Rather, Bergson defends a "true empiricism," which, as he claims in vivid and poetic words, "*se propose de server d'aussi près que possible l'original lui-même, d'en approfondir la vie, et, pour une espèce d'auscultation spirituelle, d'en sentir palpiter l'âme.*"⁴⁶ This true empiricism is also the true metaphysics needed to deal with the spirit and its life. The 'I' cannot be apprehended through the narrow lenses of traditional philosophical categories like unity and multiplicity: it challenges conceptual divisions and scholarly disputes. Concepts must adapt themselves to things, instead of shaping things in accordance with their demands. We have to understand "*la vie même des choses.*"⁴⁷ The connection with Husserl and the phenomenological movement seems clear.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, any philosophical approach to the nature of the spirit, even if it regards intuition as its fundamental intellectual tool, should lead to at least one principal idea capable of comprising its more significant features. This idea is, according to Bergson, that of "*durée*". "*Durée*" can be defined, in extremely general terms, as that which is susceptible to "tension".⁴⁹ The tension of the *durée* of a conscious being would measure "*sa puissance d'agir, la quantité d'activité libre et créatrice qu'il peut introduire dans le monde.*"⁵⁰ The orientation of consciousness towards action summarizes the fundamental law of human psychological life.⁵¹ The states of the soul are subject to constant change, but an internal "*durée*" remains which is "*la vie continue d'une mémoire qui prolonge le passé dans le présent.*"⁵² Any state must be seen as a continuous form of becoming. The analytical approach operates upon unmovable entities, whereas intuition is capable of grasping mobility itself. "*Durée*" stands as the

synthesis between the multiplicity of successive states of consciousness and the underlying unity which incorporates the totality of them. Intuition represents the only way to reach that “*durée intérieure*” which is “*la vision directe de l’esprit par l’esprit.*”⁵³

In Bergson’s view, consciousness is coextensive with life and should not be limited to human intelligence⁵⁴ (he clearly inserts human intelligence within the evolution of animal intelligence⁵⁵). This intimate link between consciousness and life obeys the spontaneous movement of life which defines the whole evolutionary process.⁵⁶ With the birth of life, unforeseeable movements emerge. Life constitutes the bridge between matter (understood as necessity) and consciousness (regarded as freedom⁵⁷). Life reconciles both necessity and freedom. Life is freedom “*s’insérant dans la nécessité et la tournant à son profit,*”⁵⁸ a topic to which the third chapter of *L’Évolution Créatrice* is dedicated. But, at this point, Bergson becomes imprisoned by the same dualism which he has repeatedly criticized.⁵⁹ He abruptly separates matter and consciousness and he reintroduces the latter into the former (life as “*conscience lancée à travers la matière*”)⁶⁰, instead of following the development of matter itself. Bergson speaks in terms of a force inserted into matter,⁶¹ but he can do so only metaphorically, for what kind of energy is actually liberated that should not be considered equal to the power of matter itself? Bergson goes as far as to claim that the voluntary act⁶² is capable of creating some kind of energy that escapes any attempt to measure it.⁶³

Bergson clearly states that both types of existence, matter and consciousness, derive from a common source.⁶⁴ At some point he identifies it with “*pur vouloir,*”⁶⁵ an idea in which it is inevitable to find resonances of the philosophy of Schelling’s 1809 essay *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*. The common procession of matter and consciousness indicates their mutual dependence: matter needs consciousness and

consciousness requires matter, and Bergson sees “*dans l’évolution entire de la vie sur notre planète une traversée de la matière par la conscience créatrice, un effort pour libérer, à force d’ingéniosité et d’invention, quelque chose que reste emprisonné chez l’animal et qui ne se degage définitivement que chez l’homme,*”⁶⁶ a view adopted years later by Teilhard de Chardin.⁶⁷ In fact, Bergson thinks that matter and consciousness, rather than constituting two absolutely antagonistic realities, represent different degrees of complexity or intensity of the same underlying force.⁶⁸ Both materialism and creationism are unable to grasp reality as growth, as an “*accroissement*”⁶⁹ which is not given in advance. Materialism regards matter as the absolute reality, whereas creationism places the ultimate source of existence in the spiritual realm, but the two of them contemplate their respective objects as given entities, instead of apprehending the “*élan de vie,*” the interlacing dynamics of matter and spirit which leads to the display of the creative power of life, reaching the highest possible degrees of indeterminacy and freedom.⁷⁰ However, this desired reconciliation of matter and spirit through subsuming them into an underlying but hardly effable entity does not really overcome its merely metaphorical formulation.

But the theoretical problems have only begun to arise. Bergson himself admits that such a synthesis is a mysterious operation.⁷¹ Therefore, what do we gain by posing “*la durée*” as the fundamental category upon which any attempt of solution to the mind-body problem should be founded? If everything responds to intuition and it cannot be summarized in any “objective” statement, shall we surrender and accept that the relationship between mind and brain will remain enigmatic? Bergson prefers to remain in some sort of deliberate ambiguity concerning this point, although he dares to offer a series of principles that sustain, in his opinion, this intuitive process which philosophy cannot renounce. These principles state that an external reality exists and is immediately

given to our spirit; this reality essentially consists of mobility (things are in their making), so that all reality involves “*tendance*”; the spirit looks for permanent structures, for “states,” but this claim generates the insurmountable problem of trying to reconstruct reality – which is mobility - through concepts whose nature and whose function evoke immobility.⁷² The only way of escaping from this fatal destiny to which analytical thought seems to be condemned lies in striving for “*s’installer dans la réalité mobile,*” in order to follow its flow in an intuitive manner. Any kind of change, any form of movement, is essentially indivisible.⁷³ It is therefore necessary to contemplate everything *sub specie durationis*.⁷⁴

Not surprisingly, Bergson offers hardly any clue on how this grounding upon a reality which is mobile can be achieved. He has denounced the scientific method as being unfit for the study of mind, without suggesting any universally accessible way of grasping that “*durée*” (which, in his view, defies the power of analysis) other than the problematic idea of intuition. He clearly admits a deep fracture within the scientific view of the world. And, even if it were taken to its ultimate frontiers, it is not clear that Bergson’s metaphysical ambition would increase our knowledge of reality instead of only broadening our imagination. Intuitions are essentially mutable and volatile. They change from one subject to another. The “*expérience intégrale*”⁷⁵ to which the French philosopher appeals is as elusive as the quest for the ‘I’ through the reconstruction of its mental states. Although in Bergson’s time many fundamental discoveries regarding the physic-chemical nature of life (especially the elucidation of the structure of DNA and the evidence for its key role in the transmission of genetic information) had not been made, there had already been some outstanding findings in the realm of the chemical nature of life, and the path towards its “analytical” reduction was firm. Therefore, how

should we justify his philosophical mystification of life? Perhaps pointing to the fear that science could penetrate domains monopolized by philosophical reflection?

The obscurity of some of the expressions used by Bergson cannot conceal the fundamental problem, which is left unsolved. According to the French philosopher, the brain is an organ of “pantomime,” and cerebral activity could be compared to the baton of an orchestra, mental activity being the symphony.⁷⁶ But Bergson does not elucidate how the whole process is set off. And the contradictions are numerous. For example, Bergson admits that, although mental activity is not confined to cerebral structures, there is at least one function of thought which can be located in the brain: memory, specially the remembrance of words. The discoveries of Broca and Wernicke⁷⁷ had already opened new and vast horizons for neuroscience by demonstrating how certain cortical regions are narrowly and inextricably connected with some mental functions, such as speech production and processing. For Bergson, this solidly grounded fact is reasonable: “*les souvenirs sont là, accumulés dans le cerveau sous forme de modifications imprimées à un groupe d’éléments anatomiques.*”⁷⁸ However, he also claims that “the remembered” (*souvenir*) is not conserved inside the physically limited continent, since it is intangible and invisible, but “*dans l’esprit.*”⁷⁹ Although he assures us that this is a metaphorical expression which is not intended to support the existence of a mysterious entity, he fails to explain its nature.

Also, and despite his constant attempts for placing himself in some sort of *via media* between idealism and materialism, Bergson does not offer any systematic account of how this aim could be achieved. He advocates the necessity of returning to an idea of “*durée pure,*” which grasps the continuous flux of reality, because movement (“*en tant que passage d’un repos à un repos*”⁸⁰) is not susceptible to being decomposed. But we get no hint on how this could be done. Bergson insists that the true nature of

reality consists of a continuous movement, not of static “instantiations.” This continuity also affects our conception of space: a thing cannot be separated from its surrounding environment, and “*l’étroite solidarité qui lie tous les objets de l’univers matériel, la perpétuité de leurs actions et réactions réciproques, prouve assez qu’ils n’ont pas les limites précises que nous leur attribuons.*”⁸¹ Beyond the notorious fallacy hidden here (does Bergson suggest that there is no “centre of action” in a given body?; the fact that reality can be arbitrarily divided does not mean that it is susceptible to any kind of division), the most “legitimate” conclusion to be drawn from Bergson’s proposal would encourage us to conceive of mind as an indivisible extension of matter, so that splitting the world into two substances, matter and mind, would be incorrect. But is this Bergson’s authentic aim? Does he mean that mind is a highly developed version of matter, as he suggests in *Matière et Mémoire*, when he claims that an infinite number of degrees (which measure “*une intensité croissante de vie*”⁸²) between matter and a spirit “*pleinement développé*”⁸³ is possible? Again, we find ourselves crossing a misty ocean.

3. Conclusions

The brilliance of some of Bergson's philosophical reflections about the nature of life and consciousness cannot hide a reality: although he addressed the old and persistent problem of how mind and body relate each other, he did not offer a systematic solution to this perennial and profound mystery.

Concealed behind his exaltation of the creative force of life and its inextricable connection with consciousness, Bergson did not actually commit himself to any ontological claim beyond his vitalism, according to which the traditional opposition of *res extensa* and *res cogitans* should yield to the primacy of life and its *élan* towards higher degrees of freedom and indeterminacy.

The actual way in which mind and body interact was never elucidated. His dissatisfaction with the prevalent positions of materialism and dualism, although evident in most of his writings dealing with his subject, did not lead to the development of a systematic ontological account capable of overcoming the ambiguities of ideas like "intuition," *durée*, and life itself when applied to the mind-body problem.

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¹ See H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, 88-98. For an introduction to this important Bergsonian idea, see S. Linstead – J. Mullarkey, “Time, creativity and culture: introducing Bergson”, *Culture and Organization* 9/1 (2003), 3-13. For a comprehensive overview of Bergson’s idea of mind and its place in the French philosophical tradition, see M. Merleau-Ponty, *L’Union de l’Âme et du Corps chez Malebranche, Biran et Bergson: Notes Prises au Cours de Maurice Merleau-Ponty à l’Ecole Normale Supérieure (1947-1948)*.

² H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 5.

³ H. Bergson, *L’Évolution Créatrice*, 191.

⁴ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 70. See also *L’Évolution Créatrice*, 192.

⁵ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 7. This remark had been extensively examined in his early work *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (115f.)

⁶ Cf. H. Bergson, “Le possible et le réel,” included in *La Pensée et le Mouvant* (originally published in 1934).

⁷ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 145.

⁸ See W. Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, en *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII, 142.

⁹ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 164.

¹⁰ H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 5.

¹¹ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 5.

¹² *Op. cit.*, 27.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, 4-5.

¹⁴ H. Bergson, *Cours II*, 286.

¹⁵ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 7.

¹⁶ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 5.

¹⁷ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 21.

¹⁸ H. Bergson, “Le Cerveau et la Pensée: une illusion philosophique,” in *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 191-210.

¹⁹ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 193. Already in *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, Bergson had written: “plus on descend dans les profondeurs de la conscience, moins a le drot de traiter les faits psychologiques comme des choses qui se juxtaposent” (6-7), for it would forget (in a Kantian perspective) the unity of the subject that perceives.

²⁰ H. Bergson, *L’Évolution Créatrice*, 263. See also *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 3 (lecture “L’Âme et le Corps”).

²¹ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 14.

²² *Op. cit.*, 19.

²³ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 102.

²⁴ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 15.

²⁵ H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, 201.

²⁶ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 117. For a critique of psychological determinism, see *op. cit.*, 117-122.

²⁷ H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, 201.

²⁸ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 208. Experience only confirms “une certaine relation entre le cerveau et la conscience” (9).

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, 207.

³⁰ See A. Kenny, “The homunculus fallacy”, in *Interpretations of Life and Mind*, 155-165.

³¹ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 208.

³² On “multiple realizability,” see W. Bechtel – J. Mundale, “Multiple realizability revisited: Linking cognitive and neural states”, 175-207.

³³ H. Bergson, *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 15.

³⁴ H. Bergson, *Matière et Memoire*, chap. 1: “De la selection des images pour la représentation. Le rôle du corps”.

³⁵ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 5.

³⁶ See H. Bergson, “L’intuition philosophique,” a lecture given in Bolonia in 1911, included in *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, 117-142.

³⁷ See H. Bergson, *Cours II*, 291-296.

³⁸ H. Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, 123.

³⁹ H. Bergson, *Cours II*, 390.

⁴⁰ H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 5. See also *L’Énergie Spirituelle*, 5.

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- ⁴¹ See T. Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?," 435-450.
- ⁴² H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 4.
- ⁴³ Kant reduces consciousness to "*une existence purement formelle*" (*Cours II*, 296).
- ⁴⁴ For a criticism of Berkeley's theory of mind, according to which "*la matière est coextensive à notre représentation*," see H. Bergson, *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, 125f.
- ⁴⁵ H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 20.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, 40.
- ⁴⁸ On the connection of Bergson's philosophy with phenomenology, see J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy*, 22f.
- ⁴⁹ H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, 226-235.
- ⁵⁰ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 17.
- ⁵¹ H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, 200.
- ⁵² H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 24.
- ⁵³ H. Bergson, *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, 27.
- ⁵⁴ H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice VIII*.
- ⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, 188-189; *Matière et Mémoire*, chap. 2 and 3.
- ⁵⁶ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 8.
- ⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, 13.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ⁵⁹ For example, in *Matière et Mémoire*, 297.
- ⁶⁰ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 13.
- ⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, 17.
- ⁶² Defined in the following way: "*L'act volontaire (...) n'est pas autre chose qu'un ensemble de mouvements appris dans des expériences antérieures, et infléchis dans une direction chaque fois nouvelle par cette force consciente don't le rôle paraît bien être d'apporter sans cesse quelque chose de nouveau dans le monde*" (H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 2).
- ⁶³ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 7.
- ⁶⁴ H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, 239; *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 18.
- ⁶⁵ H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, 239.
- ⁶⁶ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 18. In the initial pages of *L'Évolution Créatrice*, Bergson writes: "*L'histoire de l'évolution de la vie, si incomplète qu'elle soit encore, nous laisse déjà entrevoir comment l'intelligence s'est constituée par un progrès ininterrompu*" (V). The adherence to a teleological view is clear. The evolution of life would culminate in the birth of the human species, in which the creative display of life would have reached its pinnacle.
- ⁶⁷ See P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Phénomène Humain*.
- ⁶⁸ H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, 191.
- ⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, 192.
- ⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, 241.
- ⁷¹ H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 31.
- ⁷² *Op. cit.*, 35.
- ⁷³ See H. Bergson, "La perception du changement," lecture given at Oxford in 1911, included in *La Pensée et le Mouvant*.
- ⁷⁴ H. Bergson, *La Pensée et le Mouvant*, 176.
- ⁷⁵ H. Bergson, *Introduction à la Métaphysique*, 51.
- ⁷⁶ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 19.
- ⁷⁷ See P.-P. Broca, "Sur le siège de la faculté du langage articulé," 377-393; C. Wernicke, *Der Aphasische Symptomenkomplex*.
- ⁷⁸ H. Bergson, *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, 23.
- ⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, 27.
- ⁸⁰ H. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, 209.
- ⁸¹ *Op. cit.*, 235.
- ⁸² *Op. cit.*, 249.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*