

FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY IN BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY IN BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY**

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M.A. in Philosophy

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The purpose of this study is to make sense of the notion of freedom in Bergson's philosophy. Bergson's original approach to the problem of free will is the application of the notion of duration to solve this problem. For Bergson, the problem of free will arises from a misconceived framework which is based on reducing time to space. Throughout the thesis, we tried to show how the notion of duration allows Bergson to reformulate and solve the problem of free will. For that purpose the method of intuition as the method to understand the notion of duration is also elucidated. In the light of the method of intuition and the notion of duration, free acts can be seen as the creative acts of the fundamental self. We arrive at the conclusion that freedom in Bergson's philosophy can be understood as a kind of creativity.

Keywords: Bergson, freedom, duration, intuition, creativity

## ÖZ

### BERGSON FELSEFESİNDE ÖZGÜRLÜK VE YARATICILIK

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Bergson felsefesindeki özgürlük anlayışını anlamlandırmaya çalışmaktır. Bergson'un özgür irade sorununa getirdiği özgün yaklaşım, bu problemi çözmek için süre kavramını kullanmasıdır. Bergson'a göre, özgür irade sorunu, zamanın mekana indirgenmesine dayanan hatalı bir kavramsal çerçeveden kaynaklanmaktadır. Tez boyunca, süre kavramının, Bergson'un özgür irade sorununu yeniden formüle etmesine ve çözmesine nasıl olanak tanıdığı gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu amaçla, süre kavramını anlamaya yarayan yöntem olan sezgi yöntemi de açıklanmıştır. Sezgi yöntemi ve süre kavramı göz önüne alındığında, özgür eylemler, temel benliğin yaratıcı eylemleri olarak görülebilmektedir. Vardığımız sonuç, Bergson felsefesindeki özgürlük düşüncesinin bir çeşit yaratıcılık olarak anlaşılabilirliği.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bergson, özgürlük, süre, sezgi, yaratıcılık

To My Parents and To My Dear Husband

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CE	Creative Evolution
CM	The Creative Mind
CPR	Critique of Pure Reason
IM	An Introduction to Metaphysics
TFW	Time and Free Will

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

With a close consideration of Henri Bergson's philosophy, it can be seen that the problems which Bergson dealt with show a wide variety ranging from time to memory, from evolution to motion, even from freedom to morality. The roots of all the problems discussed by Bergson go back to antiquity but they are also ever-present problems. Bergson's contributions to addressing these problems are highly influential even today.

The wide range of topics he writes on indicates that his aim in philosophy goes beyond choosing and solving one specific problem to understanding life in its entirety. His philosophical attitude can be interpreted as a kind of inquiry in search of the essence of whole life and in its exaggerated sense 'the meaning of life.' I think his desire for this absolute knowledge about the world explains why he is fed by very different fields of knowledge such as psychology, biology and physics. Actually, since philosophy is the origin of all inquiry of knowing which all sciences in the world spring from, I would argue that Bergson's philosophy constitutes a fine example of what I would call "true philosophy."

According to Bergson, all philosophical systems are too abstract and too vast to explain reality. He claims that the explanations in philosophy can only be satisfactory if they "fit with [their] object[s]" without leaving "spaces between them". (CM, p.11) Bergson thus defends a philosophical approach which is not lifeless and transcendental but which knows the object immediately.

His philosophical aim of having the explanation "fit with the object" can be seen in his method of discussing philosophical problems. There is something common in his

way of approaching all of these problems. Bergson always starts from the internal and the deep-seated essence of things. This approach arises from his pursuit of knowing something from “the inside”. He believes that one should try to know the object by entering into it in order to attain ‘absolute’ knowledge. That is why he suggests ‘intuition’ as a method of philosophizing because intuition is the method which seeks absolute knowledge. For Bergson, as a process philosopher, the absolute is not something static but pure movement and flux. He defines intuition as ‘intellectual sympathy’ which means a coincidence between the subject and the object. It is by this sympathy that a conscious being establishes a coincidence by placing itself within the object for grasping the inner essence of the object absolutely. He claims that “[...] an absolute can only be given in an *intuition*, while the rest has to do with analysis.” (CM, 161) According to Bergson, the intellect tries to know objects by analyzing them. That analyzing process always works with dividing a whole into its constituent elements and reducing the object to foreknown things. For Bergson, the intellect misses the dynamic nature of the ‘absolute’ for the sake of analysis and the knowledge of pure intellect has to remain relative. He thinks that most of the problems in philosophy arise from this relative approach.

Bergson’s most famous concept is duration. The notion of duration springs from the intuitive thinking on time. When he investigates the nature of time, Bergson realizes that the time that science measures is homogeneous and static and is defined relative to other magnitudes. However, the inner experience of time which means duration consists of heterogeneity and pure mobility. Bergson claims that the time we measure is not the real duration that we experience inwardly but the spatial representation of it.

For Bergson, Kant’s antinomies result from thinking of time in terms of space. In Kant’s philosophy, the antinomies are the contradictions that arise when reason attempts to go beyond the capacities of sense and the understanding. This attempt causes reason to speculate on issues that exceeds its facilities and to produce the contradictions in the antinomies. For example, one of these four antinomies is the antinomy of freedom: Thesis: “Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived.

To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.” (CPR, A444/B472) Antithesis: “There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature.” (CPR, A445/B473) According to Bergson, it is possible to overcome these antinomies by broadening the possibilities of the mind. Intuition is the method for this broadening and thinking in duration, which can be attained by intuition, can surmount the antinomies of Kant. He criticizes Kant for taking time as homogeneous and for missing the point that the moments of real duration are heterogeneous. In this sense, Bergson’s philosophy can be seen as a response to Kant’s antinomies. He especially dealt with the antimony of freedom.

In the preface of his book *Time and Free Will* in which Bergson presents his notion of duration, he declares that he wrote the first two chapters where he discusses ‘the intensity of psychic states’ and ‘the multiplicity of conscious states and the idea of duration’ as an introduction to the third one in which he deals with the problem of free will. Bergson’s original contribution to the problem of free will is the application of the notion of duration to solve this problem. (TFW, p. x) In that sense, he can be regarded as unique for approaching the problem of free will from a temporal aspect.

According to Bergson, the problem of free will becomes a problem when time is conceived of as an extensive magnitude. He claims that both the opponents and the defenders of free will make the same mistake of reducing time to space. This spatialized understanding of time causes us to evaluate the actions of a self not as an activity in progress but as a completed action. In this respect, mobility is reduced to immobility and duration is reduced to a line in space. For Bergson, determinists are mistaken to claim that there is only one possible act which corresponds to given antecedents. On the other hand, libertarians mistakenly suggest that there can be many acts equally possible. Bergson criticizes both, because there is no possible or possibles prior to the realization of an act. Freedom is not choosing from possibles because the free self creates the act. In a free act, for Bergson, the possible and the actual action are the same and simultaneous.

My aim in this study is to try to make sense of the notion of freedom in Bergson's philosophy. I arrive at the conclusion that it can be best understood as a kind of creativity.

For that purpose, in the second chapter, I will first discuss the methodology of Bergson. Intuition is his method of philosophy and also an epistemological view. Before examining his method of intuition, firstly, I will give a brief explanation of the connotations of the term 'intuition' and their meanings in Descartes' and Kant's philosophies. Then I will explain the role of intuition as a method in Bergson's philosophy. In order to clarify the scope of intuition, I will evaluate the term from the perspective of intellect and instinct. Lastly, I will investigate the connection between the method of intuition and the notion of duration. In this relation, I will point out that the notion of duration fulfills two requirements of intuition for being a method: coinciding with the object and attaining a continuous process in its flux.

In the third chapter, I will introduce the notion of duration. Duration is the continuous flux of our heterogeneous inner states. It is the basis to form a unity of the continuous multiplicity of these inner states. For explaining the notion of duration, firstly, I will discuss the terms 'extensity' and 'intensity' to clarify Bergson's claim that the nature of the psychic states is not extensive but intensive. Then I will deal with the concept of multiplicity in order to present Bergson's investigation of the multiplicity of conscious states. He realizes that the multiplicity of our inner states does not resemble the multiplicity of objects or numbers, because they are not distinct entities, they permeate one another. So then, I will present two kinds of multiplicity as discrete and continuous multiplicity. Bergson argues that the former is the multiplicity of objects; the latter is the multiplicity of conscious states. Lastly, I will express the difference between the notion of duration and the homogeneous time. I will describe the nature of duration and emphasize that for Bergson, the homogeneous time is the illegitimate translation of unextended duration to the extended space.

In the fourth chapter, I will turn to Bergson's sense of freedom. I will try to discuss the problem within the scope of Bergson's views in opposition to the determinists'

and libertarians' for their misconstructions of the problem of freedom. Then, I will handle the problem from the perspective of two kinds of selves in Bergson's philosophy. Finally, I will attempt to show that the notion of freedom in Bergson's philosophy is grounded on the idea of creativity and free actions have the same nature with creative acts.

## CHAPTER 2

### INTUITION

In this chapter, I will introduce Bergson's method of intuition. To be able to exhibit its different sense in Bergson's philosophy, first, in section 2.1, I will make a general review of the term 'intuition'. I will briefly present the meanings of the term in Descartes' and Kant's philosophies. In section 2.2, I will explicate Bergsonian intuition as a method of philosophy and epistemology. In subsection 2.2.1, my aim will be to designate the meaning of 'intuition' with respect to the terms 'intellect' and 'instinct'. Finally in subsection 2.2.2 I will discuss the relation between the method of intuition and 'duration'.

#### **2.1 A General Look at the Notion of Intuition**

In everyday language, the word 'intuition' evokes ideas like instinct, insight or even premonition. In philosophy however, it has quite different meanings. In the widest sense of the term, 'intuition' can be defined as "immediate apprehension." (Ency.of Phil, p.722) In other words, intuition is characterized by absence of mediation. Since there are many sorts of mediation, the "immediacy" of intuition can mean a number of things depending on what kind of mediation is absent in this type of apprehension. This can be "the absence of inference, the absence of causes, the absence of the ability to define a term, the absence of justification, the absence of symbols or the absence of thought." (Ency.of Phil, p.722) To give an account of intuition that is both general and brief is impossible and to discuss different types of intuitions in detail would be the aim of a broader study. For those reasons, in this study, we will limit ourselves to mentioning only the Cartesian and Kantian views on intuition.



According to Descartes, intuition is a capacity of the intellect to grasp clear and distinct ideas. As a rationalist, Descartes insists that there are some primary truths which can be arrived at by rational thinking. They are a priori knowledge which do not depend upon sense experience. Rational intuition is the method for grasping these first principles. The first claim that he arrived by rational intuition is the idea of cogito. (Routledge)

For Kant, on the other hand, the term 'intuition' has more to do with sensibility and what is given in experience. According to Kant, intuition is that through which cognition is in an immediate relation to objects. (CPR, A19) Intuition gives the sensory knowledge about what is supplied by the sensibility. What Kant means by 'sensibility' is the capacity for receiving representations, through the mode in which we are affected by objects. (CPR, A19) The forms of this intuition and the forms of the appearances of things are space and time. According to Kant, these forms of intuition (i.e. space and time) are a priori. (CPR, A39/B56) That means, all appearances which are the mere representations of things, can only be sensed in the form of space and in the form of time. Space and time are both forms of intuitions, for Kant; while space is the form of outer intuitions, time is the form of our inner intuitions.

What is original in Kant's doctrine is the view that only the appearances of things can be attained by intuition. The sensibility of the things via intuition is limited with the appearances of the things; the knowledge of what they are in themselves cannot be attained in the form of space and time by intuition. (CPR, B56)

While for Kant, knowledge attained via intuition is limited with the appearances of sensible things in the form of space and time, Bergson sees intuition as precisely what enables us to go beyond appearances to the inner nature of things.

## **2.2 Bergsonian Intuition**

In Bergson's philosophy intuition appears not only as a capacity of the mind, but as a method of philosophy.

In his book, 'An Introduction to Metaphysics', Bergson defines 'intuition' by contrasting it with 'analysis.' He sets forth that, despite their varieties in details, all philosophies can be classified in two groups by their method of knowing a thing: Relative knowledge and absolute knowledge. Whereas analysis is the method of relative knowledge, intuition is the method for absolute knowledge.

Relative knowledge remains external to its object; it thus merely "moves around" the object. (CM, p. 159) If you are trying to know a thing from the outside, you have to place yourself in a spatial relation to that thing (near or close to the thing). This type of knowledge about the thing will be inevitably relative to the position of the knower and give only a relative knowledge. This knowledge works with the properties that this thing has in common with other things. (CM, p.160) So, our relative knowledge will be only a definition or analysis which is made from outside of the thing according to our point of view and made by the help of symbolical expressions. But, the unique characteristics and the properties which form the real essence of the thing is "internal by definition" and cannot "be expressed by symbols" because it is "incommensurable with everything else (CM, p.160)

Bergson asserts that the method for attaining absolute knowledge should be 'intuition'. But what does he mean by "absolute"? In order to answer this question, it will be better to refer to some examples given by Bergson, rather than a mere definition of the word. For example, he says that looking at the adjoined photographs of a city which are taken from all possible points of views cannot be equal to walking in the streets of the same city. (CM, p.160-161) In this example, while the photographs of a city signify the relative knowledge, being located 'in' the city and walking 'in' its streets signifies what Bergson means by 'absolute.' Another example given by him is: even the best translation of a poem can never give the same "inner meaning of the original." (CM, p.161)

A representation taken from a certain point of view, a translation made with certain symbols still remains imperfect in comparison with the object whose picture has been taken or which the symbols seek to express. (CM, p.161)

In this regard, for Bergson the word 'absolute' is identified with perfection in the sense of being complete and being really what something itself is.

Absolute also carries the meaning of being "infinite" for Bergson. To illustrate, Bergson mentions that when someone lifts his/her arm, the experience of this movement is a simple thing, but for another person, this movement is seen as arm's passage from a point to another and these points are infinitely many. So, absolute is infinite in the sense of being both indivisible inwardly and being divided into infinitely many pieces outwardly. (CM, p.161)

According to Mullarkey, as he noted in his introduction to "Introduction to Metaphysics", the absolute is "nothing steady, nothing we can take hold of -it is pure flux, movement in itself." (IM, p. xvi) Keeping in mind the dynamic nature of the absolute (as "pure flux") gives us a clearer understanding of what 'intuition' means in Bergson's philosophy, as he gives us the following explanation of the term in *Matter and Memory*: "pure intuition, external or internal, is that of an undivided continuity." (p.239)

A definition of intuition can be also found in his essay, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, as the "intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible" (CM, p.161)

Intuition gives us the absolute knowledge which analysis is not able to give by dividing the reality into parts. Analysis is a method aiming to have the knowledge of a thing by reducing it to an aggregation of many elements that are already known and by comparing and contrasting the thing with these elements. In other words, analysis tries to have the knowledge of a thing by identifying common and distinctive properties of it in comparison with other known things. In this sense, analysis is not able to grasp the reality of a thing in itself, but can only be the expression of a thing

“in terms of what is not it.” (CM, p.162) On this point, it is important to note that Bergson does not hold ‘the thing’ in a substantial standpoint. Mullarkey states that: “[...] Bergson renders as simultaneously the thing itself – not ‘of’ the thing, nor caused by the thing, but the thing. [...] this thing is not a thing, but a process. It is not a substance but a movement or pure ‘variability’.” (IM, p.xii)

For Bergson, all sciences, in their inquiry of nature, use the method of analysis which is based on understanding a whole by dividing into parts and explaining mobility in terms of immobility. By doing so, they inevitably express the continuous reality by steady symbols. Science, in fact, starts with an original and ambiguous intuition which provides a basis for its inquiry, and then passes from this intuition to analysis for investigating its object from different points of view as much as possible. By putting all the knowledge from different points of view together, science supposes to reconstitute the object. (CM, p.173)

Bergson admits that science has the right to do so, but for him, metaphysics has to go further and grasp the reality absolutely. That is why he puts metaphysics above all sciences and asserts that “Metaphysics is therefore the science which claims to dispense with symbols.” (CM, p.162) So, in Bergson’s philosophy, choosing intuition as the method of philosophy, serves the purpose of doing a metaphysics that “dispense[s] with symbols.” As stated above, since intuition is the sympathy with the thing by entering into it and coinciding with it and since the thing is not a steady substance but a ‘process’ and ‘becoming’, intuition is coinciding with the process in a thing, putting our thinking into its becoming. Indeed, what Bergson means by intuition is the “metaphysical investigation” which can be made “through the effort to experience” the object and “to sympathize with its movement” in order to attain “what is ‘essential and unique’ in the object.” (Mullarkey, IM, p. xvii)

So, for Bergson, to experience an object requires being in harmony with its fluency by the effort of intuition and only with this kind of experience, one can attain “what is essential and unique” in the object. He implies that empiricism, since it is the epistemological view which purports attaining the real knowledge of the object by experience, should get in touch with the real essence of its object in an immediate

way. Bergson thinks that his way of philosophizing by the method of intuition is “true empiricism”:

But a true empiricism is the one which purposes to keep as close to the original itself as possible, to probe more deeply into its life, and by a kind of spiritual auscultation, to feel its soul palpitate; and this true empiricism is the real metaphysics. (CM, p.175)

Thus, it can be said that Bergson’s understanding of metaphysics is an attempt to reverse the habitual thinking of mind which is “going from concepts to things” because for him, a real metaphysics has to start with things. (CM, p.177) (It is crucial to remind here again that the thing in Bergsonian understanding is not substance but a process.)

His metaphysics aims at “bending thought backwards towards its object” and in this regard, Mullarkey comments that his metaphysics can be seen as “physics in process.” (Mullarkey, IM, p. xi, xiii) He also establishes that Bergson’s metaphysics is contrary to both the supersensory ideals in Plato’s and “the impossible objects of knowledge” in Kant’s metaphysics. (IM, p. xii) That is because they both take the reality as being and cannot attain the continuous reality in becoming. So, metaphysics of Bergson can be regarded as this-worldly.

### **2.2.1 Intellect and instinct**

In traditional philosophy the concept of intuition has been severed from its common-sensical evocation of the notion of instinct. Bergson re-problematizes the relation between the concepts of intuition, instinct and intellect.

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson argues that the fundamental mistake in philosophies of nature, since Aristotle, is to consider the vegetative, instinctive and rational life as three successive developed stages of the same faculty. But for Bergson “they are three divergent directions of an activity that has split up as it grew.” (CE, p. 142) They differ not in degree, but in kind. According to this idea, it is wrong to regard one of these faculties as superior to another. The same holds for intellect and instinct.

For Bergson, consciousness consists of both intellect and instinct. Intuition is mediation between intellect and instinct. That does not mean that intuition is an intermediate faculty between a superior and a lower faculty. Intellect is not a more complex and more perfect form of instinct as it is generally thought. It is wrong to attribute to them a difference of degree because they are not faculties of the same kind. They have qualitatively different natures. Thus, to say that intuition is mediation between them means that it is a combination of these different qualities.

But, intellect and instinct are not found in pure forms as ‘pure intelligence’ and ‘pure instinct’. Neither of them is in their pure forms because “they are tendencies, and not things.” (CE, p.143) In intuition these two faculties interpenetrate each other. Bergson argues that, “there is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct are not to be discovered, more especially no instinct that is not surrounded with a fringe of intelligence.” (CE, p.143)

Furthermore, for Bergson, intellect and instinct are “opposite and complementary.” (CE, p. 142) On their being opposite, he asserts that, “what is instinctive in instinct [is] opposite to what is intelligent in intelligence.” I think, here, Bergson does not use the word ‘opposite’ in the sense of a negation but tries to emphasize that they have completely different natures. On being complementary, he thinks that they complement each other by being found in different proportions and constituting intuition. He explains the complementariness of intellect and instinct as follows: “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.” (CE, p. 159) So, it can be argued that Bergson’s method of intuition intends to combine the supreme features of both intellect and instinct in order to grasp the reality in its wholeness.

In his book *Bergson*, Gündoğan points out that intuition in Bergsonian understanding can be seen as ‘the instinct which is conscious of itself’ (p.90)

Bergson also makes a distinction between instinct and intellect from the perspective of the knowledge they involve due to the different modes of action they prompt.

In the action carried out by instinct, there is no gap between its idea of action and the performance of the action. Instinct acts automatically in order to fulfill this action whatever it is. There may be a consciousness in its action but it is hidden as long as the act is fulfilled. But if it meets with an obstacle that hinders the performance of this action, consciousness becomes a part of this activity to remove the obstacle between the idea of the act and the act itself. This “distance between the act and the idea” is “the deficit of instinct” (CE, p. 152) and closing the deficit of instinct is the very nature of this consciousness. This consciousness is intellect. The nature of intellect is to function as removing the difficulty—i.e. the obstacles that stand in the way of instinct—by thinking. So, whereas the knowledge of instinct is “acted and unconscious”, the knowledge of intellect is “thought and conscious.” (CE, p. 153)

Intellect and instinct involve different types of knowledge. These different types of knowledge designate different objects for instinct and intellect. The knowledge of instinct is limited to a singular object or a specific part of the object because the nature of instinct is action towards a thing. Since instinct is focused on its object of action, it knows this singular thing very deeply and closely. However, intellect has a tendency to conceptualize and generalize the connections between the objects and the actions to be taken upon them. Because of this tendency, the knowledge of intellect is directed to the relations i.e. “relations of like with like, of content to container, of cause to effect.” (CE, p. 156) As its attention is to the relations rather than the individuals, its knowledge of an individual thing is superficial compared to the knowledge of instinct. In short, the knowledge of instinct focused on things, but the knowledge of intellect, on relations. (CE, p. 155-156)

Another difference between instinct and intellect is the difference of the instruments they use. Instinct does not require a representation of its idea but only acts. As a tool for its action, instinct uses organized instruments which organically belong to the body of the living being. For example, a bird uses its wing as an instrument in order to fulfill its action of flying. In an instinctive action, the knowledge of using one’s instrument is immanent. The bird does not think about how to use its wings; it only uses this organic tool and flies. There is no gap between its flying and the idea of flying.

On the other hand, the instruments of intellect are inorganic. These instruments are not a part of our body and the knowledge of using them is not inherent in the intellect. To illustrate, using a computer or using a car does not resemble the bird's using its wings. The function of intellect is to produce artificial instruments for its action. As a matter of fact, when we look at the development period of the human being, we define intelligence according to the ability of manufacturing tools. The human that we attribute intelligence to is not *homo sapiens* but *homo faber*, who manufactures artificial tools and also the tools for producing new tools. (CE, p.146) So, to be able to produce artifacts, intellect concerns itself with matter. That is why Bergson defines intellect as "the attention that mind gives to matter." (CM, p.78) But, matter is always in space. Since the function of intellect is to utilize matter and fabricate tools from matter, the development of intellect takes place in space. For that reason, intellect tends towards space.

Thus, the activity of the intellect lies within a spatial realm. The intellect analyzes crude matter and synthesizes it in a different form to be able to produce a new artificial object from it. This tendency of intellect culminates in technology and science.

As mentioned before, the function of intellect is to close the gap between an act and the idea of the act. For instinct there is no gap between them, but there is only activity, pure activity. Intellect intervenes between actions when an obstacle occurs in the continuous flux of the actions of instinct. It functions as a problem-solver. Since solving a problem requires first analyzing it, the intellect specializes in analyzing a continuous process. This act of analyzing is accompanied by dividing matter into parts. But instinct is always in the heart of the activity and works within the real continuous flux of life. However, intellect reduces the continuity and mobility which is the real nature of life to discontinuity and immobility by analyzing and dividing it into discrete parts. But these parts of life no longer carry the mobility of life; they are lifeless states. Pure intellectual thinking breaks down the flux of life by analyzing and dividing it into dead states, and then tries to construct life again out of these dead states. Analogically, it is like dissecting a cadaver to learn about the



processes in a body. It can give information but not about a living thing anymore but about something dead.

[...] we treat the living like the lifeless and think all reality, however fluid, under the form of the sharply defined solid. 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. (CE, p. 174)

Bergson illustrates this view with the example of motion. Science –which works with intellect- explains motion with immobilities. It is the confusion between real motion and space traversed in a motion. That is the same confusion that led to the famous paradox of Zeno.

### **2.2.2 Intuition and Duration**

Bergson asserts that:

[...] 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. (CM, p.34)

Bergson says that his construal of duration enabled him “to raise intuition to the level of philosophical method.” (CM, p.30) This is because the method of intuition requires two things at least, both of which are supplied by duration: (1) coincidence with the object of knowledge; (2) grasping a continuous process in its movement.

For (1), the coincidence with the object, the knowing subject has to place itself within and grasp the inner reality of the object. This implies a thinking process with no intermediary between the object and the knowing subject. Contrary to the discursive and analytic mind, intuition is the method for grasping the immediate knowledge of the things in themselves. Bergson claims in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* that “there is at least one reality which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own person in its flowing through time, the self which endures.” (CM, p.163) What we see from this quotation is that

Bergson starts to apply his method of intuition, first -and “at least” only- to the self. Since he defines intuition as the sympathy by which one places oneself to the interior of the object and coincides with it, it goes without saying that our own selves would be the first place to try and apply the method of intuition in a way that fulfills this first requirement.

Also, it won't be wrong to infer that duration of our own selves is the intuition of duration from the phrase “our own person in its flowing through time.” Since the intuition of self is the intuition of duration, duration also provides us with the subject matter for applying the second requirement of intuition as a method: grasping a continuous process in its movement. Bergson's notion of duration can be understood as the application of his method of intuition to time, since duration is our inner perception of time. On the other hand, the concept of homogeneous time—i.e., the concept of time which is used in the sciences and in social life— can be seen as the result of an analytical approach to time. As Bergson states that analysis is the method for relative knowledge, analysis of time should be relative to other things. For example, for physics, time is a magnitude related to distance and velocity. But intuition as a method as it is used particularly in the Bergsonian sense is intended to give the absolute knowledge about time i.e. that is duration.

Deleuze points out ‘the methodological thread of intuition’ in Bergson's philosophy as a ground for all other concepts like Duration, Memory and Elan Vital. Moreover, he draws attention to the importance of intuition as a method to establish especially the concept of ‘duration’ (Bergsonism, p.14)

He also says that “duration would remain purely intuitive, in the ordinary sense of the word, if intuition –in the properly Bergsonian sense- were not there as method.” (Bergsonism, p.14) Deleuze argues that “Without intuition as method, duration would remain a simple psychological experience. Conversely, if it did not coincide with duration, intuition would not be capable of carrying out the program that corresponds to the preceding rules: the determination of true problems or of genuine differences in kind.” (Bergsonism, p.33)

## CHAPTER 3

### DURATION

Bergson applies his method of intuition firstly to the inner states of the self. As mentioned in the previous chapter, intuition is the sympathy by which we put ourselves within the object in order to coincide with the real inner essence of it. Also, as we mentioned in section 2.2.2, Bergson admits that there is at least one reality the essence of which we can coincide with by intuition and this is our own selves. Accordingly, he starts his investigation by directing his attention to the inner states of this self. What he encounters is an uninterrupted succession of states which are melting into one another. (CM, p.163) He says that in this flow, it is very difficult to tell apart these states from one another because there are not clear starting and finishing points between them. They penetrate into each other. But still, it is evident that these many states form a multiplicity which does not resemble any other multiplicity we know. (CM, p.168) There is also a unity which binds them together. So, he comes to the inference that there should be an inner time experience which has the same nature with the states of consciousness as being continuous, heterogeneous and intermingled. Also this inner time should be the basis for these states being both a multiplicity and a unity: that is what he calls duration. (CM, p.169)

In order to conclude this idea of duration, Bergson inquires into the double nature of these states of consciousness in terms of the concepts of extensity, intensity, multiplicity, unity, quality, quantity, homogeneous and heterogeneous. In this chapter, we will follow the path of his reasoning that is found in his book *Time and Free Will*.

### 3.1 Extensity – Intensity

In his book *Time and Free Will*, Bergson starts with an investigation of the nature of our states of mind such as our feelings, desires and sensations. What he realizes is that we speak of a sensation as being more or less intense than another sensation. For a simple example, we generally use phrases like ‘happier, less excited, more sorrow’ in our daily lives. As we admit that the feelings are characterized by intensity, why are we trying to compare them as “more intensive” or “less intensive” although ‘more’ and ‘less’ are the terms of extensity?

Bergson explores several ways in which one might argue for speaking of intensity as if it is a magnitude. But, he ultimately dismisses all of them.

One could argue that to be ‘more’ or ‘less’ is related to the amount of something which occupies a volume in space. Do sensations or feelings have this type of magnitude in space? Of course they do not, because they are not extensive. Bergson claims that it is possible to make such comparisons only between spatial things according to the space they occupy or in terms of relations of containment. To say that something is greater or smaller than another thing means that what is greater contains the space which the smaller occupies. But, can we speak of comparing two intensities according to the relation of containment? Bergson claims that it would be “a contradiction to speak of an inextensive quantity.” (TFW, p.3)

We are thus led to believe that we translate the intensive into the extensive, and that we compare two intensities, or at least express the comparison, by the confused intuition of a relation between two extensities. (TFW, p.4)

The important distinction between extensity and intensity is while the increase or decrease of an extensity is based on a quantitative change, the change of intensity is “a qualitative progress”. So, the attempt to measure intensities by the methods of measurement that are used for extensities would be to transform a quality into a quantity. But if it is evident that this is impossible, what is the underlying reason of this illusion that such a conversion of quality into a quantity is possible?

According to Bergson, we tend to confuse the quantitative measure of the cause of a sensation with the qualitative nature of this sensation. To clarify the relation, he gives an example: If someone holds a pin with his right hand and pricks his left hand, the sensation is a slight pain in the left hand. But if the right hand pricks with an increased force, the sensation of pain becomes very intensive. Bergson explains the reason of this transforming as follows: “[...] we localized in the sensation of the left hand, which is pricked, the progressive effort of the right hand, which pricks.” (TFW, p.43) The qualitative change in the effect (pain) is measured in terms of the quantitative increase in the cause (pricking). For Bergson, it is an illegitimate conversion of quality into quantity, intensity into magnitude and he claims that in all representative sensations, intensity is converted in this way. (TFW, p.43)

Bergson, as mentioned above, claims that the conversion of cause into effect occurs in all ‘representative sensations’. But there are also more complex sensations “the intensity of which [do] not absolutely depend on an external cause.” (TFW, p.31) He calls these sensations “affective sensations” and distinguishes them from “representative sensations.”

Representative sensations –each of which Bergson considers in the first chapter of Time and Free Will- are the sensations of sound, heat, pressure, weight and light. The common property of all these sensations is to have a cause which is measurable and extensive. However, the sensation itself is intensive and a change in the sensation is not a quantitative change, but a qualitative change. In this point, Bergson suggests to call a change in a sensation, “a sensation of increase” rather than “an increase of sensation”. (TFW, p. 48) He explains this as follows:

The whole question is centered in this, for in the first case the sensation would be a quantity like its external cause, whilst in the second it would be a quality which had become representative of the magnitude of its cause. (TFW, p.48)

On the other hand, affective sensations can be generally sub-classified as pleasure and pain. So, his investigation continues with the question of what the intensity of an

affective sensation, a pleasure or a pain, consists in. (TFW, p.32) For Bergson, in an affective state, there is “the conscious expression of an organic disturbance, the inward echo of an outward cause.” (TFW, p. 32)

We notice that a more intense sensation generally corresponds to a greater nervous disturbance; but in as much as these disturbances are unconscious as movements, since they come before consciousness in the guise of a sensation which has no resemblance at all to motion, we do not see how they could transmit to the sensation anything of their own magnitude. (TFW, p. 32)

The intensity of such sensations (of pleasure and pain) does not depend on only the external causes but it depends of the stimulus in the organism. In that sense, they can be seen as self-sufficient. Pleasure and pain do not only express the past and present occurrences, but they give information about the future reaction.

In short, Bergson’s research on the nature of sensations is concluded by asserting two types of sensations due to having a cause: Representative sensations and affective sensations. While the former represent the external cause which produces the sensation, the latter are self-sufficient. In accordance to the source of these sensations, acquired perception is the way of getting representative sensations and confused perception is the origin of affective sensations. In a confused perception, Bergson says, “we give the name of intensity to the larger or smaller number of simple psychic phenomena which we conjecture to be involved in the fundamental state”. (TFW, p.73) In a representative sensation, we choose “the simpler phenomena” to represent in a sensation with a name, but since in reality most of the representative sensations are affective sensations, they involve a multiplicity of sensations. (TFW, p.73) Now, the question is what implies a multiplicity of sensations, and what kind of multiplicity is this? The next attempt of Bergson is to determine what the multiplicity of inner states is and to investigate if there is a similarity between the multiplicity of inner states and the multiplicity of numbers.

### **3.2 Multiplicity of Conscious States**

In order to understand the multiplicity of conscious states, Bergson first deals with our intuition of number. He compares the multiplicity of conscious states with the multiplicity of numbers because the main problem about the multiplicity of inner states is the illusion of their being countable like extended things. As we mentioned before, inner states are not extensive but intensive states. But now this question arises: If they are not extensive, how is it possible to count them, and if we cannot count them, what kind of multiplicity is involved in inner states? This confusion leads Bergson to contemplate on the counting process in numbers.

He says that a number can be defined as “a collection of identical units.” (TFW, p.75) Thus the process of counting with numbers implies both the concept of unit and the notion of identity. Let us first explain the concept of unit: We can only talk about a multiplicity by calling one of these identical units as ‘one’ and the collection of these ones as ‘many.’ But if we look closer to this ‘one’, this unit, it is clear that every unit consists of multiple parts in its unity. Bergson claims that a unit is both a multiplicity of parts and the unity of a whole. (TFW, p.80)

Nevertheless, by looking more closely into the matter, we shall see that all unity is the unity of a simple act of the mind, and that, as this is an act of unification, there must be some multiplicity for it to unify. (TFW, p.80)

Thus, he claims that the formation of the number is “provisional” because it is the simple act of the mind which attributes a unity to what is multiple in itself. (TFW, p.81)

Secondly, if a number is the collection of identical units, these units require being identical with one other. To be identical here means to have the same qualitative properties. This means that counting necessitates qualitatively identical units. To illustrate a counting process, Bergson gives the example of counting the sheep in a flock: Although each sheep has its own qualitative properties different from others, in order to count them, we ignore these differences and take into consideration of their common property of being a sheep as if they are identical. (TFW, p.76) Also,

the sheep that are counted should be distinct from each other. This only means that they should occupy different positions in space. Counting will start with an image of one sheep and continue with envisioning the successive images. Thus, counting necessitates juxtaposition in a real or ideal space. (TFW, p.83) If we try to remember how we have learned the numbers and counting in primary school, we will remember the abacus which consists of several beads in each line of it. We learned counting things by realizing that each bead is separate and distinct from another in space depending on the voids between them. That enabled us to realize that they are in different positions according to the space they occupy. Then, by their distinctness and different positions in space, we grasped the juxtaposition of them which made counting possible. But, after grasping the concept of number, we give up counting in space and continue to make calculations with numbers. Bergson says that after grasping the counting process, the objects we counted “became points” as images and then this image of point evolved into the idea of “abstract number.” (TFW, p.78) This abstract number is no more a point or image or even an idea, but a conventional symbol that we use for calculating. We make calculations no more in space but with these abstract symbols of numbers. But, that is the point which causes the misunderstanding of regarding the counting process as occurring not in space but in time. (TFW, p.78) Bergson admits that “in this way we have counted moments of duration rather than points in space” but adds that “the question is whether we have not counted the moments of duration by means of space.” (TFW, p.78) If a counting process takes place in duration, when we pass from a number to another, the previous ones should wait somewhere. Since duration is a succession of moments, they cannot wait in this succession but they wait in an ideal space where we localize their mental image. (TFW, p.79) He concludes by claiming that “every clear idea of number implies a visual image in space.” (TFW, p.79)

As a consequence of this inquiry about the multiplicity of numbers, we can say that counting necessitates qualitatively identical units which have juxtaposition in a real or ideal space. Since our inner states differ qualitatively and since they are not in juxtaposition but they penetrate into one another, counting them as real objects or as numbers is impossible. But, then how should we understand the multiplicity of these



inner states? For Bergson, there should be another type of multiplicity for explaining the multiplicity of inner states.

### **3.3 Two Kinds of Multiplicity**

Bergson distinguishes between two kinds of multiplicity: discrete multiplicity and continuous multiplicity. Discrete multiplicity is numerical and is based on quantitative differences. Continuous multiplicity is non-numerical and rests on qualitative differences. While the former is the multiplicity of material objects and has to do with space, the latter is the multiplicity of states of consciousness.

As Deleuze states in his book *Bergsonism*, Bergson does not discuss the word ‘multiplicity’ in the sense of the opposite of the word ‘one’ and in conjunction with the classical problem of “the one and the many” in philosophy. (p. 39) What Bergson claims is that there should be two different kinds of multiplicity. Before Bergson, the idea of a distinction of multiplicities had been asserted by G. B. Riemann, a physicist and mathematician, in his 1854 *Habilitationsschrift* entitled ‘On the hypotheses which provide the grounds for geometry’. He has put forth two kinds of multiplicity as discrete multiplicity and continuous multiplicity. Discrete multiplicity is based upon the metrical division of calculating the whole by measuring one part of a multiplicity and counting the number of these parts included in the whole. But continuous multiplicity is established on the metrical principle which depends on the forces acting in the multiplicity. The method for measuring a discrete multiplicity is counting the number of elements in the multiplicity by assuming the magnitude of an element as a unit. On the other hand, the method for measuring a continuous multiplicity is comparing one magnitude with the one which contains it. (Bergsonism, p.39-40)

According to Deleuze, Bergson was well aware of the distinction made by Riemann because Bergson’s book, *Duration and Simultaneity*, in which he puts his doctrine as opposed to the theory of relativity, is dependent on Riemann. (Bergsonism, p.39) But Bergson attributed a highly different meaning to the term ‘continuous multiplicity’

from the Riemannian sense of the term and connected it to the idea of duration. (p. 39-40) The principle for continuous multiplicity is, for Bergson, the change in metrical principle in all the steps of dividing this multiplicity because of the differences in kind of the constituent parts of this multiplicity. Even, the dividing process is based on the qualitative differences between them.

Also, Bergson thinks that the continuous multiplicity is not spatial like the discrete multiplicity, but temporal. That is why it is directly related to the notion of duration in which our confused and qualitatively different mental states form a continuous multiplicity.

Space, which is the medium for the multiplicity of material objects – i.e. discrete multiplicity—is homogeneous. By homogeneity, Bergson intends ‘the absence of every quality’ (TFW, p. 98). But the essential question is then what the medium for continuous multiplicity -which is the multiplicity in our states of consciousness - is. Time is the apparent option, but according to Bergson we will not have solved the problem unless we think more carefully about what we understand by ‘time’. One mistake that is commonly made is to think of time as a homogeneous medium. Thus, we would still have to use representations of states of consciousness in space to form a series, and they would again be represented as a discrete multiplicity. As Bergson says “Time, conceived under the form of unbounded and homogeneous medium is nothing but the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness.” (TFW, p.99)

According to Bergson, “the ghost of space” means the spatialization of time and that is also the mistake Kant made by taking time to be homogeneous.

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. (TFW, p.232)

Bergson claims that we cannot count our internal states as we count extended things. Multiplicity of conscious states does not have the necessary conditions for being

counted, because they are not units or distinct entities; moreover they are not qualitatively identical units.

He suggests that the only way for counting conscious states would be to “represent them by homogeneous units” in space which are distinct from and impenetrable to each other. (TFW, p. 89) If so, this multiplicity of our conscious states would be seen as they stand in a line as the material objects are aligned in space. But, he immediately adds that, in reality they are not homogeneous and separate from one another, but they are heterogeneous and they permeate each other. The multiplicity of our conscious states cannot be reduced to the multiplicity of objects or of units of a number owing to their qualitative differences. He asserts that these states are not distinct and cannot be held as equal quantitative magnitudes because they permeate into each other and constitute a heterogeneous structure. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, is “the very ground of our experience” which is based on the qualitative differences immanent in nature. (TFW, p.97) While symbolic representations of states of consciousness (such as words) are situated in space, the states of consciousness themselves are not.

I shall say, for example, that there is, on the one hand, a multiplicity of successive states of consciousness and, on the other hand, a unity which binds them together. Duration will be the ‘synthesis’ of this unity and this multiplicity, but how this mysterious operation can admit of shades or degrees- I repeat- is not quite clear. (CM, p.184-185)

### **3.4 Homogeneous Time and Duration**

As we have discussed in the previous sections, for Bergson, the multiplicity of our conscious states is not a multiplicity that we can compare with other multiplicities. This confused multiplicity of inner states forms a unity in the sense of indivisibility and being in an uninterrupted flux. Duration is the basis for this unity of the continuous progress of heterogeneous multiplicity. The “inner life” which is experienced by the intuition of duration presents itself all at once in a “variety of qualities, continuity of progress and the unity of direction.” (CM, p.165) I in this sense, duration, as the medium in which we experience this flux of inner states, is

both a unity and a multiplicity. That is what Bergson means by calling duration as the synthesis of unity and multiplicity.

For Bergson, the homogeneous time which we use in our daily life as divided into hours, minutes, etc. and the time physics uses in its calculations is not the real duration that we experience by means of our inner perception. He argues that this homogeneous time is the result of projecting time into space as if time can be divided into equal portions like any other spatial thing. It is the illegitimate translation of what is unextended into the extended. (TFW, p. ix) I think the most important aspect of time that Bergson brings into its conceptualization and problematization is its unique nature which cannot be analyzed by the nature of space.

Bergson points out the important difference between the homogeneous time and pure duration explicitly with these words:

Granted that inner duration perceived by consciousness, is nothing else but the melting of states of consciousness into one another, the gradual growth of the ego, it will be said, notwithstanding, that the time which the astronomer introduces into his formula, the time which our clocks divide into equal portions, this time, at least, is something different. (TFW, p. 107)

Bergson defines pure duration as “the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states” and describes it as “forming the past and the present in an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting into one another.” (TFW, p. 100) The crucial idea to intuit the notion of ‘duration’ is that, past and present as a whole together are in an uninterrupted flux. This also explains how it is possible to be ‘ever the same and ever changing’. (TFW, p. 101)

To illustrate the unity of duration in progress, Bergson mentions the progress in a color spectrum, the change of tints which resembles the successive change in our conscious states in duration. However, the color spectrum example does not exactly fit in with the concept of duration since the tints in the spectrum still occupy different

spaces external to each other and are juxtaposed. But, pure duration should be independent from externality, spatiality and juxtaposition. (IM, p.9)

In order to intuit the real essence of duration, let's think about a musical piece we are listening to. Although we know that it is formed by the juxtaposition of several notes, our inner sensation is confused and the multiplicity of tones is not discrete but heterogeneous. It is heterogeneous because each tune has its own qualitative property. However, if this piece of music is represented by symbols of notes in a treble staff, they are not the notes we hear anymore, they are spatial representations of them. Can we compare the sensations of looking at written symbols of a musical piece and listening to it? Although the notes in a treble staff are the same every time, the performance of the entire piece is unique. This is because of the irreversibility of real duration. A performance always occurs in duration. There are no two identical moments in duration. The impossibility of experience of two identical moments in our life shows the heterogeneity of duration.

## CHAPTER 4

### FREEDOM

Bergson defines ‘freedom’ as “the relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs.” (TFW, p.219) Bergson speaks of a kind of self who lets itself live in the real succession of conscious states—that is, in duration. According to Bergson, freedom becomes a pseudo-problem when it is abstracted from the self as duration and constructed on a wrong assumption regarding time which is the illegitimate translation of duration to spatialized time. Therefore, the problem of freedom in Bergson’s philosophy will be discussed within the frame of two questions (1) how does ‘spatialization of time’ cause to a misconception of freedom? (2) what is the relation between self and freedom? First of all, in section 4.1, the problem will be considered from the aspect of the misconception of freedom due to a wrong assumption on time.

Then, in section 4.2, I will discuss the relation between the notion of freedom and two kinds of selves (the fundamental self and the superficial self) in Bergson’s philosophy. In order to understand the possibility of freedom in Bergson’s philosophy, it is crucial to distinguish between the fundamental self and the superficial self. For the aim of explaining the differences between these two selves, I will express the superficial self in subsection 4.2.1 and the fundamental self in subsection 4.2.2. After clarifying this, in subsection 4.2.3, I will emphasize the importance of the fundamental self as the self which has the potential to create free acts by means of attaining the intuition of duration. Finally in section 4.3, I will show the similarities between free acts and creative processes and argue that the notion of freedom in Bergson’s philosophy can be interpreted as a kind of creativity. Moreover, I will briefly mention the difference between philosophy of ‘being’ and philosophy of ‘becoming’ in order to argue that creativity can be introduced as a fundamental ontological category of ‘becoming’.

#### **4.1 Misconception of Freedom: Spatialization of Time**

The original contribution of Bergson's approach to the problem of freedom can be seen as his objection to the standard perception of time which is built on the notion of divisibility into parts. According to him, philosophers previous to him and also his contemporaries deal with the problem on the basis of the same mistake; that is to take time as a homogeneous unity and as a line which is composed of juxtaposed moments. This primary assumption leads to the illegitimate translation of duration- the real flow of time- to an understanding of time which is reduced to space. If time is drawn as a line which is composed of linear juxtapositions of moments, it causes the illusion that we can divide it into intervals of the same kind. The result of this approach for the issue of free act is the attempt to investigate the structure of a free act by analyzing it within its place in a whole, completed time period. Bergson opposes this view of time by claiming that "the line one measures is immobile, time is mobility." (CM, p.12) For him, time cannot be taken as a line because a line symbolizes something complete whereas real duration is always incomplete and it is the ceaseless flux itself.

Physics uses the notion of time as a magnitude which is traversed as a body travels over a specific distance. Science of physics thus deals with time passed which can be calculated in terms of intervals as moments or seconds. Bergson finds this "quite natural; for the role of science is to foresee." (CM, p.13) But in this process, science eliminates duration, and as Bergson argues, "this duration [...] which is so difficult to conceive and express, is what one feels and lives." (CM, p.13)

He criticizes metaphysicians for discussing the notion of time in a way similar to that of the scientists. For him, all theories of space and time in metaphysics are based upon the fallacy of applying the features of space to time as if they have the same nature.

In short, time thus considered is no more than a space in idea where one imagines to be set out in line all past, present and future events, and in addition, something which prevents them from appearing in a single perception: the unrolling in duration would be this very incompleteness, the addition of a negative quantity. Such, consciously or unconsciously, is the

thought of most philosophers, in accordance with the demands of the understanding, the necessity of language and the symbolism of science. Not one of them has sought positive attributes in time. (CM, p.18)

If we get back to the subject of free acts, as a consequence of conceiving of time in terms of a line—i.e., projecting time onto space— both those philosophers who defend free will and those who oppose it make the same mistake of confusing duration with extension. According to Bergson, this is what makes freedom “a pseudo-problem”. (CM, p.27) Defenders of determinism claim that “there is only one possible act corresponding to given antecedents” and the opponents of determinism state that “the same series could issue in several different acts, equally possible.” (TFW, p.175) The former are mistaken to miss the creative force in the free act by reducing it only to an inevitable effect of certain causes. On the other hand, the latter fall into the error of defining free will as “a simple ‘choice’ between two or more alternatives, as if these alternatives were ‘possibles’ outlined beforehand and as if the will was limited to ‘bringing about’ [...] one of them.” (CM, p.19) Here, Bergson has two objections to those defenders of free will. The first one is that they regard a free act as if it is a choosing process between several alternatives at a specific point, by stopping, hesitating and deciding at this point. His second objection is that they believe that at that specific point, all alternatives are possible. He insists that a free act would “in no way [...] exist, not even in the form of the purely possible, prior to its realization.” (CM, p.19)

Bergson discusses the problem of possibility in detail in his essay “The Possible and The Real”. He argues that the “pseudo-problem” of freedom is exacerbated by another misconception (in addition to the misconception regarding time) concerning the concept of possibility. According to him, a subtle but crucial semantic shift takes place with the word ‘possible’. The innocuous meaning of the term is “what is not impossible”. It merely signifies “absence of hindrance”. But the idea of possibility that the defenders of free will ground their arguments on relies on ascribing to what is possible ‘an ideal pre-existence’. Libertarians regard freedom as a choice between the possibles as if the possible has an existence before the act. In this point, Bergson



gives a very good example to distinguish two different meanings of the term 'possible' and to point out the mistake of libertarians on the problem of freedom by confusing these two meanings. It can be said that Hamlet was possible before Shakespeare wrote it if we use the word 'possible' in the sense of having "no insurmountable obstacle to its realization." (CM, p.102) In other words, if 'possible' is used in the meaning of 'not impossible', it makes sense. But according to Bergson, libertarians assign a different meaning to it as "pre-existence under the form of an idea." (CM, p.102) If we say that Hamlet was possible before its realization, this would mean that one could predict what Shakespeare will live, think and feel in his whole life before he created Hamlet. To do this, one would have to "have the same body and the same soul" with Shakespeare in the creation process of Hamlet (which means to be Shakespeare himself, and it is impossible). (CM, p.103) Possibility in this sense implies that Hamlet already existed as an idea before Shakespeare created it. The writing of Hamlet is a creation process and within a creation, possibility and realization are simultaneous. The same thing can be said for a free act.

For Bergson it is not reasonable to attribute pre-existence to what is possible. Bergson's claim is that freedom is not to choose one of these possibles because it is freedom itself which creates these possibles. He objects to the idea that there are possibles and one of them becomes real. Bergson states this idea as: "It is the real which makes itself possible and not the possible which becomes real." (CM, p.104) Libertarians conceive the so-called "possible" as a pre-existent alternative by retroactive thinking, by analyzing this choosing process (as they account for the free act as a choice) from the future. They argue that somebody chose the way X, but the way Y was equally possible before.

The possible is therefore the mirage of the present in the past; and as we know the future will finally constitute a present and the mirage effect is continually being produced, we are convinced that the image of tomorrow is already contained in our actual present, which will be the past of tomorrow, although we did not manage to grasp it. That is precisely the illusion. (CM, p.101)

Bergson tries to point out the misconception which both libertarians and determinists ground their arguments on -that is the geometrical representation of the free act

process- by illustrating a diagram of a path which starts from the point M, comes to the point O and branches off into two paths as one of them reaches the point X and the other reaches point Y. When we thus illustrate the succession of time and the decision on one of two directions at point O, with a spatial diagram, we fall into the fallacy of projecting time into space. This is a fallacy because the process of a free act does not 'take place' but *happens* in the continuous activity of the self. For Bergson, in reality there are not only two options but there is "a self that lives and develops by means of its hesitations until the free action drops from it like an over-ripe fruit" (TFW, p. 176) Let us assume that the self decided to move to the direction of X. For this situation, determinists will claim that choosing the direction of X occurred by virtue of some reasons for choosing it. Contrary to this, defenders of free act will defend that you hesitated and pondered at point O, then chose the direction of X while the option of choosing the direction of Y was also possible.

Bergson finds both of these explanations meaningless because they both analyze the choice of X after the choosing process has been performed. Besides, for Bergson the free act is not something like choosing between two alternative ways. He says that this diagram does not show the act in the doing but the act already done. (TFW, p.180) That arises from the confusion of space and time, representing time by space. Because, if we represent the succession of time by a map-like diagram as if it is a line that branches off in some points, it may seem as if we had the chance to turn back and choose another path. But, time is not a line that traverses space; it is irreversible and has only one direction. With this type of a map-like diagram, one can only show the time that has already passed, not the time which is passing. That is the result of the fallacy that both the defenders of free will and the determinists fall into, when they project time into space.

In addition to the objection of regarding time as space in the free will discussion, Bergson also has four important objections to determinists- or to put it more accurately- to psychological determinists. (1) reducing the self to a collection of psychic states (2) abstraction of these states of mind from the self (3) disjoining these states from each other whereas in reality, they "melt into one another" (4) then trying

to impose a causal relation onto them from the outside. These four fallacies are interrelated and each fallacy has its source in the previous one.

Firstly, Bergson opposes an understanding of the self which is regarded as the sum of all psychic states. For Bergson, self is more than the aggregate of these mental states because 'the whole personality is in a single one of them'. (TFW, p.165) These feelings, sensations and ideas make up a new whole soul by each act and this whole soul is reflected in the creation of new free acts. He articulates this view as follows: "The outward manifestation of this inner state will be just what is called a free act, since the self alone will have been the author of it, and since it will express the whole of the self." (TFW, p.165-166) By the analogy of 'author' Bergson draws attention to the creative aspect of self in his free actions.

Secondly, psychological determinists (associationists) try to isolate mental states from the self as if these states can be analyzed separately. But, for Bergson, they miss the point that one's entire personality and his/her states of consciousness are in a reciprocal relationship because these states effect the determination of the whole personality and the personality is reflected in these states. Associationists try to construct the self as a sum of all these inner states. But as long as associationists consider the impersonal representations of these states, this self would be no more than the "phantom self" or "the shadow of the ego projecting itself into space". (TFW, p.165) Contrary to this, Bergson defends the view that "the self is not determined by these states, it creates them." (Mullarkey, Bergson and Philosophy, p.25) According to Bergson, acts of the self can only be regarded as free since they "spring from our whole personality", and since they express the whole self. (TFW, p. 172) For Bergson, "it is the whole soul, in fact, which gives rise to the free decision." (TFW, p.167)

The third objection that Bergson raised to psychological determinism is that they assume these mental states (which they abstract from the self) as separate from each other. In social life, to name the inner states such as feelings, desires, we are forced to set clear-cut distinctions between the conscious states, but in reality they are permeated into each other and melt into one another. In order to express our confused

inner states by a word in language, we are compelled to set the heterogeneous plurality of them as a homogeneous multiplicity and perceive them as if they are external to each other. But these expressions of these heterogeneous states are only their symbols. Hence, Bergson states his objection to psychological determinists as follows: ‘They make the mistake of constantly replacing the concrete phenomenon which takes place in the mind by the artificial reconstruction of it given by philosophy, and thus confusing the explanation of the fact with the fact itself.’ (TFW, p.163) While the concrete phenomenon is the heterogeneous multiplicity of conscious states, psychological determinism takes the linguistic representations of these states and regards them as separate and distinct.

Lastly, determinists try to establish a causal relation between the states of mind preceding the act of choice. Thus, Bergson reveals psychological determinism to be the application of physical determinism to states of consciousness. But, for him, it is a fallacy to construct causality between states of consciousness. He claims that ‘psychological determinism implies an associationist conception of mind’ (TFW, p.155) According to this view, our present state of consciousness is in a necessary connection with the preceding ones like a resultant is in connection with its premises. But Bergson rigorously questions what kind of a necessity the necessity involved in this connection can be. He says that it cannot be a type of “geometrical necessity” because “between successive conscious states there is a difference of quality which will always frustrate any attempt to deduce any one of them a priori from its predecessors.” (TFW, p.155-156) This difference of quality in mental states prevents us from calling the relation between them ‘a cause’. Here, we see again that Bergson grounds his objection on the idea of the heterogeneity of the conscious states which he explains in detail in the first chapter of his book ‘Time and Free Will’. This absence of causal determinism between the successive mental states is his fourth objection to psychological determinism.

To sum up the discussion of psychological determinism, it can be said that by these four objections, it is clear why Bergson is not a *self-determinist* despite all his arguments which connect the mental states of self and the actions of self. The crucial idea here is that, Bergson does not establish a causal determination between the

successive conscious states. Instead, in his view, each state and each act is integrated into the self at each moment so that the self continually grows and develops as a whole in duration. But the momentarily new selves that are thus formed, of course, cannot be distinguished from each other in the continuous flux of time. That idea implies an uninterrupted change in the self. That is why we cannot realize that our soul is changing continuously although we can realize that our soul has changed after a period of time. It is similar with the experience of getting older. We look at our mirror-image everyday and none of these days we can say that ‘I can see, I’m older than yesterday’ but after a long period of time passed, when we look at our old photos we say that, ‘I was younger than today.’

In the uninterrupted and continuous flow of the states of mind, the acting self does not remain the same. Due to the passage of time and the storage of the previous acts of the self in memory, the self is always in a continuous change.

Try, for instance, to call up today the act you will accomplish tomorrow, even if you know what you are going to do. Your imagination perhaps evokes the movement to be gone through; but what you will think and feel in doing it you can know nothing of today because your state tomorrow will include all the life you will have lived up until that moment, with whatever that particular moment is to add to it. (CM, p.19)

As Guerlac explains, “Bergson refutes determinism within the psychological realm by affirming the creative force of time; by affirming that time itself is a force.” (p.81) This is because time is related to memory, which is part of consciousness, and since memory stores up past lived experiences, it becomes a force; Guerlac even refers to time as a kind of energy. More accurately, it becomes “energy” in passing. “Paradoxically, time becomes energy by passing, by losing itself in the very act of becoming, and by being stored through memory.” (p.80)

## 4.2 Freedom and Two Kinds of Self

Bergson's dualistic approach which is started with distinguishing two types of multiplicity leads to the distinction of two different notions of time: homogeneous time, as a quantitative multiplicity and duration as a qualitative multiplicity. As a consequence of this dualism in time perception, Bergson suggests another duality, this time, in the conscious life of the self. These three dualities, in fact, all stem from the same transformation: reducing a heterogeneous multiplicity to the homogeneous medium of space.

Below homogeneous duration, which is the extensive symbol of true duration, a close psychological analysis distinguishes a duration whose heterogeneous moments permeate one another; below the numerical multiplicity of conscious states, a qualitative multiplicity; below the self with well-defined states, a self in which succeeding each other means melting into one another and forming an organic whole. (TFW, p.128)

This quotation summarizes the main distinction that Bergson tries to explain in *Time and Free Will*. On the one side, there is continuous flow of qualitative multiplicities, and on the other side, quantitative and spatial representations of them. In other words, in the core there is continuous multiplicity, heterogeneous duration and the fundamental self, on the crust, there is discrete multiplicity, homogeneous time and the superficial self.

Bergson thinks that if two kinds of multiplicity and two forms of time are set forth, there should be two different aspects of the self which correspond to the conscious states of two. (TFW, p.129) His distinction of two selves results from the idea of continuous multiplicity of conscious states. To be more precise, for Bergson, the self whose states form a continuous multiplicity is the fundamental self.

As said before, if these two kinds of selves are examined from the perspective of time, it can be said that, for Bergson, two different aspects of conscious life are related to two ways of understanding of time. While the superficial or social self is the reflection of homogeneous time, the fundamental or deep-seated self springs from the intuition of duration. Only with this fundamental self, can one apprehend

the succession of duration in the inner states which are already non-measurable and interpenetrating each other. We can come in contact with our fundamental self only within the intuition of duration. On the other hand, the superficial self is like a spatial and social representation of the former. The superficial self “comes in contact with the external world at its surface.” (TFW, p.125)

#### **4.2.1 Superficial Self**

The superficial self is the projection of the fundamental self -which lives in duration- to homogeneous space. When the self is reduced to the realm of homogeneous space, the deep-seated states of the self are distinguished from one another as we distinguish objects in space. In that case, the deep-seated states of the self which are continuous multiplicity are converted into objects and therefore a process is illegitimately objectified. Then, some of these psychic states are taken as causes and some particular effects are inferred from them. On this issue, Bergson draws attention to a very important point. He claims that only the actions of the superficial self can be applicable to associationist theory. (TFW, p.168) The associationists regard the self in a deterministic approach which leads to “a mechanical conception of the self.” (TFW, p.171) Bergson explains this as follows:

[W]e generally live and act outside our own person, in space rather than in duration, and [...] by this means we give a handle to the law of causality, which binds the same effects to the same cause [...]. (TFW, p. 233)

Bergson calls this superficial self as “a parasitic self which continually encroaches upon the other.” (TFW, p.166) Our daily routine actions are generally performed with the superficial self and these actions do not spring from our real inner motives or feelings. We behave automatically for fulfilling our biological and social needs.

For example, every morning we wake up at a specific time and eat something and go to work and do what we have to do. The activities of this self cannot go beyond monotony. In all these activities, “the act follows the impression without the self

interfering with it” and we became “a conscious automaton.” (TFW, p.168) The superficial self does not act with the real sensations and feelings but based on outer impressions. These acts are not ‘actions’ anymore but they are only ‘reactions’ to outer influences. Bergson states that when viewed from this respect they “resemble reflex actions.” (TFW, p.168) However, most of us surmise that these outer impressions are our real motives because of the inability to reach our fundamental self. In a life of this kind, it is hard to talk about creativity because creative acts cannot flourish from the chain of action-reaction.

#### **4.2.2. Fundamental self**

In our daily life, (and by ‘daily life’ here, I mean the real inner life and not the superficial social life) there is a flow of inner states which are melting into one another in our consciousness. In a moment, we experience more than one feeling which are intertwined with also many ideas and sensations which come from the impressions of the external world as well as impressions from our past memories. The real inner life consists of these moments but not as a serial of juxtaposed moments. These moments in our consciousness do not exist interruptedly and separately, but rather in a continuous flow. This flow of moments implies the sensation of duration in which we experience all moments permeate into each other. That is the fundamental self in which we experience a heterogeneous multiplicity of conscious states within the sensation of duration. But when we try to express some part of this flow in words, we divide this flow into parts; we again reduce a temporal succession to space. However the spatial representation of this temporal process is not a succession anymore. In this point Bergson argues that, “[...] sensations and tastes seem to me to be *objects* as soon as I isolate and name them, and in the human soul there are only *processes*.” (TFW, p. 131)

A feeling always carries the color of our whole personality. While a feeling in us is always confused with other feelings in a unique way that is peculiar to our personality, the name we give to that feeling cannot have the feature of its uniqueness.



We believe that we have analyzed our feeling, while we have replaced it by a juxtaposition of lifeless states which can be translated into words, and each of which constitutes the common element, the impersonal residue, of the impressions felt in a given case by the whole of society. (TFW, p.133)

The superficial self is in the tendency of analyzing the confused multiplicity of inner states and separating them from each other and representing them in homogeneous space as if they are distinct. For Bergson, this is the tendency of consciousness which is “goaded by an insatiable desire to separate” and by this desire consciousness “substitutes the symbol for the reality, or perceives the reality only through the symbol.” (TFW, p. 128) That symbolism implies again the conversion of confused multiplicity into discrete multiplicity, the conversion which is the central point of criticism in Bergson’s thought.

So, the superficial self is the self which represents the confused multiplicity of sensations by distinguishing them with definite words in language. But, the linguistic expression of our unique feelings can only imply a common meaning that we share with other people, and that is not the same thing with the one we feel in reality. For example, when we are dreaming, we experience a confused mass of feelings that permeate one another. Also, sometimes in a dream we experience a feeling that does not really correspond to a name of a feeling in language. That feeling in the dream may be a mixture of many feelings. Nevertheless, we generally try to tell someone about our dreams with some expressions: There was something like that, but not exactly; it also resembles this but not in such a manner, etc. That is why the commonly used words are strange, weird, confused and nonsense for describing a dream. In reality, we intuitively know that our dream was not exactly the same as what we verbalize because the words do not satisfy the real nature of the sensations in a dream. Moreover, we cannot express it by words without changing the real nature of it. The dream example is important to make understood the confused states of the fundamental self. Since we admit that dreams reveal the subconscious personality, the states of the fundamental self may be somewhat close to the states of

dream consciousness. Verbalizing the sensations of the fundamental self without distortion is as difficult as telling about a dream without changing the essence of it.

However, we live in a society and need to communicate with other minds by means of a conventional language. For the sake of expressing feelings and communicating in social life, the superficial self has to remain on the surface and misses the deeper subjectivity. That is why Bergson calls it “the shadow of the fundamental self, projected into homogeneous space.” (TFW, p.12) But, for the reason that social life is practically more important, in daily life, we turn our feelings or the other impressions into a more rigid and solid state to express them with a word. Language causes the distortion of the real essence of feelings. So our consciousness generally chooses this type of self to objectify its sensations, ideas and impression in order to be able to communicate with language and to promote social life. Bergson states this idea as follow: “An inner life with well distinguished moments and with clearly characterized states will answer better the requirements of social life.” (TFW, p.139)

#### **4.2.3 Fundamental Self and Freedom**

The superficial self and the fundamental self should not be thought of as completely separate from each other. Although the natures of these two selves are very different, they are present in all people. They should be seen as different states of mind changing from one to the other depending on the attainment of the intuition of duration. The fundamental self is a state of mind that a person has when he/she touches the depths of his/her inner life with confused ideas, feelings and motives which form the whole personality.

Only the acts which are performed in this state can really be called as free. Bergson claims that “the act will be so much the freer the more the dynamic series with which it is connected tends to be the fundamental self.” (TFW, p. 167) In the moment when we live up to the fundamental self, we coincide with the real continuous inner life and the act performed in that moment has the characteristic of being directly connected with the real motives. This connection will give rise to breaking the chain

of automatic responses to life and give birth to the ‘creation’ of new and free acts which reflect the whole of our personality.

Free acts can only be possible when we let our deep-seated self break the crust formed by our superficial self and flow from the core to the surface. (TFW, p. 169) But, the superficial self always represses the creative and free acts of the fundamental self. But Bergson believes that “we can nevertheless always get back into pure duration of which the moments are internal and heterogeneous to one another.” (TFW, p. 233)

So, if the self coincides with the real heterogeneity of the deep-seated states in the intuition of real duration, this self can escape from the necessary determination. By an effort of intuitive thinking, the self can have “the absolute knowledge” of itself and can be “a free cause.” (TFW, 235)

For Bergson, as mentioned above, we generally act with our superficial self. Moreover, most people are not aware that they are in touch with the world by this superficial personality. Also, most of the time, a person has to live with his/her superficial self and can rarely contact his/her fundamental or concrete self. And since Bergson defines freedom as “the relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs”, this means that truly free acts are also rare. (TFW, p.219) We can rarely get in touch with our fundamental self and we can rarely “grasp our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*.” (TFW, p.231) We can seldom put ourselves into pure duration in which our inner states permeate one another and make up a whole personality. Apart from that, most of the time we are imprisoned in our superficial self which lives not for his/her self but for society. In short, according to Bergson “we are rarely free.” (TFW, p. 231)

This idea is very crucial for comprehending Bergson’s notion of freedom. It is clear that he does not talk about a complete freedom. He states that “freedom, thus understood, is not *absolute*, as a radically libertarian philosophy would have it; it admits of degrees.” (TFW, p.166) These degrees depend on the effort of the individual. The more an individual gets closer to his/her concrete self, the freer he/she can be. But, as Bergson claims, it requires “deep introspection” (TFW, p.231)

### 4.3 Free Acts as Creative Processes

Even though Bergson does not directly use the word ‘creativity’ in *Time and Free Will* (in which he presents his understanding of freedom) the creative aspect of free acts can be inferred from his ideas on freedom that we ‘inevitably analyzed’ and set forth under two headings. Now, what we have to do is to show the unique essence of the structure of free actions that we grasped intuitively from the whole of his writings on freedom: the creation process of a self in his/her free actions.

Bergson shows that the spatial understanding of time which is divided as past, present and future leads to the misunderstanding of time as a line which branches off in many lines—that is, many possibilities in the imaginary points that a self hesitates to choose from. For Bergson, what we experience in the intuition of duration is not a linear path that we walk through. In duration there is only a self whose states permeate into one another and this self is reconstructed in every single moment by these states of his/hers. In that sense of duration, the fundamental self, who can intuit the heterogeneity and the real flux of his/her inner states, creates the free actions which flow from his/her whole personality in the same way that a poem springs from the whole deep-seated personality of a poet. This overflowing of the fundamental self in the performance of free actions is indefinable and inexpressible as is the case with the creation of a poem by the poet or the creation of a composition by the musician. I think what Bergson points out is this unanalyzable relation when he claims that “freedom is the relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs” and “this relation is indefinable, just because we are free.” (TFW, p.219) We cannot analyze this creation process by the intellect because only a completed thing can be analyzed by it. The creation (of a work of art or a free act) cannot be analyzed because it is a ‘process’ and a ‘becoming’ which is not complete during the creation. Bergson criticizes both determinists and libertarians for their analysis of the process of free actions. For him, what they analyze is not the process, but the spatial representation of duration (in which free acts spring) that can be drawn only after the creation of the free act is completed. That is the result of retroactive thinking. That is the illusion of seeing the past, present and the future as juxtaposed elements of time as if time can be represented in space. It is the illusion of the intellect which believes that it can see

the past, present and future all at once like Augustine's god. But what the intellect fails to notice is that the real godlikeness or divinity of human is the power of creation of free acts in this real present of duration.

By our acts, we participate in life which is always in flux. Our acts are a part of this everlasting change of life. For this reason, to be able to evaluate our actions as free or not, we have to comprehend the nature of change. We have to understand that change is an uninterrupted continuity and can never be captured by analysis. Analyzing this continuity by breaking it into parts will cause a distortion of its nature. This is the main point of Bergson's criticism. He embraces the notion of duration for regaining the real essence of continuity. In this sense, duration is not only the medium that unifies the multiplicity of our inner states but also the medium that unifies the continuity of our inner states and our participation in life.

It is also Bergson's focus on the continuity of our inner states that makes it possible for him to capture the organic nature of life. Because life is growth and constant creation and we observe this constant growth and development by observing the way our inner states grow as they retain their wholeness while new experiences are added to them. That is why Bergson says that "the free action drops from it [the self] like an over-ripe fruit." (TFW, p.176) All feelings, ideas, impressions, memories and future hopes form an intensive unity in duration of the person (as an artist and creator of his/her own free actions) and this compact unity of his/her personality gives rise to the creation of the free acts.

We emphasized that a creation process is unanalyzable. In addition to that, we have to say that, this process is unpredictable and unforeseen because every creative act is unique. Bergson illustrates this feature of creativity as follows:

The painter is before his canvas, the colours are on the palette: the model is sitting—all this we see, and also we know the painter's style: do we foresee what will appear on the canvas? We possess the elements of the problem: we know, in an abstract way, how it will be solved, for the portrait will surely resemble the model and will surely resemble also the artist: but the concrete solution brings with it that unforeseeable nothing which is everything in a work of art. (CE, p. 360-361)

In another passage in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson mentions the painter example again and claims that no one, even the painter, can predict what it will be like. It is impossible to foresee a work of art before it is produced. He adds that “Even so with regard to the moments of our life, of which we are the artisans. Each of them is a kind of creation.” (CM, p.7) In this sense, since our free acts are creative actions, they cannot be predicted. The prediction of a free act is not possible in the same way that we cannot predict what the portrait of the painter would really be like. Also, creative actions are unique. For example, the same poem cannot be written by different poets, and even the same poet cannot write the same poem again. That is because the feelings and motives and all the other circumstances cannot be equal to each other in a person’s life. As Bergson says, “no two moments are identical in a conscious being.” (CM, p.164) This fact comes from the uniqueness of inner duration. In his article, *Bergson and Jung*, Gunter emphasizes this point:

While an atomized, fragmented world contains nothing that should not be, in principle, predictable, the experienced world of "inner duration" exhibits the emergence of novelty: the appearance of the really surprising, the ontologically new. In other words, for Bergson inner duration provides a paradigm of creativity; spatialized time provides a paradigm of predictable repetition. (p.636)

In short, freedom should not be conceptualized along the lines of a mechanical model (as is done by many libertarians and, for instance, Kant) as if there is a space which gives us elbow room to move from one possibility to another. Instead the similarity between a free act and a creative process should be emphasized. As a matter of fact, Bergson tells us that a free act is precisely that: a creative act.

The creation process occurs in an inexpressible way because in this process, the idea and the performance of this creation are simultaneous. This unity in duration can be sensed only in intuitive thinking. As Nelson mentions in his article “Creativity As a Philosophic Category”: “In fact, descriptions of the creative process intimate an intuitive intelligence in which thought and actuality are one, there being no prior creative design and no intermediate stage of unactualized alternatives before the mind.” (p. 956) Here, the crucial point I want to emphasize is that a creative process

occurs with an “intuitive intelligence.” As we mentioned in section 2.2.1, for Bergson, this simultaneity of action and thought is a feature of the actions of instinct. In the action of instinct there is no gap between its actuality and the idea of the action. It is pure activity. Yet, intuition in the Bergsonian sense is a combination of instinct and intellect. Since there is a coexistence of actuality and thought in the creation process, this coexistence comes from the instinctive aspect of intuition. That is the point that Bergson tries to explain: the necessity of intuitive thinking for the creation of free acts. Also, that is why he opposes the sacrifice of the instinctive aspect of intuition and draws attention to the danger of explaining the problem of freedom (which is a creation) by a mind that is reduced only to the pure intellect and by its method of analysis.

In this sense, the fundamental self which can give rise to free actions, lives with an intuitive thinking and in this way of thinking this self can attain to the real motives and grasp the spiritual richness that lies in the deep-seated states. By intuition, the fundamental self also gets in touch with the real inner flux of his/her states (which means duration) and frees itself from the prison of a spatialized perception of time which holds it captive in the immobile representations of duration. In this point, it should be emphasized that Bergson handles the problem of freedom from the perspective of a process philosopher and a philosopher of ‘becoming’. The fundamental self creates free acts in a state of ‘becoming’.

As another process philosopher, Hartshorne, says in his article “*The Philosophy of Creative Synthesis*” the difference between being a philosopher of becoming and being a philosopher of being can be seen most vividly in the way they account for the dynamic interaction between the self and reality. As Hartshorne writes:

There is, of course, a tradition that becoming is a secondary mode of reality, inferior to and less real than Being. Our view affirms the contrary, that becoming is reality itself, and being only an aspect of this reality.[...]Whereas becoming can be taken as inclusive without suppressing the reality of the contrast between itself and being, being taken as inclusive would destroy this contrast. (p.946)

When the fundamental ontological categories are switched around like this, we can see that abstract causal laws are derived from the creative process and not vice versa. In this sense, creativity becomes a “fundamental category of becoming” as Everett Nelson says in his article “Creativity as a Philosophic Category”: p.959 (Nelson)

But if creativity is taken as the fundamental category of becoming, causal processes might be interpreted as abstractions from the creative process and as grounded in it. Accordingly, the necessity involved in causation would be derivative from the necessity of the creative process, and the regularities expressed by laws of nature would be grounded in the principle governing creative becoming. (p.959)

To sum up, the nature of a free act carries the properties of a creative act. The notion of freedom in Bergson’s philosophy is directly related to the creativity of the self. In other words, what gives “a general value character to freedom” is “the value character of the creative process.” (Garnett, *Freedom and Creativity*, p. 27) Rather than explaining freedom as the independence of external causes which will be “the negative concept of freedom”, approaching the problem of freedom with its relation to creativity gives it “a positive value character” (Garnett, *Freedom and Creativity*, p. 25)



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, I tried to make sense of the notion of freedom in Bergson's philosophy. My thesis is that freedom in Bergson's philosophy can best be understood as a kind of creativity and should therefore be conceptualized along the model of creative processes. I tried to reveal duration as the medium of creative processes.

Bergson's original contribution to the problem of free will is the application of the notion of duration to solve the problem. The method to understand and investigate duration is intuition. As I explained in chapter 2, intuition is the effort to experience reality absolutely in order to grasp the essence of it in its movement and continuity. One can attain this essence via sympathy by putting oneself into what one tries to understand to coincide with its dynamic nature.

We can say that intuition is a unique method of Bergson's and he takes the self as the proper focal point to start applying this method because intuition as method requires the coincidence of subject and object. When the method of intuition is applied to the self, we coincide with the real flux of our inner states.

To make sense of what "intuition of our inner states" is, in chapter 3, I turned to Bergson's discussion of conscious states in *Time and Free Will* and tried to expose his detailed discussion of conscious states which is intended to reveal the mistakes in the traditional ways of conceptualizing and analyzing mental states. According to Bergson, in the intuition of our selves, we experience an uninterrupted succession of states which are melting into one another. While this succession includes a multiplicity of states on the one hand, on the other hand, they form a unity in their flux which cannot be divided. It is duration that synthesizes this unity and the

multiplicity of our inner psychic states. Therefore, intuition of duration is grasping our own person in its flowing through time.

So, for Bergson, duration is the medium that makes possible a unity of the continuous multiplicity of our inner states. In chapter 3, I explored the relation between duration and the multiplicity of our inner states. Multiplicity of inner states is continuous because these states are not distinct. They permeate into one another and form a heterogeneous multiplicity. In section 3.3, I explained Bergson's distinction between two kinds of multiplicity: continuous multiplicity which is heterogeneous and discrete multiplicity which is numerical and based on the idea of homogeneous units in space. States of consciousness are not extensive magnitudes which can increase or decrease quantitatively. Their change depends on a qualitative progress and for that reason they are intensive. Therefore these intensive states cannot form a discrete multiplicity like extensive things, but they form a continuous multiplicity. (The distinction between extensity and intensity was explained in section 3.1.) Since this continuous multiplicity is not spatial but temporal, the unity of this multiplicity can only be formed in duration.

Bergson develops and applies the method of intuition to understand duration, because he wants to capture duration as a unified continuity and flux. He therefore underlines the method of intuition in contrast to the method of analysis. As analysis, by definition, relies on breaking a whole into parts, it can never arrive at an absolute understanding of unity and flux. By analysis, the continuous movement of life is converted into steady lifeless states.

Having clarified the notion of duration, in chapter 4, I tried to show how this notion allows Bergson to reformulate and solve the problem of freedom. As previous philosophers tried to capture the nature of a free act, they had to take time into account since the freedom of an act can only be captured as it is being performed in time. But they have gone astray because they have conceptualized time wrongly; remained fixated on solving the problem within that misconceived framework and have therefore missed the boat of freedom. In other words, they tried to analyze a free act within the 'time passed' and failed to see the real nature of free act as a

creative process in duration. All of this was shown in section 4.1. A free act, which is a creative process, cannot be analyzed in spatialized time. It is not a completed thing, but an undivided progress. So, to understand a free act, one must conceptualize it in duration, not in spatialized time.

In section 4.2, I discussed Bergson's distinction between the fundamental self and the superficial self since a proper understanding of the fundamental self is crucial for understanding free and creative acts.

To understand our acts, and whether they are free or not, one needs to first understand change. We participate in life by acting. An action is a participation of our fundamental self in one of the ever-changing processes of life. But change is by nature a continuous progress and therefore it can never be adequately captured by analysis which breaks the continuity into parts. Bergson's notion of duration enables us to grasp the continuity not only of conscious states in relation to each other but also in relation to how they flow out of the self in a free act and thus contact, enter into, be a participant in and coincide with the other creative processes of life.

Thus in section 4.3, I tried to reveal the creative aspect of free acts in Bergson's philosophy in relation to an interpretation of Bergson as a process philosopher. Bergson's notion of duration calls forth and implies a different way of doing ontology. Bergson discusses the problem of freedom within the framework of 'becoming'. Since a free act is a creative process which occurs in a state of 'becoming', creativity emerges as a fundamental category of 'becoming' which has been ignored in the traditional philosophy of 'being'.

The need for such re-conceptualization and a new framework can be seen in how fruitful it renders the discussion of freedom. The traditional framework can only understand freedom as "not being restricted by the laws of causality" and this is giving just a negative explanation of freedom. Considering it with the notion of creativity on the other hand, will be to attribute to it a positive value.

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## APPENDIX

### TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

#### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

#### YAZARIN

Soyadı : Özyurt

Adı : Esen

Bölümü : Felsefe

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Freedom and Creativity in Bergson's Philosophy

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans



Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

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