

BERGSON'S METHOD OF INTUITION: TOWARDS
A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

BERGSON'S METHOD OF INTUITION: TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

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The purpose of this study is to show how a possible philosophy of life can arise by following Bergson's method of intuition and to make emphasis on how Bergson's two fundamental notions (intuition and duration) are capable of grasping the flux of life. The scientific methods, static concepts and classical philosophy are not able to understand the flow of life. Throughout this study it is pointed out a possible philosophy that is able to grasp the flow and the evolution of life. For this aim, Bergson's method of intuition is investigated and the difference between the method of intuition and analysis is pointed out. Then, the evolution of intuition and its relation with instinct and intellect are examined. Moreover, the significance of duration and its difference from mathematical time are analyzed. Finally, the relations between intuition, duration and life are examined.

Keywords: intuition, duration, freedom, creativity, philosophy of life

ÖZ

BERGSON'S METHOD OF INTUITION: TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Koçkan, Zöhre

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Bergson'un sezgi metodu izlenerek nasıl bir olanaklı yaşam felsefesinin ortaya çıkabileceğini göstermek ve Bergson'un iki temel nosyonu olan sezgi ve *durée*'nin akış ve değişim içerisinde olan yaşamı anlamaya nasıl muktedir olduğuna vurgu yapmaktır. Bilimsel metodlar, statik kavramlar ve klasik felsefe yaşamın akışını anlamaya yetkin değildir. Bu çalışmada yaşamın akışını ve gelişim sürecini anlamaya yatkın bir felsefenin mümkün olabileceği fikrine vurgu yapılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda öncelikle Bergson'un sezgi metodu incelenecek ve analiz metoduyla olan farklılığına işaret edilmekte, ardından sezginin gelişim süreci ve sezgi, intelekt ve içgüdünün bu süreç içerisindeki ilişkisine değinilmektedir. Ayrıca *durée* kavramının önemi ve onun matematiksel zamandan farkı analiz edilmektedir. Son olarak da sezgi, *durée* ve yaşam kavramları arasındaki bağıntı incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sezgi, süre, özgürlük, yaratıcılık, yaşam felsefesi

To Fazıl

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the mid-19th century on, positivist philosophy had become dominant all over the Europe. During that period, positivist philosophers became inspired by scientific developments and tried to explain all philosophical problems via scientific methods. In contrast to that developing tendency, Bergson puts forward the method of intuition and elaborates a philosophy of reality that is far from the reality constructed by scientific methods. In this regard, Bergson's philosophy and his criticisms to positivists seem revolutionary against the domination of positivism.

The philosophical standpoint of Henri Bergson is peculiar not because he poses new philosophical questions, but because he deals with common philosophical problems, originally rooted in the Ancient Greek thought, by reorganizing them in a new and unique way.

Throughout the history of philosophy, many philosophers have regarded philosophy as a theoretical endeavor and have assumed science as the practical instrument facilitating the satisfaction of our everyday pragmatic necessities. According to Bergson, in time, science gained dominance over philosophy and imposed its positivist categories to philosophical thinking. As I shall discuss here, Bergson argues against these strict concepts of positivist

philosophy and the dominance of the scientific method. Indeed, Bergson tried to reinterpret philosophy that had come under the influence of positivism by means of ruling out the strict concepts and putting forward new dynamic ones. Bergson also opposes the acclaimed universality of the methods of positivism and offers two distinct methods for two different fields. That is, he offers the notion of intuition as the method of philosophy and intellect as the method of practical knowledge and science.

In that respect, what makes Bergson's philosophy distinctive is his focus on the concepts of intuition and intellect that had already been used in different ways throughout the history of philosophy. Bergson's method of intuition does not aim at attaining knowledge as unchanging and fixed; rather it is a way of knowing life in its constant state of evolution. However, this is not to say that Bergson ignores the possibility of absolute knowledge; instead, he argues that the absolute knowledge is embedded in the evolution of life and can only be grasped by the method of intuition. Thus, it is better to investigate the origin and the evolution of intuition in order (i) to understand how intuition makes a philosophy of life possible, and (ii) to investigate what kind of philosophical method intuition is.

There are two main opposing interpretations of Bergson's notion of intuition. According to the first interpretation, intuition is a non-intellectual and a mystical way of knowing.¹ On the other hand, for the second interpretation, the intuition is an intellectual method of knowing reality.² In many works of Bergson, there is an emphasis on spiritualism, but he does not consider himself as a defender of mysticism. "If by mysticism be meant (as it almost always is

¹ See, Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*; D. S. Miller, *M. Bergson's Theories*

² See, G. W. Cunningham, *Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition*

nowadays) a reaction against positive science, the doctrine which I defend is in the end only a protest against mysticism."³ It must be noted here that taking one of these as the only true version and rejecting the other does not actually seem to be viable because in Bergson's own writings, there are numerous assertions that stand as affirming both interpretations. In my thesis, I will not follow the first interpretation raising the claim of mysticism given that my focus will be on the methodological aspect of intuition.

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine how Bergson's philosophy of life is constituted. In this regard, I shall attempt at demonstrating the relations between his notions of intuition, duration and life. In each chapter of my study, I will concentrate on one of these notions of Bergson. Throughout this study my focus will be on Bergson's works, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, *Creative Evolution* and *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. The reason behind this selection is that I shall try to limit my research on the elemental themes (intuition, duration, life) of Bergson's philosophy.

In chapter two, I shall mostly try to examine Bergson's philosophical method of intuition. The notion of intuition is significant for Bergson, not only because in his philosophy it appears as a method to grasp reality but also because as a notion it allows for an appropriate approach to the essence of the evolution of human life, the driving factors of which are two fundamental tendencies, instinct and intellect. Given these two aspects of intuition I read *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, in terms of the ways in which it conveys intuition as a method. He regards intuition as the unique way that enables us to attain absolute reality. In his work *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson makes

³ Quoted by A. D. Lindsay, *The Philosophy of Bergson*, p.19

reference to two methods each dealing with one of the two kinds of knowledge, namely relative and absolute knowledge. Thus, I think that, before examining the philosophical method of intuition, it is important first to talk about the distinction between the two modes of knowledge. Second, I will focus on the method of analysis and the method of intuition to make clear the difference between them and to put forward the peculiarity of intuition. Third, in order to clarify the characteristics of this peculiar method, I will try to analyze the evolution of intuition. In this regard, I will put forth the relation of intuition with the tendencies of instinct and intellect. For this purpose I will analyze his one of the main work, *Creative Evolution*. Finally, I shall inquire into the characteristics of the method of intuition.

The notion of duration is also one of the elemental operative term within Bergson's work. In the third chapter, I shall mainly discuss significance of duration with reference to Bergson's earliest work, *Time and Free Will*. Bergson defends that the confusion between the dualities such as intensity and extensity, quality and quantity arises from our confusion between space and time. Thus, Bergson uses the concept of duration to clarify the distinction between space and time. Duration (*la durée*) is a continuous flow in which there is no juxtaposition of events, but a succession of conscious states. Before making a detailed analysis of duration, I will first try to discuss the distinction between intensity and extensity, quality and quantity that Bergson highlights so as to clarify the distinction between mathematical time and duration. Secondly, to make clear the concept of duration, I will touch upon the differences between the multiplicity of conscious states and the numerical multiplicity. Finally, I shall review the nature of duration and investigate what consist in the intuition of duration.

The main purpose of the fourth chapter is to argue how Bergson's philosophy of life is shaped by his notions of intuition and duration. Before concentrating on the relations between intuition, duration and life, I shall attempt to inquire into Bergson's notion of the self and its relation with freedom. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson deals with the self as a totality of two components. One is the superficial self that is limited by the conceptual language, habits, and rules of the society. Thus, the superficial self signifies our social side. The other is the fundamental self that transcends the structures of social life and enables us to be aware of the reality of dynamic life. Thus, the fundamental self signifies our conscious life. In other words, the fundamental self is our free side that moves us away from the domination of social life towards the inner free life. Secondly, I shall study Bergson's examination of freedom and his criticisms on determinists' and free will defenders' approaches to the problem of freedom. Bergson's notion of freedom is closely related with his notion of duration. That is, according to him, free acts are directed by the creative power of duration. Free acts spring from our fundamental self that has unlimited possibilities to create its direction to act. Finally, I shall focus on Bergson's philosophy of life and make clear his notions of life and reality. In the investigation of Bergson's notion of life, I will mainly concentrate on its continuous and creative characteristics. That is to say, his concept of life cannot be held as independent from duration and his philosophy of life can best be explained through his method of intuition. Intuition does not conceive life with concepts and symbolizations which stem from language, logic and several other structures, but it is rather the immediate consciousness which grasps life in its state of flux.

CHAPTER 2

INTUITIONISM OF BERGSON

Intuition is the philosophical method of Henri Bergson and in *Introduction to Metaphysics*; he elaborately examines this notion as a unique way which enables us to grasp *absolute* reality. In this work, Bergson draws out two kinds of knowledge, namely, *relative* and *absolute* knowledge. In this chapter, I will first try to present these two ways of knowing in the light of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Then, I will also make an investigation of evolution of intuition. In this regard, I will put forward the relation of intuition with instinct and intellect. Finally, I will concentrate on the notion of intuition as being a philosophical method.

2.1. Two Ways of Knowing

Throughout the history of philosophy, many philosophers have defended that there are two ways of knowing. The first one is knowing partially and relatively; the second one is knowing completely and absolutely. Bergson calls these aforementioned ways as (i) *the way of analysis* and (ii) *the way of intuition*. According to the distinction drawn out by Bergson, while we are just capable of moving around the object by the first way, by following the second way we have the power of “enter[ing] into it”⁴. I will try to clarify the contrast as

⁴ Henri Bergson, *Introduction of Metaphysics*, p.1

follows. Through analysis, we take a narrow observation position, and the point of view that we develop is bound to that position. In other words, by this method, we are distanced from the focused object and see it from a particular perspective. Because of the constraint of the particular perspectives, the knowledge that we attain by the first way is doomed to be relative. On the other hand, the way of intuition is independent from the perspectives of any position. In this way, we grasp the knowledge of the object in itself by participating in the interior experience of it. So, this participation allows us to witness immediately the change, evolution and movement of the object from the inside. That is, by the act of intuition we feel sympathy with every states of the object and this sympathy paves the way for absolute knowledge. In short, according to Henri Bergson, intuition is the simple experience of sympathy, namely going into an object and grasping its uniqueness and peculiarity. Let me state the distinction between the two ways in his own words.

It follows that an absolute can only be given in *an intuition*, while all the rest has to do with *analysis*. We call intuition here the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, common to that object and to others.⁵

Bergson explicitly distinguishes relative and absolute knowledge by using appealing examples. For instance, according to Bergson, we can see “all the photographs of a city taken from all”⁶ the possible perspectives and also combine all the photographs of the city to see it entirely. Even so, this entire appearance of the city cannot be on a par with discovering the city by walking

⁵ Henri Bergson, “*Introduction of Metaphysics*”, Creative Mind, p. 189

⁶ Ibid, p. 135

on its streets.⁷ Just with an active effort, which is an intuitional effort, the attainment of absolute knowledge may be possible. The path to absolute knowledge demands serious devotion not because the understanding of the reality as a whole is challenging, or simple analysis is inefficient and insufficient to grasp object itself. Rather, method of intuition as an indissoluble element of philosophy of life requires putting the prolonged and established conceptual structures aside.⁸

Bergson gives various examples to clarify the contradiction between *analysis* and *intuition*. Apparently, with all these examples, he tries to rid his language of relativity and encourages the readers to make an effort to participate in the stories in his examples. Instead of explaining the contrast by some concepts he tries to arouse sympathy with the heroes of the stories, exactly like in the example given below.

[T]ake a character whose adventures make up the subject of a novel. The novelist may multiply traits of character, make his hero speak and act as much as he likes: all this has not the same value as the simple and indivisible feeling I should experience if I were to coincide for a single moment with the personage himself. The actions, gestures and words would then appear to flow naturally, as though from their source [...] The character would be given to me all at once in its entirety, and the thousand and one incidents which make it manifest, instead of adding to the idea and enriching it, would, on the contrary, seem to me to fall away from it without in any way exhausting or impoverishing its essence.⁹

Furthermore, analysis has a deep passion like the burning of the sun to embrace the focused object. To satisfy its own desire, analysis tries to wholly

⁷ Ibid, p.188

⁸ That devotion on the road of reality will be addressed in the following parts.

⁹ Henri Bergson, "*Introduction of Metaphysics*", Creative Mind, p. 187

grasp the object by separating it into its elements. Indeed this movement of analysis is an endless process. That is, each act of analysis is a kind of incomplete and imperfect translation of the real and thus, to attain the perfect knowledge of its object, analysis breaks every element of the object into an ever-growing number of new elements. Ultimately, the only thing it can reach is an “incomplete representation”; because no combination of the elements can give the wholeness of the object. On the other hand, intuition is a “simple act”; that is, it immediately provides the knowledge of the thing in its wholeness.¹⁰

According to Bergson, analysis cannot be a method of knowing the absolute. This method contains the processes of separation, dismantlement, classification and an activity that always puts limits to its objects by taking different points of view. Thus it reconstructs the original forms of the objects with respect to these selected viewpoints. In other words, the method of analysis divides the reality, takes a part of it as its object and uses symbols for this particular object. This activity not only disregards the uniqueness and the unity of an object, but also can represent only some parts of the object by symbolization, and hence misrepresents it by missing out on the object *itself*. In addition, the act of symbolization transforms the mobile and indivisible character of the objects into a divisible and immobile form.¹¹

Moreover, according to Bergson, the essence of something cannot be understood by definitions and neither be explained by symbols. The nature of objects cannot be grasped by means of extracting its essential elements and by analyzing them in separation; absolute reality is a whole which is not

¹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Mind*, pp.189-190

¹¹ “That is to say, analysis operates on immobility, while intuition is located in mobility or, what amounts to the same thing, in duration. That is the very clear line of demarcation between intuition and analysis.” (Henri Bergson, *Creative Mind*, p.211)

penetrable via logical examinations. Therefore, description and analysis leave us in the relative; thus, Bergson claims as follows:

One recognizes the element by the fact that it is invariable. And it is invariable by definition, being a schema, a simplified reconstruction, often a mere symbol, in any case, a view taken of the reality that flows. But the mistake is to believe that with these schemas one could recompose the real. It cannot be too often repeated: from intuition one can pass on to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition.¹²

As stated above, passing from analysis to intuition is not possible. The object of investigation cannot be clamped in an invariable definition, that is, a particular quality cannot be detached from the object itself as an invariable while the several other features belong to its nature. In other words, there is no invariable definition under which all instances of an object can be subsumed; rather only the intuition of the variability in an object itself can provide us its absolute knowledge. Indeed, Bennett mentions two accounts that Bergson gives as the reasons to the question, why there is no “road from analysis to intuition”. The first one is the logical view stated in *Introduction to Metaphysics* and the second statement is the biological view that is indicated in *Creative Evolution*.¹³

From the logical viewpoint, there are two obstacles that block the road from analysis to intuition. (i) Analysis works with general concepts and all it can reach is a kind of general knowledge that represents common points of many things; thus it can never attain the knowledge of individual. (ii) The concepts of analysis are not parts of any object; they are artificial and not capable of

¹² Ibid, p.212

¹³ Bennett, *Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition*, p.48

identifying an object.¹⁴ In other words, concepts are various symbols indicating the similarity between objects. That is, to assume the concepts as if they were parts of the objects, is an erroneous approach.

As mentioned before, Bergson regards analysis and intuition as two different ways of knowledge. From biological perspective, the contrast between intelligence and instinct seems parallel to the contrast between analysis and intuition. The relationship between intelligence and analysis is logically clear; the ability to make analysis depends on being intelligent. On the other hand, the relationship between instinct and intuition is not appreciable or logically understandable by everyone. That is why this issue should be examined in more detail. And so, we can apprehend why transition from analysis to intuition is not possible and clearly show that we must get rid of the methods and concepts of analysis to reach reality. However, to make this examination more reliable, we should first investigate the evolution of intuition by stating its relation with instinct and intelligence.

2.2. Evolution of Intuition

2.2.1. Intelligence and Instinct

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson puts emphasis on the point that intelligence and instinct are not completely different things that exist independent from each other. According to Bergson, they are just the *tendencies* that arise from the same source.¹⁵

For Bergson, in nature, originally there is not a significant difference between instinct and intelligence. The essential thing that differentiates these tendencies

¹⁴ Ibid, p.48

¹⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp.152-153

is that they use different objects. He says that “[I]n instinct perfected is a faculty of using and even of constructing organized instruments; intelligence perfected is the faculty of making and using unorganized instruments.”¹⁶ In other words, while instinct uses an organized living body, the faculty of intelligence constitutes and uses artificial objects. Yet, during evolution, instinct and intelligence develop, and hence the gap between them increases.

Hence intelligence and instinct, which diverge more and more as they develop, but which never entirely separate from each other. On the one hand, the most perfect instinct of the insect is accompanied by gleams of intelligence, if only in the choice of place, time and materials of construction... But, on the other hand, intelligence has even more need of instinct than instinct has of intelligence; for the power to give shape to crude matter involves already a superior degree of organization, a degree to which the animal could not have risen, save on the wings of instinct.¹⁷

According to Henri Bergson, the traces of instinct can be found in every part of the intelligence. In addition to this, instinct is embosomed with a “*fringe of intelligence*”.¹⁸ The idea that instinct is surrounded by intelligence causes so many wrong interpretations about the relationship between these two sentiments. The misunderstanding of this above mentioned statement results in the notion that there is a hierarchical difference between instinct and intelligence in terms of their excellence. Furthermore, this causes people to contemplate that these two faculties can be explained in respect to each other. However, Bergson asserts that instinct and intelligence are “complementary” since they are only different tendencies; they are originally interdependent.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.155

¹⁷ Ibid, p.157

¹⁸ Ibid, p.150

Even if Bergson points out that the instinct and intelligence arise from a common source, this does not mean that the faculty of instinct can be expressed by intelligible terms. According to him, instinct cannot be analyzed scientifically. Unlike the intelligence's logical analysis of objects, instinct is the unconscious knowledge of an object, that is, the instinctive knowledge is innate.

If instinct is, above all, the faculty of using an organized natural instrument, it must involve innate knowledge (potential or unconscious, it is true), both of this instrument and of the object to which it is applied. Instinct is therefore innate knowledge of a thing. But intelligence is the faculty of constructing unorganized that is to say artificial instruments.¹⁹

Human intellect gives different meanings to life out of its needs. In other words, life comprises of human-made truths. In spite of this, the continuity is the essential characteristic of life, and intellect is not able to grasp this continuity, that is, intellect tends to understand the object as they are in a given moment, but not in their perpetual development in time. As Bergson points out: "Just as we separate in space, we fix in time. The intellect is not made to think evolution, in the proper sense of the word."²⁰ In contrast to intellect, instinct is closer to life.

2.2.2. Instinct and Intuition

Instinct, for Bergson, is "*sympathy*" and it turns its face towards life. However, it is not enough to grasp life, because it is without "*reflective consciousness*". In addition, intuition, with its characteristic of reflective consciousness, goes beyond instinct. In Bergson's words:

¹⁹ Ibid, p.166

²⁰ Ibid, p.179

Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations –just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us into matter. [...] But it is to the very inwardness of life that *intuition* leads us –by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it definitely.²¹

Therefore, is the meaning of feelings or sensations identical to intuition? As it is clearly understood, for Bergson, intuition is not a feeling; it is a kind of instinct but more sculptured. If intuition is not primitive or natural as instinct, what has shaped it? Is the answer mind, a creative energy, or something else?

In his letter to Harald Höffding, Bergson states that instinct is able to know life absolutely but incompletely: “[H]uman intuition, which prolongs, develops and makes reflective what remains of instinct in man, is capable of embracing life more and more completely.”²²

The main question that we need to raise at this point is as follows; how does *instinct* transform into *intuition*? According to Bergson, the propulsive force that provides the transformation of instinct is *intelligence*. This is the reason why only human beings have intuition. Thus, Bergson claims that “it [intuition] thereby transcends intelligence that has come the push that has made it rise to the point it has reached. Without intelligence, it would have remained in the form of instinct, riveted to the special object of its practical interest, and turned outward by it into movements of locomotion”.²³ But, this does not mean that intuition can be expressed by the terms of intelligence. Instinct is just affected by the mechanism of intelligence. That is to say, the

²¹ Ibid, p. 194

²² Henri Bergson, “Letter to *Harald Höffding*”, *Key Writings*, p.367

²³ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.195

roots of intuition are strongly connected to instinct just as Bergson says: “[A] glance at the evolution of living beings shows us that intuition could not go very far [...] intuition had to shrink into instinct”.²⁴

In *Creative Mind*, Henri Bergson opposes the traditional methods of philosophy. According to him intuition, *la vision directe*, is not alienated to time and the real. The essential nature of human intellect consists in acting for the pragmatic necessities. This is the reason why humans arrange their experiences in order to facilitate action and communication in social life. He also protests to socialize the truth by means of substituting the concepts for things and actions. There we must choose the hard way to penetrate the reality: the intuition rather than instinct or sentiment. Deleuze, in his work *Bergsonism*, presents the Bergsonian intuition as the fundamental method of philosophy. According to Deleuze, intuition is “fully developed method”; it is “neither a feeling or an inspiration, nor a disorderly sympathy.”²⁵

2.2.3. Intellect and Intuition

The main purpose of this part of the investigation is to clarify the relationship between intellect and intuition. In the first phase of this study such a burning question arises: Are intuition and intelligence completely opposite to each other? In other words, does intuition involve or exclude the intellectual activity? Actually, these questions can be answered from two radically different interpretations²⁶ of Bergson’s doctrine of intuition.

²⁴ Ibid, p.200

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.13

²⁶ Margaret W. Landes, *A Suggested Interpretation of Bergson’s Doctrine of Intuition*, p.450

- (i) According to the first interpretation, intuition is far from being intellectual. Intuition is a non-intellectualistic and mystical method of knowing; that is, it directly touches reality without the concepts of intellects. If this interpretation is correct, that is, if intuition is not an intellectual activity, intuition is not objective, but rather a mystical and subjective way of knowing. Actually this interpretation is not baseless because in *The Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson describes intuition as mystical.²⁷ Can such a non-intellectual intuition embrace the whole nature of life or is it just able to apprehend the knowledge of our inner life? Yet, Bergson asserts that intuition is able to reach the knowledge of the self and absolute reality. If intuition is not intellectual, how can Bergson assume that intuition is able to grasp the absolute? Unless there is commonality of the intuitional experiences of people, how can we be sure that we really touch the reality?
- (ii) On the other hand, according to the second interpretation, intuition involves an intellectual activity; in a sense intuition is an intellectual way of knowing the reality. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, there are some expressions that put forth that intuition is not completely opposed to intellect; contrary to an opposition, intellect participates in intuitional activity. In other words, there is a collaboration between intuition and intellect. Bergson identifies intuition as “intellectual sympathy”²⁸ and he also uses “intellectual auscultation”²⁹ instead of intuition. Actually, intellect is the thing that makes intuition creative and perfect. According to Bergson, without participation of intellect, intuition is not so different from instinct.

²⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, p. 220

²⁸ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p.7

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.36

Yet, is such collaboration between intellect and intuition enough for validating the second interpretation?

As a matter of fact, to accept or refuse any of the two interpretations is not that easy, since, as it is seen, in Bergson's writings we can come across different propositions that support both of these interpretations. In this case, does Bergson fall into the conflict in his writings? Since to mount both pro-argument and counter argument about an issue seems contradictory.

W. Landes in pointing out these two aforementioned interpretations, proposes a third alternative. She neither chooses the first interpretation nor the second. Her third alternative contains both alternatives since she thinks that to eliminate one of the two views causes to miss the key points and the novelty of Bergson's teaching.³⁰ In a sense, to accept both views as correct is not a conflict because these two views represent two separate forms or possibilities of intellect. As we described before, first is a mechanical intellect that makes general concepts through the relations of things. On the other hand, the second form of intellect prefers to use unique and peculiar concepts for every particular thing rather than general concepts.

In point of fact, Bergson does not deny the role of intellect in the quest of reality. As a matter of fact, what Bergson rejects is the intellect which is in the grip of our habits and tendencies. What Bergson rejects is the intellect that draws symbolic pictures and gives us relative knowledge. That kind of intellect is directed by our everyday needs, habits and tendencies. Is it possible to envisage another kind of intellect? Is it possible to pull intellect through its relations and incorporate it into the struggle to find reality?

³⁰ Margaret W. Landes, *A Suggested Interpretation of Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition*, p.456

One of the most important points to take into account while analyzing the studies of Bergson about the relation between intuition and intellect is the dominant philosophical movement of the period. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Positivist philosophy emerged in France, spread around Europe and also maintained its influence throughout the first half of twentieth century. The scientific developments in this period encouraged the positivist philosophers in so much that they insisted on explaining all phenomenal things by the methods of natural sciences. They thought that the intellectual methods and scientific investigations were sufficient to understand life. That kind of effort would be a false intellectualism for Bergson. In fact, neither science nor intellect is the enemy for Bergson's intuitive method; the thing that he opposes is false intellectualism. According to him there are two kind of intellectualism; "[...] the true, which lives its ideas; and a false intellectualism, which immobilizes moving ideas into solidified concepts to play with them like counters."³¹

It is true that, mechanical concepts cannot reach the essence of life and they are created by intellect; but, intellect is not identical with mechanism. Intellect is higher than mechanism; that is, it has a possibility in itself to get rid of mechanical categories, choose another way and be more creative.

[T]he truth is that our intelligence can follow the opposite method. It can place itself within the mobile reality, and adopt its ceaselessly changing direction; in short, can grasp it by means of that *intellectual sympathy* which we call intuition. This is extremely difficult. The mind has to do violence to itself, has to reverse the direction of the operation by which it habitually thinks, has perpetually to revise, or rather to recast, all its categories. But in this way it will attain to fluid concepts,

³¹ *Bulletin de le Soci  t   Fran  aise de Philosophie*, Vol. I, p.64. Quoted by A. D. Lindsay, *The Philosophy of Bergson*, p.19

capable of following reality in all its sinuosities and of adopting the very movement of the inward life of things.³²

According to Bergson, there is an external and mobile reality that is in a constant state of flux. In the normal process of evolution, intellect has a tendency to break the mobility. Instead of participating in the changing states, our intellect substitutes reality with immobile representations. Hence, by stating this criticism, Bergson does not ignore the needs of practical life. Actually, the intellect has been evolved for the adaptation of living beings to their environment in order to survive in the face of potential danger. For the pragmatic needs and for the scientific investigations, intellect has to use concept, but not to escape the essence of life, it must participate in mobile reality. Thus, it should transcend the ready-made mechanical concepts and choose a harder way.³³

2.3. The Method of Intuition

As it is mentioned above, intuition is the ultimate method for knowing the object itself as well as being the keystone of the Bergson's philosophy of life. The problems of philosophy, especially metaphysical questions, can only be settled down only if the method of intuition is implemented to the object of investigation. To put it differently, the complete and proper understanding of an object requires all-comprehensive attitude which is released from the limitations of intellectual activity and its conceptual categories. Indeed, for Bergson, the traditional epistemological approach as well as their opponents has hitherto been confusing the apprehension of "practical life" and knowhow of sciences with grasping the object itself. For this reason, "the determinists

³² Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p.69

³³ *Ibid*, p.68

and their opponents” are unable to unveil the most significant philosophical problems:

But it may be asked whether the insurmountable difficulties presented by certain philosophical problems do not arise from our placing side by side in space phenomena which do not occupy space, and whether, by merely getting rid of the clumsy symbols round which we are fighting, we might not bring the fight to an end. When an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended, of quality into quantity, has introduced contradiction into the very heart of, the question, contradiction must, of course, recur in the answer.³⁴

Indeed, Deleuze argues that the hallmark of intuition as a method is that it enables access to the reality as its most pure and basic form since intuition, unlike intelligence, asks true questions to the objects and eliminates the ill-defined domains of nature. In other words, intuition does not deal with any particular aspect of objects. Intuition neither intends to divide the indivisible nor transforms the variable into invariable. Rather, intuition finds out the origins of philosophical problems which stem from the erroneous identification of different natures, in other words, intuition redefines questions and untangles turmoil of reality which in fact serves as the purification of objects as well as subjects themselves. As Deleuze manifests:

The means used by intuition are, on the one hand, a cutting up or division of reality in a given domain, according to lines of different natures and, on the other hand, an intersection of line which are taken from various domains and which converge. It is this complex linear operation, consisting in a cutting up according to articulations and an intersecting according to convergences, which leads to the proper

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

posing of a problem in such a way that the solution itself depends on it.³⁵

Moreover, in *Time and Free Will* and *Creative Mind*, Bergson stresses the misunderstanding of intellectualism under the light of his two notions viz. *intuition* and *duration*. For Bergson, intellectualism tries to conceptualize real time by cutting it out and breaking it into moments; however, the real time is indivisible pure duration. According to him, our intellect is on the wrong track since it accounts time as analyzable and measurable -through intellectual abstraction- just like space, that is, the fallacy of intellectualism arises from the identification of the incompatible natures of space and time. Accordingly, I suppose that it would not be a mistake to claim that intelligence is incapable of grasping the reality, since reality is a real duration by itself. Intellect is the activity of consciousness on nonliving matter. Despite that, intuition as an immediate consciousness grasps the flow of real time and reveals the dynamic reality.

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, pp.115-116

CHAPTER 3

MATHEMATICAL TIME AND DURATION

Duration, stated by Henri Bergson, is a concept of time that comprises the succession of conscious states in an indivisible and immeasurable flow. In his work *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Bergson deals with our tendency of measuring time as we actually do spatial things. In his investigation of real time he analyzes such concepts as intensity, extensity, quality, quantity, multiplicity and number all of which are related to his study. Thus, this study is a deep and detailed investigation about time and its relations.

In this chapter, I will try to investigate the confusion between intensity and extensity, quality and quantity, multiplicity and number that also lead the confusion between mathematical time and real time (duration). Then I will touch upon two qualitatively different realities, time and space. Next, I will discuss the distinction between mathematical and real time, and finally, will investigate the possibility of feeling duration.

3.1. The Intensity of Conscious States and Magnitude of Material Objects

In the first chapter of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson points out the confusion between the two so-called forms of quantity; intensity and extensity. While intensity pertains to the internality of conscious-being and it is unextended

and immeasurable, extensity is wholly related to the extended and measurable things. According to the proponents of the assertion, we can easily claim for the increase and decrease of both intensity and extensity, which is why they are called as magnitude. According to Bergson, drawing such a parallelism proceeds from our commonsensical misapprehension of intensity. Well then, how can we measure non-spatial things and regard intensities as being quantitative? The answer resides in our common-sensical acts that habitually draw an analogy between intensity with extensity and picture unextended things as extended. Bergson explains the interpretation that our common sense brings with these words:

It is this qualitative progress which we interpret as a change of magnitude, because we like simple thoughts and because our language is ill-suited to render the subtleties of psychological analysis.³⁶

According to Bergson, space is a homogeneous medium, and when we try to understand heterogeneous inner states in such a plane, that is, with the language and concepts of the homogeneous space, we have to transform the conscious states into physical states that are wholly related to quantitative relations. However, intensities can only be compared according to their qualities. Trying to apprehend the inner states with regard to quantities is a habit of our intellect.

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.³⁷

³⁶ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p.13

³⁷ Ibid, p.4

Although common sense and scientific psychology treat sensations, feelings and passions as if they are measurable physical states, Bergson conversely indicates that the concerning states are related to our psychic aspects. Scientific psychology makes this mistake by imitating other sciences and talking about inner states just as talking about extensive and quantitative things. In addition, the mistake of common sense is the effort of using the language of spatial things for non-spatial states. That is, both common sense and scientific psychology try to reduce intensity to extensity.

We generally use numbers and quantitative words to describe and also compare the things perceived in space. However, these kinds of quantitative relations cannot be established between psychic states³⁸. It is a stubborn fact that intensity is affected by the physical conditions, and the quantitative changes of these conditions cause alterations in intensity, but this alteration is qualitative.

While relating two things through their extensive magnitude, and also while talking about two intensities, the same expression such as “greater than” may be used, but it is not possible to use purely quantitative expressions such as “longer than” and “shorter than”. According to the intent and purpose, the first expression can gain two different meanings. One of these expresses a mathematical magnitude between the physical objects and the other one expresses qualitative differences in intensities.

When we assert that one number is greater than another number or one body greater than another body, we know very well what we mean. For in both cases we allude to unequal spaces, as shall be shown in detail a

³⁸ “The psychic states whose intensity we have just defined are deep-seated states which do not seem to have any close relation to their external cause or to involve the perception of muscular contraction.” Ibid, p.20

further on, and we call that space the greater which contains the other. But how can a more intense sensation contain one of less intensity?³⁹

Thus a correlation can be established between numbers and mathematically measurable things in terms of container and contained. However, between intensities there is no such relation. So our conceptualist ill-suited language is not capable of expressing the deep-seated sensations. Thus, is there any possible language that can successfully express the deep seated sensations? According to Bergson, art allows us to enter into the inner sensations through sympathy. Unlike our ordinary and static language, the language of the art and the way of expression it uses is very peculiar and dynamic. Bergson describes the peculiarity of art with the following words:

Art aims at impressing feelings on us rather than expressing them; it suggests them to us, and willingly dispenses with the imitation of nature when it finds some more efficacious means.⁴⁰

Furthermore, it would not be wrong to say that in the first chapter of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson states that quantity is not applicable to the conscious states. Bergson points out the mistake that both intellect and language makes by trying to apprehend the consciousness through their own categories. In other words, the tendency of the intellect and language is to translate the immeasurable intensive things into measurable extensive things.

Bergson indicates the confusion of quality and quantity as the main factor of the misapprehension of the conscious states. To mention of a less intensive sensation as contained in a more intensive sensation does not make any sense. The relation between sensations and the alteration of sensations cannot be

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 1-2

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.16

assumed as in the relation between “contained” and “container”, such relation can only be established between extensional things and spatial objects.

The other mistaken way of defining intensities is measuring their external causes and drawing a numerical parallelism between cause and effect, and between extensive and intensive. Bergson defends that we become aware of the affection of an intensity without realizing the cause of it. Intensities are immediately experienced things without figuring or calculating the external causes. Moreover, any enterprise that tries to apprehend intensity through the quantitative concepts or external causes can neither realize nor explain the alteration of intensities as “deep-seated psychic phenomena”. Because of the reason that the causes of the related intensities are purely subjective and not easily measurable, they cannot be explained by aforementioned methods.

Whether the relation between a deep-seated intensity and external cause is close or not, it is obvious that their fields of activity are completely different. The former is related to the inner self and a conscious activity, the latter is related to the material things and mechanical activity. After making such a distinction between intensity and extensity we come up to a question as follows: although intensities are quintessentially qualitative why do we regard intensities as quantities? I will try to address this question in the following section.

Bergson illustrates the distinction between quality and quantity in two parts. In the first part, he talks over the complex psychic states; and in the other, he examines the simple psychic states. In my analysis about quality and quantity, I would like to follow the line drawn by Bergson. In other words, after

elucidating the complex psychic states, I will touch upon the simple states that Bergson articulates.⁴¹

3.1.1. Complex Psychic States

Bergson specifies the complex psychic states by distinguishing them into two different kinds. First is the deep-seated psychic states and the other is superficial states (muscular sensation) that involve physical conditions. He clearly expresses deep-seated states by exemplifying some of these feelings and indicates the qualitative change of the related intensive feelings. For instance, he points out the progress of desire and its transition to deep passion.

[An] obscure desire gradually becomes a deep passion. Now, you will see that the feeble intensity of this desire consisted at first in its appearing to be isolated and, as it were, foreign to the remainder of your inner life. But little by little it permeates a larger number of psychic elements, tingeing them, so to speak, with its own colour and lo! your outlook on the whole of your surroundings seems now to have changed radically.⁴²

Furthermore, Bergson analyzes the qualitative alteration of sensations of joy and sorrow, and then gives examples to illustrate the change of aesthetic and moral feelings. He speaks upon the sensation of pity, through indicating a gradual alteration of this moral feeling: "The increasing intensity of pity thus consists in a qualitative progress, in a transition from repugnance to fear, from fear to sympathy, and from sympathy itself to humility."⁴³ As he articulates, the deep-seated feelings have no or little connection with the external impacts. On the other hand, the muscular effort has closer relation to the external

⁴¹ Ibid, p.8

⁴² Ibid, p.8

⁴³ Ibid, p.19

causes. Because of this relation, sensations of muscular effort seem as if they are magnitudes, and the gradual changes in them appear to be quantitative. However, when we consider the related sensations carefully, we realize that they do not occupy space and they are non-spatial psychic states. That is to say, the changes of these sensations are also qualitative just as the deep-seated feelings.

We are thus led to define the intensity of a superficial effort in the same way as that of a deep-seated psychic feeling. In both cases there is a qualitative progress and an increasing complexity, indistinctly perceived.⁴⁴

3.1.2. Simple Psychic States

Later on, Bergson, commenting on simple sensations, indicates that they much less depend on external causes. He divides these sensations into affective and representative sensations. While Bergson subclassifies affective sensations as pleasure and pain, he defines the representative sensations as the sensations of heat, light, weight that are affected by sensory data of physical world. In that respect, he first of all touches upon the relation between affective sensations and physical impressions.

Common sense and science try to conceive the intensity of pain through the external causal factors, and agree with the existence of a close relation and parallelism between the measure of pain and the size of affected body. Just as pain, intensity of pleasure is seen as parallel to the bodily changes in terms of their magnitudes. However, it is not possible to mention an increase or decrease of the intensity of affective sensations. Physical factors cause qualitative change of sensations, but in terms of magnitude, there is no

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.26

parallelism between physical causes and qualitative change. There is no translative language between quality and quantity.

Our bodies react to the music that is heard, and harmonically accompanies the sound. Thus, the increase and decrease of sound influence our bodily reactions and sensations. Bergson terms these kinds of sensations as representative sensations. Every sensation in the state of flux changes qualitatively and becomes a different sensation. Although each sensation under the influence of external causes is like the shade of colors, they are interpreted as the same sensation that changes quantitatively.

Bergson argues that the representative sensations have an affective character and, as a result, the qualitative alterations of representative sensations are understood as quantitative alterations. It is an undeniable fact that the outward factors affect our nervous system and by the effect of external factors we immediately feel a sensation. However, we do not immediately become aware of the changes in our nervous system. While the causal physical factors and also changes in our nervous system can be measured, our inextensive immediate sensations do not have mathematically measurable magnitude.⁴⁵ Yet, the intellect and our ill-suited language represent qualitative differences as quantity.

Based upon Bergson's point of view about intensity, we reach the conclusion that talking about a more intensive sensation does not signify "an increase of sensation" in reality because a sensation is qualitative and does not occupy any space. So when we regard sensation as a quality we can call it as "a sensation of increase". Talking about sensation as an increasing quantity is just

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 39

making a mistaken inference.⁴⁶ Bergson points out those mistaken inferences as follows:

The fact is that there is no point of contact between the unextended and the extended, between quality and quantity. We can interpret the one by the other, set up the one as the equivalent of the other; but sooner or later, at the beginning or at the end, we shall have to recognize the conventional character of this assimilation.⁴⁷

Here, the representation of intensities are taken as two distinct forms; first is the representative states that represent the external causes and the other one is the self-sufficient states of consciousness that are not caused by any kind of external factor. Bergson describes these forms by the following words:

The idea of intensity is thus situated at the junction of two streams, one of which brings us the idea of extensive magnitude from without, while the other brings us from within, in fact from the very depths of consciousness, the image of an inner multiplicity.⁴⁸

Then, if there is not any significant relation between extensity and intensity, how is it possible to speak of the multiplicity of each one? That is, how are the multiplicity of intensity and extensity distinct from each other?

3.2. Two Kinds of Multiplicity

As stated in the previous part, Bergson points out in the first chapter of *Time and Free Will* the misunderstanding of intensity by distinguishing quality and quantity. In the second chapter of *Time and Free Will*, he inquires the “multiplicity of inner states” and its difference from the multiplicity of number. In everyday life, the word multiplicity is often used to describe

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.48

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.70

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.73

quantitative multiplicity. He examines thoroughly the characteristic of our inner states and the distinction between inner sensations and external objects; and draws a parallel picture to this distinction which he terms as “qualitative multiplicity” and “quantitative multiplicity”. Similarly, to make clear the idea of duration, Bergson first aims to throw light on the multiplicity of conscious states of our life.

Our habit of interpreting the qualitative subjective states as quantitative objective conditions causes us to understand unextended physics states as measurable extended objects. So, is it possible to signify qualitative states with numbers? It does not seem so, because just as Bergson indicates number implies spatiality.

Bergson defines number as “a collection of identical units”⁴⁹ - the units that are counted together must be identical or assumed to be identical. In order to count things together we must ignore their intrinsic differences. Through that kind of ignorance, we can call a group of sheeps as flock or a group of soldiers as army. For the purpose of counting, we isolate a soldier from reality and imagine him as identical with the others. At least one difference, the place which he occupies differs from the places of other soldiers that we imagine. Otherwise, the soldiers become one and same thing. That is to say, the parts of the units are juxtaposed in space. Because of being “a collection of units”, number is many; and being “a collection of the units”, it is one. In other words, number is “the synthesis of the one and many”.⁵⁰

When we first learn to count, every number refers to an external object that occupies a different location from other objects. Yet, after apprehending the

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.75

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.75

concept of number we give up the habit of counting by referring a signified object. According to Bergson the process of counting starts with signifying external objects, then the objects “become points” and in the end, the related points disappear and the image turns into “abstract number”.⁵¹ So, the abstract number becomes just a symbol that helps us to think back on the extended images.

Is it possible to count without imagining the extended objects? Or is it possible to abstract number from space? During the process of counting, we think that the numbers are not dependent on space. That is to say, we believe that the numbers exist in duration rather than existing in space.⁵² Although we do not accept the dependence of numbers to space, we attribute a spatial location to the numbers while counting. Actually the durational moments that we count and add to each other do not refer to pure duration. “[E]very clear idea of number implies a visual image in space.”⁵³ If so, why do we think numbers as if they are independent of space?

As stated above, in the counting process we build up numbers by an indivisible process of our mind but, it does not mean that numbers consist of indivisible units. Divisibility is an attribute of extended spatial things. On the other hand, unextended and non-spatial states are indivisible. If we assert that number signifies unextended and non-spatial things, we must admit that number refers to indivisible states. However, our notion of number has the potentiality to be divided infinitely. So, the problem is that; how can a divisible concept signify indivisible states? Beyond all these problems, a

⁵¹ Ibid, p.78

⁵² Ibid, pp. 78-79

⁵³ Ibid, p. 79

significant problem that we should consider is the possibility of counting inner states. As it is pointed out before, our inner states cannot be interpreted as qualitatively identical spatial objects. Although there is a reflexive relation between our inner states, none of our sensation is identical with each other. That is to say, our inner states are not countable because we can only count qualitatively identical things. Hence, is it possible to mention multiplicity of inner states?

While adding a number to the previous one, we conceive the multiplicity of the parts.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Bergson points out another kind of multiplicity and distinguishes two kinds of multiplicities. The mentioned multiplicities are (i) the multiplicity of external objects “counted in space” and (ii) the multiplicity of conscious states that is not countable but “symbolically represented in space”.⁵⁵

Physical objects are localized in space and, being so, they are divisible multiplicities. Although through the process of building up numbers we make an abstraction, thereby creating “ideal space” and juxtaposing the units into this imaginary space, we do not have to make such an abstraction for counting the material objects. As Bergson states, we already perceive the material objects in space.

When we speak of material objects, we refer to the possibility of seeing and touching them; we localize them in space. In that case, no effort of the inventive faculty or of symbolical representation is necessary in order to count them; we have only to think them, at first separately, and

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 85

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 85

then simultaneously, within the very medium in which they come under our observation.⁵⁶

The psychic and mental states are indivisible and not locatable in space. The only way to count these non-spatial states is representing them symbolically. In the process of counting the qualitative senses we picture them as spatial images. Bergson illustrates this representation by regarding the perception of a bell sound. He talks about two alternatives to count the successive sounds of bell. The first is to combine the successive sensations of sounds with each other and form a series of rhythm. That kind of impression is totally qualitative. The second alternative that Bergson points out is the separating of sounds and placing them into a homogeneous ideal medium. In such a medium, the sounds are deprived of their qualities and lose their intensities.⁵⁷ The question that arises at this point is whether this medium is spatial or temporal.

Because of the intervals between gong sounds of the bell, these sounds seem as countable. Actually, things that we count are not sounds but intervals. That is to say, the ideal medium that is created for sounds is spatial. Bergson explains why time cannot be such an ideal medium:

[A] moment of time, we repeat, cannot persist in order to be added to others. If the sounds are separated, they must leave empty intervals between them. If we count them, the intervals must remain though the sounds disappear: how could these intervals remain, if they were pure duration and not space? It is in space, therefore, that the operation takes place.⁵⁸

Bergson states that to count our all psychic states we need to form them as they are in space.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.85

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 86-87

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.87

On the basis of two stated alternatives of counting Bergson reaches the conclusion that there are two kinds of multiplicities. The first is the multiplicity of material objects to which we can apply the concept of number. The second is the multiplicity of states of consciousness that must be represented symbolically and placed in ideal space in order to apply the numerical concepts to them.⁵⁹ In other words, we can define the first as multiplicity of juxtaposition and the second as multiplicity of interpenetration. The material objects are juxtaposed in space one by one and cannot penetrate each other because they are located in different places. However, we cannot prove the assertion that impenetrability is the characteristic of physical objects because our perceptions and observations will never be capable of validate such an assertion. To make this kind of assertion we need a specified ideal space in which we may calculate all the possibilities. In other words, with the logical form of number we attribute impenetrability of the objects.⁶⁰ We can say that this attribution is also a mistaken habit of our intellect.

Furthermore, if the impenetrability mentioned above is a property of number, how can we count the feelings, sensations and mental states that penetrate each other? As argued before, although the psychic states penetrate one another, they are assumed as if they are located in different places in “ideal space”. So in the act of counting the psychic states, we assume that there is no penetration between these states. As we see in this process, impenetrability is not directly related with our perceptions; on the contrary, to make such an assumption is a logical necessity of number.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.87

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.89

⁶¹ Ibid, p.89

Through the light of his expression about the counting process of conscious states, Bergson makes a distinction between our ordinary time concept and duration. In the process of counting, our conscious states are exposed to symbolic representation and their qualitative nature becomes impressed by external conditions. So, our immediate conscious states are reformed by spatial multiplicity. Bergson points out our ordinary understanding of time, that it is seen as a homogeneous medium in which our states of consciousness are juxtaposed just as they are in space.

The multiplicity of our conscious states is heterogeneous and continuous; however, number is discontinuous and deals with completed states. If we strip the conscious states off symbolization, isolate them from the external world and consider the immediacy of them, we can realize that the multiplicity of conscious states differ from the numerical discrete multiplicity. Otherwise, these states stay in an assimilated “time” that is the medium represented by reflective consciousness.

Although the pure duration is not representable, whenever we think and talk about duration or count the moments of it we unwillingly spatialize it. The habit of transforming time to space shows that there is a strong correlation between “time” and space. Hence, before analyzing Bergson’s concept of duration, it is necessary to talk about our concept of space and its relation with time. As mentioned above, Bergson describes our ordinary concept of time as a homogeneous medium that enables us to count our conscious states. In this regard, what is to be said of the relation that Bergson indicates between space and time as a medium? The main purpose of Bergson, while picturing the relation between our ordinary conception of time and space, is to show how pure duration differs from physical time.

3.3 The Relation between Physical Time and Space

Bergson starts the examination of space by comparing Kantian and empiricists' concepts of space. Kant considers space as an *a priori* intuition that enables us to perceive physical objects as spatial. Through this *a priori* condition, we perceive objects as spatial and in spatial relations with each other. Kant assumes space not as a property of objects but as a necessary condition for the intuition of objects. That is to say, Kant describes space as a pure intuition that can be separated from all sensational content; and so can be intuited independently. That is the reason why Bergson describes the Kantian concept of space as "an empty homogeneous medium"⁶² enabling us to make distinctions and abstractions to count.⁶³

However, empiricists do not agree with Kant's assumption that we have an *a priori* intuition of space. According to empiricists, spatiality is the feature of "physical qualities". Bergson declares that actually the empiricists' assumption of space essentially is not dissimilar to Kant's notion of space. The empiricists claim that our notion of space arises from the synthesis or co-existence of the sensations. Although empiricists would most probably reject, Bergson defends that the related act of synthesis includes an "active intervention of the mind".⁶⁴ He points out the necessity of mind in forming extensity by combining inextensive sensations.

Thus inextensive sensations will remain what they are, viz., inextensive sensations, if nothing be added to them. For their co-existence to give

⁶² Ibid, p.95

⁶³ Ibid, p.97

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.94

rise to space, there must be an act of the mind which takes them in all at the same time and sets them in juxtaposition.⁶⁵

So the act of synthesis seems like Kant's notion of "a priori form of sensibility". As it is stated before, space is a medium that enables us to "distinguish a number of identical and simultaneous sensations from one another".⁶⁶ Bergson agrees with Kant's notion of space as being a homogeneous medium and existing independently. Space is the medium that enables us to separate and count the points of physical objects. Bergson claims that just like Kant, common sense has also the inclination of distinguishing the concept of space from the perception of extensity. Although intellect enables us to separate, count, abstract by means of space, it causes a mistaken tendency of considering time just like space. Considering time as homogeneous comes to mean to think the conscious states as juxtaposed in time like physical points in space. Consequently, through this consideration we abstract time from duration.⁶⁷ However, duration is a flow that spreads from past to future.

Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation.⁶⁸

Bergson expresses that the envisioned thing as time is actually spatial. "[T]ime, conceived under the form of an unbounded and homogeneous medium, is nothing but the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness."⁶⁹ The material objects are exterior to each other and conceived within a

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.94

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.95

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.98

⁶⁸ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.7

⁶⁹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p.99

homogeneous medium, but the conscious states permeate one another successively and so, these states cannot be apprehended by considering them in a homogeneous medium. After all, our ordinary concept of time is a homogeneous medium just like space. In the next part, I will try to investigate how pure duration differs from the physical time.

3.4. Homogeneous Time and Pure Duration

Bergson mentions two possible concepts of time. One is the scientific time that is divisible, homogeneous and formed by the act of mind. The other is the real, concrete time which is called as *pure duration*. While the latter is independent of spatiality, the first is related to space. Bergson explains pure duration with these words:

Pure duration is 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. For this purpose it need not be entirely absorbed in the passing sensation or idea; for then, on the contrary, it would no longer *endure*. Nor need it forget its former states : it is enough that, in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another.⁷⁰

Bergson draws an analogy between a melody and the life of a living being. Life with its past, present and future states, is an inseparable whole just like a musical melody that is harmonical unity of notes. Like the notes of the melody, our past and future states melt into one another. If the rhythm of the melody is distorted, we immediately become aware of the qualitative change. Thus, we recognize that the distortion or change of the flux of rhythm or duration is not quantitative. Through this analogy Bergson aims to show that we are able to

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.100

conceive the succession of the parts of the qualitative harmonious whole. As the notes of a melody, the states of consciousness are qualitatively distinct, and a change in one part affects the whole. However, we, in social life, choose a way of symbolization (such as language) for our inner states of consciousness and project them to space. The constitution of an understanding about inner states - including feelings, sensations and dispositions - in space means to grasp intensity through the medium of extensity; in this regard, the inner states become juxtaposed in the same like the material and extended objects. Our ill-suited language has a tendency to consider each state of consciousness as isolated and static like the physical objects in space. Our language is just able to describe the quantitative changes; it can identify neither psychic states nor duration. Bergson claims that when we try to talk over an order of succession in duration, we automatically conceive it as simultaneous and project it as juxtaposed in space.⁷¹ The succession of conscious states is a "succession without distinction"; that is, not succession, but simultaneity creates distinction between these states. However, the states of consciousness are not lined side by side; rather, they are harmonically added to one another and they are parts of a successively organized whole.

[P]ure duration might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number: it would be pure heterogeneity.⁷²

As Bergson states pure duration is not measurable; however, we count time in our daily life; we set moments of time to a line, give names to them and count

⁷¹ Ibid, p.102

⁷² Ibid, p.104

them. If we conceive moments like this and do not go beyond this habit and mediation we cannot realize duration. According to Bergson, to perceive duration in its immediacy, we should avoid the symbolic language that mistakenly represents duration as a measurable quantity.

In our ordinary life, we conceive time as a combination of moments that are imagined as being external to each other. The time which we measure and consider as a homogeneous medium is physical time. Moreover, the time that we refer in daily life and science uses in its calculations is this physical time. On the other hand "real time", duration is continuous experience that is perceived by our inner consciousness. Bergson states the difference between physical time and duration with the following words:

Granted that inner duration, perceived by consciousness, is nothing else but the melting of states of consciousness into one another, and the gradual growth of the ego, it will be said, notwithstanding, that the time which the astronomer introduces into his formulae, the time which our clocks divide into equal portions, this time, at least, is something different: it must be a measurable and therefore homogeneous magnitude.⁷³

Bergson claims that our ordinary act of measuring time is solely the act of counting simultaneities.⁷⁴ Beyond this act that is directed by intellect, there are conscious states that evolve in duration. If we strip our ego off the symbolization of language and give up counting time in a moment, the thing that will remain is pure heterogeneous duration, indivisible process. The general mistake in conceiving time is the confusion of real space and real duration. We habitually try to apply a quantitative structure of space to the

⁷³ Ibid, p.107

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.108

conscious states of our inner life. Here is how Bergson describes this ordinary habit with his own words:

There is a real space, without duration, in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness. There is a real duration, the heterogeneous moments of which permeate one another; each moment, however, can be brought into relation with a state of the external world which is contemporaneous with it, and can be separated from the other moments in consequence of this very process. The comparison of these two realities gives rise to a symbolical representation of duration, derived from space. Duration thus assumes the illusory form of a homogeneous medium.⁷⁵

As it is understood from the explanation of Bergson, the time that we speak of is divisible and homogeneous that actually refers to space rather than duration. Bergson analyses the concept of motion to make the related confusion clearer. Although motion is an indivisible process, when we consider motion as if it is homogeneous, we unwillingly fasten it up to the expansion of space. Bergson invites us to imagine a moving object from one point to another. When we think the movement of an object just within the relation of the points that it has passed over, we reduce the motion of the object to space.

Furthermore, just like our habitual act, science eliminates the process of movement, just considers the places that the moving object has occupied and structures a line by combining the points and, finally, represents this illusionary immobile line as though it is motion. The essential point that we skip while talking over motion is that it is “a process which occupies

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.110

duration"⁷⁶. Only with a mental synthesis do we become able to sense the impression of motion and continuity.

[D]uration and motion are mental syntheses, and not objects; that, although the moving body occupies, one after the other, points on a line, motion itself has nothing to do with a line ; and finally that, although the positions occupied by the moving body vary with the different moments of duration, though it even creates distinct moments by the mere fact of occupying different positions, duration properly so called has no moments which are identical or external to one another, being essentially heterogeneous, continuous, and with no analogy to number.⁷⁷

Physical objects fall along a line in homogeneous space and are external to each other. On the other side, duration has no place in the composition of space. It is completely related to our consciousness that is composed of the moments of duration. To imagine the multiplicity of the successive states of duration in a homogeneous medium does not signify any reality. These states are just real for our consciousness.

Bergson claims that during sleep our consciousness is far from counting time; and we rather live in real duration and feel the qualitative character of duration. On the other hand, when we are awake, our consciousness returns to the ordinary habit of measuring time that is not related with duration, but space.⁷⁸

The notion of homogeneous time is just "the symbolical image of real duration"⁷⁹. Our ordinary thinking and language deceive us by translating the

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.111

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.120

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 126-127

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 125

quality into quantity, and the unextended into extended. Even though we deal with discrete (numerical) multiplicity and pass over or eliminate the quality of the psychic states, they exist despite all efforts of our ignorance. If so, what kind of feeling is this that realize duration and if duration is something which is lived, is it identical with life or is it a part in the composite of life?

Time as duration is originally heterogeneous; and until the moments of duration are symbolically substituted, time cannot be regarded as homogeneous. That is to say, before such a substitution we have the feeling of quality and duration. As mentioned before, through language and intellect we symbolize quality with quantity. As prerequisite for constructing the quantity of the states of duration, firstly we need to feel the quality of it.

[W]ithout this interpenetration and this, so to speak, qualitative progress, no addition would be possible. Hence it is through the quality of quantity that we form the idea of quantity without quality.⁸⁰

When we resist the flux of duration and activate our intellect, we start to consider our conscious states as identical elements that are lined in space. Thus, we disturb the dynamic progress, and the qualitative multiplicity turns into quantitative whereas heterogeneous duration turns into homogeneous. Bergson describes these processes by the following words:

In a word, our ego comes in contact with the external world at its surface; our successive sensations, although dissolving into one another, retain something of the mutual externality which belongs to their objective causes; and thus our superficial psychic life comes to be pictured without any great effort as set out in a homogeneous medium.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.123

⁸¹ Ibid, p.125

According to Bergson, by an effort of eliminating the artificial symbolization and construction we can experience real duration. If we try to concentrate on duration by separating the moments of it and assume as if they are identical, we, as a matter of fact, become condemned to the rules of artificially constructed time and life. To intuit the real duration we should go with the immediate flow of it like listening a piece of music without selecting the notes; rather, participating in the harmony of the whole performance.

Actually, experiencing and participating in duration come to mean experiencing and participating in the real flow of life. In the next chapter, I will try to make clearer what I mean with this statement.

CHAPTER 4

SELF, FREEDOM AND PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Are we aware of our entire self? Do we feel ourselves to be free? Are the future acts of a person determined by his/her previous acts? Is it possible to predict the future acts of a person? What are the characteristics of a free act? How far is reality from our experiences? Is it possible to conceive life in its immediacy? If it is so, what is the way of it?

In this chapter, I will investigate the answers of these questions to explicate the main concepts of Bergson's philosophy of life. In this respect, I will first touch upon Bergson's notion of *self* and its relation with *freedom*. Then I will try to put forward Bergson's investigation on freedom, and his analysis and criticisms about deterministic views. Finally, I will try to lay emphasis on the notions of *life* and *reality* to make clear Bergson's philosophy of life.

4.1. Two Kinds of Self

As parallel to the distinction between qualitative and quantitative multiplicity or homogeneous time and duration, Bergson makes a distinction between two sides of the self. One is the *superficial self* and the other is the *fundamental self*.

In the previous chapter, I intended to investigate the inadequacy of our way of thinking and language while expressing the states and sensations that we gain through intuition. Intuition enables us to participate in the process of dynamic

life that cannot be represented by the words of static and divisible world. Then, is it possible to create another language that is able to represent the states, feelings, senses, and also the process of aforementioned dynamic life? To conceive such a language that is far from using concepts and categorizing can appear to be impossible, because every state and feeling is unique, and so, we need unique words for each of these unique states and feelings. Still it seems possible to form a less conceptual language to express unique states more successfully. Bergson is well aware of the difficulty of expressing such states, and to overcome this difficulty, as stated earlier, he uses a peculiar language and makes use of many illustrations from inside of life that enable the readers to participate in the experiences in his examples.

In social life, we acquire ordinary thinking, conceptual language, social structures and also habits that actually limit our perception of life. Each conceptual structure or habit instills in us with its own perspectival view and disrupts our connection with the wholeness of life. That is to say, we are imprisoned by our habits, language and society. So we can make an inference that in our daily life, on the social side, our freedom is also imprisoned.

The side that is imprisoned by social life is our superficial self. On the other hand, the side that goes beyond the social construction and to the freer level of life is our fundamental self. That is to say, while superficial self signifies our social life, the fundamental self signifies our conscious life, and in that state we become aware of psychic states and inner life. In other words, the fundamental self (free self) is conscious of duration while the other one is the impersonal self in social life.⁸² The social self is like a wrong representation of the

⁸² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p.127

fundamental self which is reflected to our daily life. It is “the shadow of the [fundamental] self projected into homogeneous space”.⁸³

[B]elow the self with well-defined states, a self in which succeeding each other means melting into one another and forming an organic whole. But we are generally content with the first, i.e. with the shadow of the self projected into homogeneous space. Consciousness, goaded by an insatiable desire to separate, substitutes the symbol for the reality, or perceives the reality only through the symbol. As the self thus refracted, and thereby broken to pieces, is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular, consciousness prefers it, and gradually loses sight of the fundamental self.⁸⁴

But, because of pragmatic needs, consciousness generally acts with the desire of separation, uses symbols for reality and contends with the social self, and hence it “gradually loses sight of the fundamental self.”⁸⁵ At this point, Bergson also adds that the fundamental self can be reawakened with a vigorous effort. That is an effort of insulating the inner states from the homogeneous time, so that the inner states can obtain their mobility again.

By the postulation of two kinds of self, Bergson does not mean that the personality is divided into two parts. It is one and the same self that, on the one hand, involving the inner states, perceives life as a unity while on the other hand, perceiving life as a series of distinct moments. In this regard, it would not be wrong to take the two selves as two different levels of the self that it is possible to pass from one level to the other: the distinction does not originate from a hierarchical superiority of the fundamental self to social; yet

⁸³ Ibid, p.128

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.128

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.128

they are essentially incompatible. In brief, these two selves are not reducible to each other.

Actually the social self is the superficial and common that we share with society. To communicate with other individuals, we need to use common concepts and language. Each of us, being a member of society, create languages, rules, laws and many other concepts to fulfill the demands of daily life in a practical way. But later, these created concepts seize control of the fundamental self, thus capturing its freedom. Consequently, we start to explain our inner sensations with common words; we use common words such as love, fear, sadness, anger to express our inner states. Thus, we lose our peculiarity and uniqueness, so as to become just a composition of society.

In social life, because of the fact that we are imprisoned in language and social rules, we become alienated with the dynamic life. We conceptualize the inner states, those of which we acquire by intuition, and then we transform these dynamic characteristics into a static condition. According to Bergson, people mostly live with their superficial self as being unaware of true freedom and lose sight of their fundamental self that is hidden behind the conscious states.⁸⁶ Therefore, we need to ask whether it is possible to act freely in social life; and if it is possible, then, we need to show in what way this is so.

In other words, the social self rises to the surface with clear-cut states while the fundamental self comes to light in a dynamic and organic whole in which the states permeate into one another. The social self is the substitutive representation of the real self that is more adapted to our language, intellect and other components of social life. Yet, to be adaptive to the inner states such

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.166

as emotions and senses, that are inexpressible with our ordinary concepts and language, require a desirous effort.

According to Bergson, these two sides of the self are able to grasp two different sides of reality. The social self enables us to get the reality of material world. On the other hand, the fundamental self enables us to access the reality of the life process. In other words, the first one deals with the reality of being and the latter deals with the reality of becoming.⁸⁷ Through evolution we have become more dependent on society and we are mostly not free and not aware of our inner self. We generally live with our social self, and so, with the social side, we have a tendency to put ourselves out of our ordinary life.

For Bergson, our real self is the fundamental self. But, because of the external factors, we move from real self, and our perception severs its connection with duration thus becoming dependent on the spatial medium. Through this movement we gain habits such as separating, counting, and conceptualizing. And so, with these habitual acts we turn to society from our inner lives.

[T]he moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we “are acted” rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration.⁸⁸

As Bergson states above, we cannot act freely in the deterministic and pragmatically shaped social life. The cause-effect relation has become an

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.231

⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 231-232

inseparable part of our way of thinking. In spite of this dependency to the external and static world, Bergson points out the possibility of free self that could be revealed with a tremendous effort.⁸⁹ The superficial self makes us aware of a reality that is shaped by concepts, laws, language and habits; on the other hand, the free (fundamental) self enables us to become aware of the reality of the world in which states and moments are in a heterogeneous flux. The effort that enables us to get into the flux is the effort that breaks the chain of language, laws, concepts, and habits of social life, and gets rid of space. That is to say, this effort turns its face to the pure reality and gives up the substitution of it.

In brief, the social self is more impersonal and more related to the external world in which the artificially constructed things such as language, laws prevail. That is to say, the social self is obedient to the external world, while the fundamental self is *sine qua non* of free will.

4.2. Freedom

At the beginning of the third chapter of *Time and Free Will*, before explicating his concept of freedom, Bergson first compares the perspectives on freedom of two opposite systems of nature, dynamism and mechanism. According to dynamism, organic forms of nature cannot solely be explained with the mechanical laws. Beside the laws that direct matter, there is a reality of facts. For dynamism, laws are just the symbolizations of the reality. On the other side, for mechanism, laws are the true realities that combine specific facts.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 233

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp.140-141

Bergson describes the contradiction between dynamism and mechanism with the following words:

[T]he believer in dynamism thinks that he perceives facts which more and more elude the grasp of laws: he thus sets up the fact as the absolute reality, and the law as the more or less symbolical expression of this reality. Mechanism, on the contrary, discovers within the particular fact a certain number of laws of which the fact is thus made to be the meeting point, and nothing else: on this hypothesis it is the law which becomes the genuine reality.⁹¹

Mechanism tries to arrange facts under laws and through the related laws, attempts to determine future actualities among possibilities. That is, mechanism calculates the effects of an action, but it makes this by abstracting and staticizing the things in homogeneous space. For mechanism, future events can be predicted by the previous states and laws. On the contrary, dynamism does not deal with arranging the notions in order to comprehend the relations between them or explain the facts by laws.

Because of the fact that mechanism and dynamism describe the concept of the "simple" in two different senses, one of them ascribes a higher reality to the laws and the other to the facts. For mechanism, calculable and predictable things or states that are explained by laws are simple. According to its definition of *simple*, inertia is a simpler notion than freedom because it can be defined by laws of physics.⁹² However, for dynamism, human being has the immediate feeling of freedom. Contrary to freedom, inertia is not an immediate knowledge but a derived concept because inertia is defined as lack of motion. Hence, what is immanent to life is change and motion, and inertia is just an abstraction and far from being simple. That is to say, what can be

⁹¹ Ibid, p.141

⁹² Ibid, p.141

simple for dynamism are concrete facts. Consequently, according to the mechanistic view, human actions are determined and predictable. However, for dynamism, none of the actions of the human being can be determined through the laws; because acts of human beings are free and spontaneous.

4.2.1. Physical and Psychological Determinism

Bergson, by comparing dynamism and mechanism aims to show that his concept of freedom is based on the dynamic system. On the contrary, determinism is grounded on mechanical assumptions. Being a dynamist philosopher, Bergson ascribes a superior reality to the facts and illustrates how physical and psychological facts are arranged under the laws ascribed by deterministic systems.⁹³

Bergson points out two kinds of determinism: physical and psychological. He asserts that although the empirical proofs of these two determinisms seem different, psychological determinism is reducible to physical determinism. Physical determinism is based upon the mechanistic theories of matter, that is, these theories explain all the physical phenomena by the movements of atoms and molecules. In addition, according to these theories the change in our nervous system can also be explained by the movements of nerves and physical changes in brain. Thus, such an explanation means that the cause of all our ideas and feelings could be identified through the analysis of physical change. According to mechanistic explanations, existence of free act is not even a matter of discussion because this deterministic view purports to calculate and predict the following action of human being.

⁹³ Ibid, p.142

According to Bergson, what psychological determinism does is to determine the nervous changes, feelings, and ideas by grounding them on physical laws. Even though psychological determinists aim at explaining our nervous system by mechanical theories and to put forward supporting instances for their theories, Bergson states that causes and effects of conscious states can be explained neither by the movements of the nervous system, nor by other mechanical assumptions. As Bergson says: "To prove conscious states determined, we should have to show necessary connexion between cerebral and conscious states. No such proof."⁹⁴ That is, to make such a proof, it is required to show a parallelism between cerebral and conscious states. Bergson agrees that in some limited cases we can realize a correlation between physical events and mental states but these limited cases are not sufficient enough to prove the causes of mental states.⁹⁵

Determinist theories believe in the law of conservation of energy. According to this law, between the parts of physical phenomena there can be energy transfer, but the total amount of energy does not change; it neither increases nor decreases. On the other hand, Bergson indicates that to bring about a free act or thought, a strong force or energy is needed. So, the followers of determinist theories, and those who take the law of conservation of energy as a guide, automatically put the possibility of freedom away.

According to Bergson, the law of energy-conservation is acceptable only for the systems in which a reserve to the prior states is available. That is, in such systems, it is not only possible to predict the future states, but also to deduce the prior states. Bergson states that most of the processes are irreversible, and

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.146

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.148

so these processes cannot be explained by the law of energy-conservation. The natural process of human beings and the change of conscious states are grounded on duration. Furthermore, to place the things that are in mobile and indivisible states to the specific time, and to try to deduce their prior states is impossible. Because every moment of a living being is unique in its process and the existence of same states at different moments is impossible.⁹⁶ For Bergson, although the law of conservation of energy is only acceptable for mechanistic systems, to accept this law as if it is universal is a mistake of psychological determinism. According to him, this mistake is caused by confusing the mathematical time and real duration.

As we are not accustomed to observe ourselves directly, but perceive ourselves through forms borrowed from the external world, we are led to believe that real duration, the duration lived by consciousness, is the same as the duration which glides over the inert atoms without penetrating and altering them. Hence it is that we do not see any absurdity in putting things back in their place after a lapse of time, in supposing the same motives acting afresh on the same persons, and in concluding that these causes would again produce the same effect. That such an hypothesis has no real meaning.⁹⁷

According to psychological determinists, present states of consciousness are necessitated by the previous states, but conscious states differ from each other qualitatively and cannot be deduced from one another.⁹⁸ Bergson admits that there is a relation between these states, but it is not to be associated as a causal relation.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.153

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.154

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.155-156

Bergson states that it is possible to guess the next action of our close friend, but actually this is not a prediction of her future. We deduce her following act from her previous action and her character. Character, ideas, and feelings, as being a part of a human being, mostly do not change suddenly, instead, they evolve dynamically.⁹⁹ Because of this reason our “prediction” sometimes becomes true. However, the reason why Bergson criticizes determinists is their precise claims about actions of human beings. Even if we had known and witnessed all events and all decisions in someone’s life, we still would not be able to grasp the changes in her inner life. What we do while expressing her history of life is just making a reconstruction of her life. Thus, our overconfident predictions are destined to remain as deductive assumptions. In this regard, I find it beneficial to re-express here that the states of inner life of a person are not expressible and not apprehensible by others. Hence, analyzing life, character, ideas and feelings of a person are never sufficient to make inferences regarding her following actions and decisions provably.

Subsequently, Bergson, states three mistaken deterministic assumption of reflective consciousness:

- (i) The first is the supposition of intensity as quantity. Determinism defends that decisions, ideas, and actions of a person can easily be predicted in the light of her past decisions, ideas, and actions. Furthermore, determinists profess that the change of intensive states of a person can be calculated by the reason of the fact that her decisions, ideas, and actions are not independent from her intensity. However, as stated in previous chapter, Bergson indicates that intensity cannot be calculated as quantitative things because it is purely qualitative.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.184

- (ii) The second mistake is the substitution of concrete reality or dynamic processes of consciousness with physical symbols.¹⁰⁰ Determinists abstract consciousness as involving all the past and future states of a person and they do not take notice of dynamic processes of consciousness. However, in consciousness, the states are in a succession and melt every moment into one another.
- (iii) The third and most fundamental mistake is the confusion of space with time. According to Bergson, because of their confusion of time with space, determinists think that it is possible to make prophetic predictions about the future decisions and mental states of a person relying on the mechanical methods. They make their prediction by measuring time, but the real time is dynamic, indivisible, and the moments of it permeate into each other.

4.2.2. Free Act

According to Bergson, rather than being predictable, free acts are new and they cannot be deduced from the past actions. His concept of freedom is closely related with his concept of time. Predictable acts do not exist in duration, but they appear in mathematical time. They can be calculated before they take place. On the other hand, a free act unfolds itself in duration, and participates in the flow of it. Although people in society, while their fundamental self being hidden from themselves, behave with their superficial self, their activities cannot be predictable like mechanistic or habitual actions.

Freedom has been a fundamental issue of philosophy ever since the Ancient Greek thought, so Bergson is not the first philosopher who formulates the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.190

problem of freedom. Thus, what I want to emphasize here is the peculiarity of his investigation about freedom. According to Bergson, human activities are directed by the force of real time. Just like real time, acts of human beings are indivisible and mobile. Thus, it would not be wrong to assert that acts of human beings are impregnated by duration.

Free act is the act of the fundamental self – it is unpredictable and indefinable. It is indefinable because none of the existing concepts is able to describe it. Additionally, descriptive words and concepts only limit the meaning and power of free act.

Bergson tries to solve the problem of free will by his concept of *duration*. According to him, neither determinists nor defenders of free will is successful in their approach of the problem of free will assume time as a homogeneous and extensive magnitude. By interpreting time as space, both fall into the same error. Through such interpretation, they assume human acts as completed definable states. That is, both of them ignore the dynamic nature of human acts which unfold themselves in the flow of duration. Actually, determinists and defenders of free will make similar assumption about acts of human beings. On the one hand, according to determinists “there is only one possible act corresponding to given antecedents”.¹⁰¹ Through this assumption they defend that we can know the past actions and also perfectly predict the future acts of a person. In other words, for determinists, the self is the combination of its states. That is to say, a state is the cause or effect of another state. If a person acts like y after the act of x; y is the only option for the person. On the other hand, defenders of free will assert that there are several kinds of equally

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p.175

possible acts that may follow up any given set of prior acts.¹⁰² Thus, for defenders of free-will, there are always some alternatives to choose for every situation, and so the person is free to make a choice between the alternatives.¹⁰³ Bergson opposes to the perspectives of both determinists and defenders of free will because of the same reason that both of them suffer from the same mistake in supposing that either one possibility or a group of possibilities necessarily have to follow the given sets of prior acts. For Bergson, free act is not an act of choosing a direction from possibilities, but rather an act of creation. The self does not make choice between so-called limited possibilities; it rather creates its own future act. The action of the self is creative just as the musical piece of a musician or the painting of a painter.

According to Bergson, most people do not recognize their freedom because they act habitually and mechanically. If a person wants to act freely s/he must participate in the creative process of life.

While free acts originate from the fundamental self, the superficial self is determined by the laws and doctrines of the society and the environment in which people live. Bergson does not propose to ignore all the ideas and doctrines of the society. There are clearly some restrictive ideas and doctrines that curtail our freedom; but there are also some ideas that give us a possibility to create new ideas and feelings that participate in our personality.¹⁰⁴ Bergson criticizes the methods of positivism, but does not ignore all the positivist doctrines. What he criticizes is to let the rules and doctrines dominate us and limit our ways of thinking. Then only then, we become mentally and

¹⁰² Ibid, p.175

¹⁰³ Marjorie S. Harris, *Bergson's Conception of Freedom*, p.514

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.515

emotionally barren and limit our freedom. That is to say, Bergson is critical of the tendency to leave the fundamental self aside and continue to exist only with the static self.

As stated before, the self that is expressed by referring to everyday language is just a shadow of the real self. On the other hand, the self that act as free is fundamental self. Any political or social mention of free act refers to the act of superficial self. Hence, the free act is actually the manifestation of fundamental self.

To understand whether an act arises from the fundamental or superficial self, the relation between the act and the environment should be analyzed. The free act has no remarkable connection with the environment and society. Although there are some ideas that limit the self, there are also some significant ideas or senses that affect the whole of our soul. So what kind of significant and effective ideas or senses give rise to the fundamental self? A deep passion, a strong anger or an intensive pity change and pervade our whole personality. These kinds of feelings have little or no connection with the laws of society or systematic thinking. Each of these intensive acts arising from deep inside and covering the whole personality may be identified as free acts.

In social life we communicate with other people with our superficial self; that is, neither we nor others can realize our real self. So how can we encounter the explosion and emergence of the fundamental self? Similarly, how can we be able to cognize the fundamental self which, as said earlier, we have not come across yet?

Bergson claims that we can get rid of this fictitious world and become free by turning back to the real and concrete self.¹⁰⁵ To be aware of the fundamental self is only possible by focusing on our conscious experiences in duration. That is to say, if we switch to duration instead of the homogeneous time, and leave out our superficial self, we can realize our real personality and freedom; therefore, we can notice our inner states as living, and grasp the reality that reveals itself in pure duration.

[T]here are finally two different selves, one [superficial self] of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former [fundamental self] by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly becoming, as free states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in-common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space. But the moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we "are acted" rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, as stated earlier, we cannot bring the fundamental self to surface accidentally. The rebirth of the self requires a great effort, and this action resembles a volcanic eruption. The self that lives in the social life is limited by language and the rules for adaptability. In this process there is no free will; on the contrary there is automatism that "cover[s] over freedom".¹⁰⁷ As a result of

¹⁰⁵ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p.139

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp.231-232

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.235

being compressed with automatism and being exposed to the oppression of language and rules; the deep-seated self breaks its crust with a strong and sudden passion.¹⁰⁸ This passion is the desire of free life and of inner dynamism.

As mentioned above, Bergson does not postulate two separate selves; the separation of the personality is just an abstraction. Briefly, there is only one self that changes its characteristics by the motivations or effects of the inner states and external factors. So it is not possible to talk about a conflict between the selves “because we are pleased to split the person into two parts so that by an effort of abstraction we may consider in turn the self which feels or thinks and the self which acts, it would be very strange to conclude that one of the two selves is coercing the other.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, the two mentioned selves refer to our whole personality, and freedom arises from that unity.

4.3. Philosophy of Life

Duration, as the main concept of Bergson’s philosophy, stands against concepts that are used in positive sciences. The concept of duration is the sign of the dynamic process and creativity of life. Life, just like duration, is a continuous and indivisible flux. Actually, duration is not just time, it is also the essence of life. To live is to be in a continuous and creative process in which the states are not lined simultaneously, but are successively part of the continuous flow. So, what is the true nature of life? Is our ordinary intellect able to grasp life?

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.167

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.232

Life is not static and created. It is always in the process of becoming, and its evolutionary movement is continuous. As stated in the second chapter, intellect deals with static and divisible things or it translates and reforms indivisible as divisible. Intellect takes shape as an effect of evolution, and we, as intellectual and conscious beings, are part of evolution. Although, intellect is the effect and part of the process of life, it does not work congruously with the rhythm of life. Life, as a flux, is in the process of moving and evolving. On the other hand, intellect works mechanically; that is, it constructs new concepts and isolated systems by the act of adding and dividing. Intellect has been evolved to be harmonized with the material environment. All the components of the universe such as the living beings, intellect, and even the states that we try to isolate exist in duration. Evolution as an enabler of the flux of life, is the power of continuity of duration. Nothing in the universe is given, rather everything is in the process of becoming new. However, mechanism assumes things and states as if they exist as static in the present. This assumption is the main mistake of mechanism.

The essence of mechanical explanation, in fact, is to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that all is given. On this hypothesis, past, present and future would be open at a glance to a superhuman intellect capable of making the calculation.¹¹⁰

In Bergson's philosophy, the concept of duration is not an empty metaphysical assumption. The idea of duration arises from the evolution of life. In that regard, Bergson points out that there is a close relation between biology and philosophy of life.¹¹¹ While putting forward his philosophy, Bergson

¹¹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.37

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.50-62

investigates life itself. And so, he examines the relation between species. What he realizes in his studies is that there is a succession in the evolution of species like the succession of life.

Bergson analyzes two twentieth century theories of evolution, one being Neo-Darwinism, the other being Neo-Lamarckism. According to him these theories unwillingly fall into the same mistake while trying to understand the evolution among species. Neo-Darwinist explanation is based on mechanism that is, this theory supposes the pre-existing factors as the basis of evolution. On the other side, Neo-Lamarckism is based on finalistic account. Both theories miss out the succession among species, disregard the unforeseeable life forms, and deal with the present appearance, assuming that all factors that could affect the evolution. So, both ignore the possibility of novelty. However, future is always pregnant with novelty.

According to Bergson, mechanism and finalism reduce the past and future to the states of present. On the other hand, in his supposition of the nature of evolution, Bergson does not treat living beings by external causes and avoids explaining them with linear and mechanistic terms. Living beings are in a continuous flux, therefore only understandable by dynamic terms of an open system.¹¹²

Furthermore, life is not just an adaptation process to the external states; it also includes an internal evolution.

Science has shown, moreover, along the whole evolution of life, the various consequences attending upon the fact that living beings must be adapted to the conditions of the environment. Yet this necessity would

¹¹² K. Ansell Pearson, "Bergson and Creative Evolution/Involution: Exposing The Transcendental Illusion of Organismic Life", *The New Bergson*, p.147

seem to explain the arrest of life in various definite forms, rather than the movement the organization ever higher.¹¹³

To define life as an adaptation process is an ignorance of the creativity of life because adaptation to the outer world means becoming harmonized with the things that already exist. That is, adaptation is not a creative but a mechanical process. Bergson characterizes life in terms of *will*. For him, life cannot be defined as psychological and intellectual faculties that are directed by a purpose. Bergson's concept of *will* is far from the traditional *will* in the sense that psychology deals with. Moreover, Bergson opposes the deterministic and intellectualist concepts of free act that offers a freedom to choose among finite possibilities. On the other hand, Bergson's concept of free act is a creative act of the new. Life involves the possibility of unpredictable novelty, and it never repeats itself. Life is creative because it is not oriented by a purpose. In addition, to define the life of an organism by an adaptation process would be an inadequate explanation. However, a living being is actually in a modification process throughout which it contacts with its environment while creating new structures.

According to Darwin's explanation of natural selection, nature selects fitter organisms and eliminates weaker ones. On the other hand, Bergson interprets evolution as organisms' selection of environment. In the flux of life, every organism has the power to select and create new possibilities. The environment is not a pre-existing ground that organisms adapt to; instead, it is a changing phenomenon that evolves in accordance with the activity of the creation of organisms.

¹¹³ Henri Bergson, *Mind Energy*, p.24

Most of the evolutionists explain the changing process of organisms with environmental effects and ignore their creative capacities. Bergson opposes this mechanistic explanation and points out to the active creation process of organisms. His concept of creative evolution is a becoming process in which organisms actively participate.

As he states in his work *Creative Evolution*, Bergson opposes to the assumption of an essence behind life and all reality.¹¹⁴ Reality does not inhold such a substance that is the cause of all existence. For him, life is a dynamic flow in which existences are not static and deterministic states in a fixed way.

Classical physics theoretically assumes the future positions of things by calculating their present positions. What it fails to recognize is that life is a free creating process with none of its states being calculable as if being part of a mathematical or geometrical system. Duration is the essence of life – i.e., life in its wholeness, is in a continuous state of becoming. Thus, it involves unpredictable possibilities, always creating the new. So how can a universal law be applied to the living organism?

Bergson indicates that there is an unhalting continuity in the process of life. Also the development in organisms is a series of qualitative changes in the form of organisms; for instance, all the ages and periods of human life in which human beings continuously evolve. This process is not a process of annihilation. In other words, growing and getting old is not a process toward extinction, they are rather the periods of evolution.

¹¹⁴ If there is an essence of life, this essence can only be a tendency. “ The essence of life, that which defines its very origin, is nothing but a tendency to change –it is a tendency to move, and to a movement that creates divergent directions by its own growth” (Paola Marrati, *Time,Life, Concepts: The Newness of Bergson*, p.1108)

[We] must no longer speak of life in general as an abstraction, or as a mere heading under which all living beings are inscribed. At a certain moment, in certain points of space, a visible current has taken rise; this current of life, traversing the bodies it has organized one after another, passing from generation to generation, has become divided amongst species and distributed amongst individuals without losing anything of its force, rather intensifying in proportion to its advance.¹¹⁵

Whereas most of the evolutionist theories do not seriously take *time* into account, *time* is the core concept for Bergson's creative evolution. While science creates isolated systems to give explanation about the evolution of life, according to Bergson, evolution is not static but mobile and creative. So, it does not seem possible to understand evolution with the classical methods of science. Even if we kept individuals under observation, we would not be able to reach precise results about their evolution because our observations would be limited and always remain so. In this respect, it is important to underline the point that the aim of Bergson's study of evolution is not to create laws or a system that fits all the living beings and explain the causes of their acts. He is just interested in the pure activity of evolution. Moreover, he does not follow a reductionist approach in his study.

Scientists, who work with isolated systems and trying to explain evolution by cause-effect relation, assume the acts of living beings as if they are linked together in a deterministic manner on a linear progress. However, according to Bergson, evolution is not a linear progress. Evolution is an undetermined and unpredictable process - that is its direction is not planned or created. By its inner impulse, evolution creates novelty throughout the course of life.

[F]rom its [life] origin, it is the continuation of one and the same impetus, divided into divergent lines of evolution. Something has

¹¹⁵ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.26

grown, something has developed by a series of additions which have been so many creations.¹¹⁶

So, how does the inner impulse cause such a creation? Evolution is initially directed by an impulsion, but the progress of it is not restricted by a cause or an effect. Each of the evolutionist thinkers put forward one main concept that signifies the cause of the movement in the process of life. For instance, while for some materialist, this cause is *itch*, for Darwin it is *natural selection* and for Bergson it is *vital impulse*. In contrast to materialists' and Darwin's assumptions about the cause of evolution, Bergson brings up a mystical factor, *élan vital* as the driving factor of evolution. He describes *élan vital* as vital impetus of the reality of life. Furthermore, *élan vital*, which cannot be comprehended by intellect, logical concepts and science, is the ground of whole life. Each component of life is in the process of moving, changing and becoming. Intellect, science and any other mechanically constructed systems deal with static and unmoving things or states. However, reality of life is not static, that is so, it is possible to grasp it neither by intellect, nor by science. *Élan vital* brings movement and creativity to life – it is the spirit of the life.

Initial impetus' act of creating new novelties never ends. "[T]he life drive is like an eternally creative artist whose every gesture redefines the avant-garde."¹¹⁷ The life with its all unity develops by vital impetus.

The driving factor of life process is just limited by the resistance of matter. However, the same resistance enables driving impulse maintaining the creativity.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp.60-61

¹¹⁷ Bernard G. Prusak, *Le rire à nouveau: Rereading Bergson*, p.377

When a shell bursts, the particular way it breaks is explained both by the explosive force of the powder it contains and by the resistance of the metal. So of the way life breaks into individuals and species. It depends, we think, on two series of causes: the resistance life meets from inert matter, and the explosive force due to an unstable balance of tendencies which life bears within itself.¹¹⁸

The resistance of matter is required for the continuity of creative evolution. Because of the obstacles of matter, evolution makes a great effort to be free and creative as much as possible.¹¹⁹ Being a part of evolution, organisms change to create a higher efficiency and become more independent. For Bergson, the initial impetus is an effort against the resistance of matter. Actually there are two directions that arise from the same impetus. One direction enables us to adapt our social and environmental situations, and the other helps us to eliminate our everyday habits. While the first one signifies our intellectual side and our adaptation to materiality of life, the second one signifies our intuitional side that turns its face to the inner depth of life and spirituality. These two directions continuously clash with each other, and as an effect of this clash new and divergent novelties are created.

We generate energy by consuming organic substances through nutrition. That is, we borrow energy from foods that store it. Yet, how does the food that we eat, store energy? Bergson explains the process of storing up energy as follows:

The process consists in using solar energy to fix the carbon of carbonic acid, and thereby to store this energy as we should store that of a water-carrier -by employing him to fill an elevated reservoir: the water, once brought up, can set in motion a mill or a turbine, as we will and when we will. Each atom of carbon fixed represents something like the elevation of the weight of water, or like the stretching of an elastic

¹¹⁸ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.109

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.275

thread uniting the carbon to the oxygen in the carbonic acid. The elastic is relaxed, the weight falls back again, in short the energy held in reserve is restored, when, by a simple release, the carbon is permitted to rejoin its oxygen.¹²⁰

Bergson describes (i) the effort of accumulating energy and (ii) letting it to flow as two main requirements for evolution. The source of energy can be changed in the life process, but this does not mean that life will end. The only required thing is a source of energy; it does not matter which source it is. When the source of energy changes, all the circumstances and quality of life might change, but life will endure. Our body, psychology or our ways of thinking can change, but liveliness, movement and creation will continue. In its flow, life confronts so many obstacles that limit its creation, but its action never ends. That is, it continuously creates and always reinvents itself.

According to Bergson, it is not possible to assume life as a complete and isolable phenomenon, because it is ever in the process of becoming and never reaches an end. Although it is not possible to consider life as an isolable system, science attempts to determine it by static concepts and definitions. Hence, there is a great mistake in this point of view because a definition could only be justified for entities or states, the realities of which are completed. Neither life itself nor its properties can be defined precisely.

The course of evolution is complicated; that is, its movement does not follow a single direction. By the power of creativity, the movement of evolution spreads too many different directions. Bergson describes the movement of evolution like that of the breaking of a shell with its explosive power meanwhile resisting obstacles that it encounters. So, life consists of two conflictive components, the first being the creative and explosive force, and the

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.276

other being the obstacle of matter. In brief, life is not composed of static states but tendencies that create different directions through its process of becoming.

Creative evolution actualizes itself in duration. Its creations cannot be represented as spatial distinct points. However, this does not mean that the evolution of life randomly chooses a direction. Its movement is harmonious with its continual evolution in duration and the limits that it encounters.

Life is in an evolutionary process and continuous progress that cannot be grasped by our faculty of intellect. This is to say that the intellect is not competent to understand the evolutionary movement of life. Thus, life can only be apprehended by participating in its evolution. However, the human activity that sprouts from the intellect is “only partial and local manifestation of life”.¹²¹

So, how is it possible to apprehend and participate in life? As stated above, none of the methods of science can be taken up as the method of this kind of apprehension; that is, another method is needed to plumb to the depths of life. Actually, life is not such an apprehensible phenomenon by the categories of our understanding and the concept of intellect – it is something that must be lived. The reality of life can only be immediately lived by a direct vision, intuition that transcends the intellect and the methods of science. In other words, the true philosophy of life can be grasped by the immediate comprehension of intuition. However there is a crucial point that should be taken into consideration, as mentioned in the second chapter, intuition does not exclude intellect. What it excludes is the strict conceptual methods that intellect starts to use in its process. According to Bergson, life grows out of a

¹²¹ Ibid, p.x

duality. On the one hand, as it was claimed before, life is formed by the pragmatic necessities that are ingrained to our intellects and so to our actions. On the other hand, life gains a different meaning with our actions in duration and with memory. In regard to *Creative Evolution*, human creativity can make sense, if life is experienced in both ways. When practical needs are considered on the one side, on the other side the continuity of life could be sensed.

Bergson's philosophy of life is constituted by his two main concepts, intuition and duration. Bergson describes his philosophy of life as true empiricism and true metaphysics¹²² that aims to investigate deeply the inner nature of life in its immediacy. Bergson criticizes the philosophical approaches which adopt the methods of science and uses scientific concepts. The problem with these approaches consists in the fact that while they try to describe life, they avoid getting into contact with the mobility of real life. In contrast to these approaches, Bergson's philosophy sets a demanding task requiring an intuitive and non-conceptual way of grasping life by means of which we could come to grips with the inner core of our lives, and whole pulse of life. He uses intuition as the method of philosophizing and as a way of grasping life.

¹²² *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson defends that a true and more intuitive philosophy should be constituted by the interrelation of science and metaphysics. According to him this relation relieves metaphysics of mysticism and also reminds science its limits.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, I have tried to shed light on Bergson's three main concepts, namely, intuition, duration and life, and attempted at investigating these concepts in relation to each other. In doing so, I aimed at showing how Bergson's philosophy of life is constituted.

In this work, I also attempted to demonstrate that Bergson elaborates a philosophy of life which is far from the conceptual understanding of science and common sense. For Bergson, in my phraseology, the reality which is constructed by science does not correspond with the reality of life. In other words, the pragmatically-oriented concepts of science cannot explain the real flow of life. So, in order to overcome the deficiency of science in explaining life adequately, Bergson offers the method of intuition to grasp the real essence of life in its real duration (*durée réelle*). That is to say, intuition is a method of knowing life in its natural and dynamic evolution. This method does not deal with grasping the separately located positions in space, but rather deals with conceiving the whole of reality by participating in the inner states of life.

Thus, Bergsonian philosophy reminds us the qualitative character of reality that has been overshadowed by the quantitative terms and concepts of science. Moreover, the perilous influence of science on the understanding of reality is

not only to obscure the qualitative character of life, but, even worse than that, science transposes qualitative states into quantitative ones by conceptualizing and measuring them.

As discussed in Chapter 2, intellect has adapted to matter throughout the evolution, as an effect of our desire to satisfy our everyday needs and necessities. As a consequence of this adaptation, we are able to form suitable concepts for material objects. The act of conceptualization that has become the habit of our everyday thinking is the natural result of the evolution of intellect. Nevertheless, according to Bergson, with a voluntarily effort, we still have the capacity to change the natural direction of the intellect and engage it in the activity of intuition. In other words, thanks to this effort, we can get rid of the habits of our intellect and become an active agent through participating the act of intuition.

The intellect that is evolved in its natural process, conceives objects as well as states statically and with a limited perspective, thus rendering us only relative knowledge. Apart from intellectually constructed reality, Bergson points out another kind of reality, which is an inner reality of life. This reality is in a state of flux and cannot be apprehended by the immobile concepts of intellect. In contrast to the naturally evolved intellect, the intellect that eliminates habitually constructed mechanical concepts can participate in the effort to grasp reality. In other words, according to Bergson, there is a need to leave the mechanical act of our ordinary thinking and engage in the dynamic process of intuition, although it is hard to achieve this active involvement. Because, by doing so, the intellect can take an active role in the process of intuition so as to grasp absolute knowledge, as well as the knowledge of our conscious states.

In the third chapter, I presented examples from *Time and Free Will* about the emergence and qualitative transitions of some conscious states. These examples point out the mistake of science in assuming the conscious states as being juxtaposed in space like the material objects. According to Bergson, our conscious states are in a mobile and indivisible succession, that is, they permeate into each other. They are related to our psychic aspects and can only be compared through their qualities. However, science and common sense constitute a numerical hierarchy between conscious states, and assume their change as quantitative. This assumption is a mistake arising from the confusion of quality and quantity. Science transforms the states of time into space, interprets quality as quantity and unextended states as extended spatial objects. Thus, science tries to simplify the qualitative states in order to facilitate their apprehension, but, in doing so, misses their real nature.

According to Bergson, the conscious states are related to our inner self (fundamental self), and are qualitatively distinct from the external objects. Thus, it is not possible to draw a parallel between the multiplicity of conscious states and the multiplicity of external objects even if some inner states are affected by external causes. The multiplicity of inner states is not the same as the multiplicity of extended objects because inner states melt into one another in succession and form a continuous and dynamic reality. Indeed, the change of a conscious state transforms its whole unity. That is to say, an inner state cannot be considered as distinct from its unity in a definite moment. Conscious states are not located in space, but rather exist as an indivisible unity in the flow of real time.

Bergson describes duration as the real time that is distinct from scientific time. Although scientific time is constructed by the act of the intellect, and is related

to spatial objects, duration is the real flow of life which is independent from space. In our daily life, we measure time, pick moments from it and symbolize them with the concepts of our ill-suited language. Actually, by taking space as a model, the intellect constructs the time that we conceive in daily life. The spatial time is homogeneous and divisible just like space -it is created to count simultaneities. On the one hand, duration is the real time that is perceived by our consciousness. The scientific time, on the other hand, is a symbolic representation of the real duration. In contrast to the mechanical characteristics of scientific time, the flow of duration is like the harmonious rhythm of a musical piece. Bergson rejects the identification of the scientific time with real time, and offers a rediscovery of duration. For him, the elimination of an artificially constructed representation of time will enable us to participate in the real flow of duration.

In the fourth chapter, I first tried to examine the relation between self, freedom and life. Then I attempted to explain Bergson's approach to philosophy as a way of life. In order to attain a proper understanding of the philosophy of life, I investigated the role of intuition and duration in the constitution of a philosophy of life.

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson concentrates on a twofold nature of the self, namely, the superficial self and the fundamental self. Whereas the superficial self is limited by language, concepts and society, the fundamental self transcends the limit of social constructions. Thanks to the power of the fundamental self, we are able to attain the conscious states and the flow of dynamic life. Thus, while the superficial self represents our social side that we share with society, the fundamental self represents our free inner side. In social life we create concepts, rules, language to interact with other people and

to fulfill our pragmatic needs. Nevertheless, in time, the created concepts take control of our whole personality, and eliminate our freedom. Hence, we become alienated from our free inner life.

Freedom, for Bergson, is the release of oneself from the confines of social arrangements, language, logic and general concepts when it comes to subjective sensations such as love, hatred and fear. To eliminate these structures requires a great effort to retrieve the fundamental self from the dominance of the social self. In social life our freedom is under the great pressure of concepts and language that are actually constituted for the sake of pragmatic needs of society. Yet, under the effect of this same pressure, the inner side, being like an entrapped gas, breaks its crust and rises to the surface with a sudden desire – the desire of free life. That is, free acts that are indivisible and unpredictable arise from our fundamental self and participate in the flux of duration.¹²³

According to Bergson, to live free is to be in a continuous and dynamic process. Life is not a pre-created phenomenon, but rather a process of becoming. As being in the flow of duration, life cannot be apprehended by static concepts of our ordinary intellect. The essence of life can be grasped by an active involvement in its continuous movement.

¹²³ In other words, Bergson's notion of freedom is related with his notion of time, and cannot be examined through spatial time.

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APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bergson felsefesi, 19. yy ortalarından itibaren tüm Avrupa'da felsefeyi etkisine almış pozitivistliğe karşı devrimci bir niteliğe sahiptir. Fransız Devrimi'nden sonra meydana gelen gelişmeler, bilime olan güvenin artmasını sağlamıştır. Bu gelişmeleri takiben, pozitivistlik teolojik ve metafizik yargıları aşma iddiasıyla ortaya çıkmıştır. Metafizik problemler pozitivist felsefe tarafından anlamsız bulunmuş ve bilimin çalışma prensibi örnek alınarak, sadece deney ve gözlem sonucu elde edilmiş verilere dayalı, genelleme yöntemiyle çalışan bir felsefi sistem oluşturulmuştur.

Positivistliğin resmettiği bilim toplumsal ve insani olan koşulların ötesine çekilmiş, indirgemeci yöntemle çalışan bir bilimdir. Böylesi bir anlayış insanı tüm maneviyatından ve sosyalliğinden soyutlayarak, onu doğa bilimlerinin yasaları çerçevesinde açıklamayı görev edinmiştir.

Bu çalışmadaki temel amacım, Bergson'un statik olmayan, değişken ve akışkan iki temel kavramının, sezgi ve *durée*'nin akış ve değişim içerisinde olan yaşamın felsefesini anlamaya nasıl muktedir olduğuna vurgu yapmaktır. Bilimsel metodlar, statik kavramlar yaşamın akışını anlamaya yetkin değildirler. Bu çalışmada yaşamın akışını ve gelişim sürecini anlamaya yatkın bir felsefenin de mümkün olabileceği fikrine vurgu yapmak istedim.

Bu çalışmada genel olarak üç temel nosyon üzerine yoğunlaşıyorum. Bunlar; sezgi, süre (dureé) ve yaşam. Bu doğrultuda çalışmamın üç ana bölümünü sırasıyla bu üç nosyonla temalandırıyorum. Bu çalışmayı yaparken Bergson'un üç eserinden faydalanmaya çalıştım. Bunlar; *Metafiziğe Giriş, Yaratıcı Tekamül ve Şuurun Doğrudan Doğruya Verileri*.

Bergson pozitivist felsefenin statik kavram ve konseptlerine ve kullandığı metoda karşı, felsefe ve bilim için iki ayrı metod önerir; bilimsel metod olarak analiz, felsefi metod olarak da *sezgi*.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde Bergson'un izafi ve bilimsel bilmeye metod olarak sunduğu analizi, mutlak ve felsefi bilmeye metod olarak sunduğu sezgiyi incelemeyi ve bu iki yöntemin temel farklılıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçladım. Buna ek olarak, gerçekliği dolaylısızlığı içinde kavramamızı sağlayan sezgi metodunun evrimsel gelişimini ve onun intelekt ve içgüdüyle ilişkisini inceleye çalıştım.

Analiz metodu, odaklanılan nesneyi belli bir pozisyondan, sınırlı bir perspektiften anlamamızı sağlayan bir bilme metodudur ve bu yüzden, bu yolla elde ettiğimiz bilgi izafi bir bilgidir. Bunun aksine sezgi metodu bilgisine ermeye çalıştığı şeyi belli bir açıyla ele almak yerine, onun devinimsel sürecine dahil olarak, onu içerden bilmeye çalışır. Yani, sezgi bilgi nesnesinin hareketine ve değişimine eşlik eder. Bilgi nesnesine dahil olup onun tekliğini ve özgüllüğünü kavramaya çalışır. Bu anlamda sezgi bir duygudaşlık durumudur.

Nesnesine dışarıdan bakan ve onu parça parça görmeye eğilimli analiz metodu önce nesnesi parçalara ayırır, bu parçaları kavramaya çalışır ve sonra da bu parçaları birleştirerek hakikate ereceği iddiasında bulunur. Bu işlemi yaparken ilgili nesne ve diğer nesnelere arasında karşıtlık ve benzerlik gibi

ilişkiler kurarak nesnesini belli kategoriler altına yerleştirir ve onun özgüllüğünü göz ardı eder. Bu yöntem nesneye yeni ilinekler ekler, muğlaklığını ortadan kaldırmak için onu tasvirler, benzetmeler ve kavramlarla netleştirmeye çalışır, onu “o” olmayan şeylerle açıklamaya çalışır ama hiçbir zaman onu kavramaya muktedir olamaz. Kavramaya çalıştığı şeye yakınsamak için yeni kavramlar ve tasvirler kullanır ama bu yöntem sınırlı bir perspektiften çıkamaz ve izafi bilginin ötesine geçemez. Yani analiz metodu mutlak bilgiye ancak yakınsayabilir ama ona ulaşamaz.

Bir şeyin mutlak bilgisine ise ancak o “şey” in kendiliğine dahil olunarak erişilebilir. Şeyin birlik ve bütünsellik içindeki yalın haline ve mutlaklığına ancak bir iç görü ile yani sezgi yöntemi ile ulaşılabilir. Dışarıdan bir bakış ile analiz, nesnesi üzerinde kullandığı sembolleri çeşitlendirerek bitmek bilmeyen tercüme ve tasvirler yapar. Ne var ki, sonsuza doğru uzayan bu tercüme ve tasvirler hep kusurlu ve eksiktir. Yönelindiği nesneyi daha önceden tanışık olduğu diğer nesnelere ilişkilendiren analiz metodu söz konusu nesnenin yalın ve biricik haline dolayimsız yaklaşımdan çok uzaktır. Analiz metodunun aksine ise sezgi, yalın ve dolayimsız bir bilme yöntemidir.

Başka bir deyişle, analiz metodu durağan bir nesneyi, belli bir zamanda ve mekânda anlamaya çalışırken, sezgi metodu hayatı dolayimsızlığı ve akışkanlığı içinde, ondan belli bir kesit almadan, evrimsel sürecinin içinde anlamaya çalışır. Bergson yaşamın değişken gerçekliğini savunurken, mutlak bilginin imkânını reddetmez. Aksine mutlak bilgi yaşamın evrimsel sürecinde saklıdır. Mutlak bilginin kavranmasını sağlayan metodun, bir bilme yöntemi olarak ele aldığımız sezginin çalışma prensibini netleştirebilmek için onun evrimsel sürecinin incelenmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Sezginin evrimsel

gelişiminin, Bergson'un iki farklı yaşam eğilimi olarak nitelendirdiği intellekt ve içgüdüyle etkileşimi içerisinde ele alınması gerektiği kanaatindeyim.

Bergson intellekt ve içgüdüyü aynı kaynaktan doğan lâkin evrimsel süreç içerisinde birbirlerinden uzaklaşan iki farklı eğilim olarak tarif etmektedir. İki eğilimin aynı kaynaktan doğması, bir eğilimin diğer eğilime indirgenebileceği veya bir eğilimin diğer eğilimle açıklanabileceği anlamına gelmez. Bu iki eğilim de alet kullanma yetisine sahiptir. Bergson'a göre bu iki eğilimi birbirinden ayıran en temel şey birbirlerinden farklı objeler kullanmaya yönelmeleridir. Şöyle ki; içgüdü organik olarak organize olmuş doğal araçlar üretme ve kullanma yönünde, intellekt ise suni araçlar oluşturma ve kullanma yönünde yetkinleşmiştir. Bu yönüyle incelendiğinde, her ne kadar intellekt ve içgüdü arasında ciddi bir fark dikkatimizi çekmiyor olsa da, evrimin sonraki aşamalarında bu iki eğilim arasındaki farklılıkların dikkate değer bir biçimde büyüdüğünü ayırt etmek mümkündür.

Tıpkı evrenin diğer bileşenleri gibi intellekt ve içgüdü de oluşlarını tamamlamamış, olmakta olan ve bu yüzden de kesin olarak tanımlanamayan yetilerdir. Ancak, evrim süreci içerisindeki tezahür edişleri incelendiğinde, yönelimleri ve işlevleri hakkında konuşmak mümkündür.

İntellekt belli bir zaman ve mekândaki nesneyi mantıksal analiz yöntemiyle bilir. Evrim sürecinde zihin insan yapımı doğruları ve maddeyi bilme yönünde, analiz yöntemiyle çalışma kabiliyetini geliştirerek evrimselleşmiştir. İntellekt bir şeyin kendiliğini değil, o nesnenin diğer nesnelere ilişkilerini, belli koşullar altında oluşabilecek sonuçları bilir. Yani hep bir öncülü vardır. İçgüdü ise yaşamın akışına daha yakındır ve yaşama içkin bilgiyi dolaylı bir biçimde anlamaya doğal olarak yatkındır.

Her ne kadar içgüdünün yüzü, intellekte göre, yaşama daha dönük olsa da yaşamı kavramamız açısından yeterli değildir. Çünkü içgüdüsel bir bilme yansıtıcı bilince sahip değildir. Yani aktif bir bilinç hali içerisinde değildir. Tıpkı içgüdü gibi yaşama dolayumsuz yaklaşan ama şekillenmiş ve aktif bir bilinç haline dönüşmüş, yaşamı bütünlüğü içerisinde anlamamızı sağlayan yeti sezgidir. İçgüdünün sezgiye dönüşmesini sağlayan etken ise intellektir. İntelektin itici gücü olmasa, sezgi içgüdü olarak kalırdı. İşte tam da bu yönüyle, sezgi mistik değildir ve felsefi bir metoddur.

Bergson'un sezgi metoduna dair yapılmış iki temel yorum vardır. Birincisi, sezginin zihinsel olmayan ve tamamen mistik olan bir bilme yöntemi olduğu; ikincisi ise sezginin mistik değil aksine zihinsel bir bilme yöntemi olduğu görüşüdür. Bu çalışmada bu her iki yorumun da Bergson felsefesinde nasıl çelişki yaratmadan var olabildiğini açıklamaya çalıştım.

Aslında bahsi geçen bu iki yorumdan herhangi birini kabul edip, diğerini reddetmek hiç de kolay değildir. Çünkü Bergson'un eserlerinde bu iki yorumu da destekleyecek tabirlerle karşılaşmak mümkündür. Peki, bu durumda Bergson'un felsefesi bir çelişki içerisinde midir? Çünkü bu iki yorumu da destekleyici tabirlerin kullanımı pekâlâ bir çelişkinin işareti kabul edilebilir. Bu iki yorumdan her biri Bergson'un intellekt kavramının iki formundan veya iki ihtimalinden birine referansla yapılmış yorumdur. İntelektin birinci hali mekanik olan ve nesnelere arasında benzerlik kurarak onları genel kavramlar altında toplayan, evrimin doğal süreci içerisinde kendisini var etmiş halidir. İntelektin ikinci hali ise nesnelere için genel kavramlar kurmak yerine, her bir nesne için tekil ve özgül kavramlar kullanan halidir.

Bu yorumlara vurgu yapmadaki amacım Bergson'un hakikat arayışında intellektin rolünü inkâr etmediği gerçeğini ortaya koymaktır. Bergson'un

reddettiđi insanın alışkanlıklarına ve eğilimlerine tabii olan, yöneldiđi nesnelere için sembolik çerçeveler çizen ve izafi bilgi alanında kalan intellekt formudur. Bergson'un reddettiđi insanın pragmatik ihtiyaçlarını ve isteklerini gerçekleştirme yönünde gelişmiş, evrimin doğal sürecinde oluşmuş intellekt formudur. Peki, böylesi bir intellekt evrimin doğal süresi sonunda oluştuysa, başka bir intellekt tahayyülü mümkün müdür? Başka bir deyişle bu intellekt formunu bağlamlarından uzaklaştırıp, hakikati arama sürecine dahil etmek, onun formunu değiştirmek mümkün müdür?

Bergson'a göre gündelik ihtiyaçlarımızı karşılama konusunda başarıyla evrimleşmiş intellekt aynı başarıyı yaşamın özünü, onun hareketli ve değişken yapısını kavramakta gösterememektedir. İntellekt ancak mekanik kavramları ve sembolik dili aşarak yani formunu değiştirip daha zor bir yol seçerek yaşamın akışına ve hakikat arayışına dahil olur.

İntellekt ve içgüdüyle birlikte evrimleşen ve dönüşen sezgi felsefi bir metod olarak benimsendiğinde hakikatin saf ve kendinde halini idrak etmemizi sağlar. Sezgi nesneye yeni ilinekler ekleyerek onu yeniden ve yeniden şekillendirmek yerine, nesnenin kendinde neyse o oluşunu kavramak için çalışır ve ona dolaylımsızca yaklaşır.

Bu çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde Bergson felsefesinin en önemli nosyonlarından biri olan dureé'yi incelemeye çalıştım. Bergson'a göre yoğunluk-genişlik, nitelik-nicelik ikilikleri arasındaki karışıklık zaman ve mekân nosyonlarını birbirine karıştırmış olmamızdan kaynaklanıyor. Bergson dureé kavramını zaman ve mekân arasındaki karışıklığı çözen bir kavram olarak sunuyor. Dureé birbirine nüfuz etmiş, iç içe geçmiş bilinç hallerinden oluşan sürekli bir akış halidir. Birbiri ardına sıralanmış, ayrık olayların toplamı değildir. Birbiri ardına sıralanmış ayrık nesnelere ve durumlarla ilgilinen

zaman mekân örnek alınarak kurgulanmış, suni bir şekilde oluşturulmuş matematiksel zamandır. Yani, Bergson'un zaman fikri günlük hayatta aşına olduğumuz matematiksel zamandan farklıdır.

Bergson bir bireyin yaşamı ile müzikal bir melodi arasında benzerlik kurar. Yaşam geçmişi, şimdisi ve geleceği ile birlikte tıpkı bir melodi gibi bölünemez ve harmoni içerisinde olan bir bütünlüğe sahiptir. Bir melodinin notaları gibi yaşamın geçmişi ve geleceği de iç içe geçmiş ve bütünleşmiş bir halde bulunur. Nasıl ki bir müzik eserinin notalarından birini eksilttiğimizde o eserin niteliği tamamen değişiyorsa, yaşamdan anlar çıkarttığımızda da yaşamın niteliği aynı şekilde değişmiş olur. Bergson'un bu benzetmeyle dikkat çekmeye çalıştığı şey, zamanın tüm anlarının birbiri içine geçmiş ve kaynaşık halde olduğu ve herhangi bir bölümü üzerinde yapılan değişikliğin zamanın bütünü niteliksel olarak değiştirdiğidir. Ne var ki, günlük yaşamdaki içsel deneyimlerimizi anlatmak için onları dil aracılığı ile sembolleştiriyor, onların zamansal boyutunu ihmal edip, onları mekâna indirgiyoruz. Günlük yaşamda kullandığımız kavramsal dil bir şeyi başka bir şey cinsinden anlatmaya, hareketli bir şeyi durağanlaştırmaya, niteliksel olanı niceliksel olana indirgemeye yatkındır. Böyle bir dil ne içsel yaşamımızın niteliksel değişimlerini ne de gerçek zamanın akışını anlatmaya muktedirdir.

Zamanın gerçek akışını temsil eden dureé sürekli bir akış, bir varoluş halidir. Ne var ki, gerçek zaman ya günlük yaşamda ve bilimde kullanılan zaman kavramıyla karıştırılmakta ya da varlığı söz konusu dahi edilmemektedir. Bilimin veya klasik felsefenin kullandığı zaman kavramı ölçülebilir, bölünebilir temsili bir mekândır. Fakat gerçek zaman bilincimizin birliği içinde değişerek ve yaratarak süregelen ve tanışık olmadığımız yeniliklere gebe olan bir oluş halidir.

Bahsi geçen bu iki zaman kavramı şeyleri algılayışımızın iki farklı yolunu temsil eder; günlük yaşamda sıklıkla kullandığımız sınırlı yaşam algısı ve yaşamın bütünlüklü ve kesintisiz algısı. Birinci algı kişinin sosyal çevresine uyum sağlamak ve ortaklık kurmak için oluşturulmuş ve alışkanlığa dönüşmüş algıdır. Bu algıya sahip olan kişi zamanı -tıpkı mekân gibi- ardarda sıralanmış parçalar bütünü olarak kavrar. Böyle bir algı zihnin işleyişine, onun parçalı görme haline uygundur. İkinci algı ise zihnin alışık olduğu algı halinden sıyrılıp gerçek zamanı, onun akışına dahil olarak kavrayama çalışan algıdır.

Bilimsel veya matematiksel zaman gerçek zamanı soyutlanıp deneysel düzleme aktarmış ve niceliksel olarak ölçülebilir hale getirmiştir. Yani bu homojen zaman gerçek zamanın soyutlanmış ve kavramsallaştırılmış kompozisyonudur. Somut zamanı, onun akış içindeki halini sabitleyerek, ondan anlık kesitler alarak bilmeye çalışır. Bilimsel zaman mekân düzleminde oluşturulur. Bunun aksine gerçek zaman ise yaşamın akışına içkindir ve ancak dolaylımsız bir bilinç haliyle eşlik edilerek kavranabilir. Alışkanlıklarla örtülü gerçek zamanın sezgisi günlük yaşam gayeleriyle oluşmuş zaman algısından azad olunarak ortaya çıkartılabilir. Böyle bir kavrayış ancak dolaylımsız bir tanıklıkla mümkündür. Söz konusu tanıklık dışarıdan değil, zamanın tam da içinden onun yaratımına katkı sağlayan ve onla birlikte evrimleşen bir tanıklıktır.

Bergson'a göre gerçek zaman tam bir bilinç hali içerisinde sezilebilir. Tam ve açık bir bilinçle kişi seçim yapma ve yaratma gücüne erişebilir. Bilinç durumu bireyin bağımlı olduğu dış etkenlerden sıyrılmasını ve özgür eylemesini sağlar. Kendisini dışsal bağlamlarından arındırmış bir bilinç gerçek zamanın yaratıcılığını keşfe çıkar, ona dahil olur ve hürriyetine kavuşur.

Çalışmanın son ana bölümünde ise Bergson'un sezgi ve dureé kavramlarıyla biçimlenmiş yaşam felsefesine bir giriş yapmaya çalıştım. Sezgi, dureé ve yaşam ilişkisini incelemeden önce benlik (self) kavramını analiz etmeye ve özgür eylemi mümkün kılan benlik halini ve bunu nasıl mümkün kıldığını incelemeye çalıştım.

Bergson'a göre sosyal ve asli (gerçek) olmak üzere benliğin iki farklı boyutu vardır. Sosyal benlik dille, kavramlarla ve sosyal normlarla sınırlanmış ve içsel yaşamımıza yabancılaşmış özgür olmayan tarafımızdır. Bütün bu konseptler ve dil insanlarla ilişkiye geçebilmemiz ve pragmatik ihtiyaçlarımızı karşılayabilmemiz için oluşturulmuştur. Sosyal benliğin aksine bizim özgür ve yaratıcı tarafımız ise dil ve kavramlarla sınırlanmamış asli (gerçek) benliğimizdir.

Bergson benliğin iki yönünden bahsederken bir bireyin iki farklı kişiliğe sahip olduğunu kastetmez, söz konusu ettiği iki taraflı bir ve aynı kişiliktir. O, benliğin iki yönüyle, iki farklı algılayış ve var olma tarzına işaret eder. Bir yönüyle yaşamı bütünlüklü bir şekilde algılayan ve onun içsel devinimine dahil olan bir benlik iken, diğer yönüyle ise yaşamı birbirinden ayrı anlar toplamı olarak algılayan, yaşamın akışının dışında kalan bir benliktir. Aslında bahsi geçen bu iki yön benliğin -birbiri arasında geçişi mümkün olan- iki farklı seviyesi olarak da tarif edilebilir. Fakat bu seviyeler arasında hiyerarşik bir derece farkı yoktur ve birbirlerine indirgenemezler.

Sosyal benlik suni olarak oluşturulmuş ve toplumdaki diğer bireylerle paylaştığımız benliktir. Diğer bireylerle iletişime geçebilmek için ortak bir dile ve kavramlara ihtiyaç duyarız. Bu ortak dile ve kavramlara yalnız iletişim kurmak için değil aynı zamanda günlük ihtiyaçlarımızı karşılamak için de bir anlamda muhtacızdır. Fakat zamanla temel ihtiyaçlarımızı karşılamak ve

iletişim kurabilmek için oluşturduğumuz dil ve kavramlar bizim gerçek benliğimizi kontrol altına alarak hürriyetimizi kısıtlamıştır. Hatta kızgınlık, korku, üzüntü ve aşk gibi içsel duygulanımlarımızı dahi ortaklaştığımız ortak kavramlarla açıklar ve özgüllüğümüzü kaybederiz. Sosyal benlik etkisiyle dönüştüğümüz hal toplumun bir yansımasından ibarettir.

Sosyal yaşam içerisinde edindiğimiz mantıksal analiz yöntemi, kavramsal dil, sosyal normlar ve bunlara bağlı olarak kazandığımız alışkanlıklar bizim yaşam algımızı kısıtlamaktadır. Edindiğimiz her bir kavram ve alışkanlık bize yeni bir perspektifi işaret eder ve yaşamın bütünlüğü ile olan ilişkimizin zayıflamasına neden olur. Bu durumda, günlük hayatta alışkanlıklara, kavramsal dile ve topluma tutsak olduğumuzu ve özgür edimlerde bulunamadığımızı söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır.

Bergson, toplumdaki çoğu bireyin günlük ihtiyaç ve isteklerini gidermek için kullandıkları sosyal benliğin gölgesinden kurtulamadıklarını, gerçek özgürlüklerinden habersiz olduklarını, yaşadığını ve sosyal benliklerinin arkasında saklı kalan gerçek benliklerini fark edemediklerini savunur. Peki, dille, kavramlarla, sosyal normlarla çevrili gerçek benliği yüzeye çıkarmak mümkün müdür?

Sosyal yaşam içerisinde asli benliğimiz yüzeyde değildir; sosyal benliğimiz tarafından örtülmüştür. Özgür eylem ancak asli benliğin yüzeye çıkmasıyla mümkün olur. Konseptlerin, dilin ve sosyal koşulların kısıtlamalarını ortadan kaldırmak gönüllü ve güçlü bir çaba gerektirir. Dışsal koşullarla bastırılmış asli benlik basınç altında sıkışmış bir gaz gibi patlama yaparak eyleme geçer. Sosyal benlik tarafından oluşturulmuş kabuğu kuvvetli bir arzuyla kırar ve yaşamın akışına aktif bir şekilde dahil olur.

Bergson *Şuurun Doğrudan Doğruya Verileri'nin* üçüncü bölümünde kendi felsefesindeki özgürlük kavramını ortaya koymadan önce, karşıt iki felsefi görüş olan dinamizm ve mekanizmin özgürlük perspektiflerini karşılaştırır. Dinamizme göre doğanın organik yapıdaki bileşenleri mekanik yasalarla açıklanamaz. Çünkü gerçekliğe indirgemeci bir tavırla yaklaşan bu yasalar gerçekliğin sembolik anlatımından başka bir şey değildir. Bu görüşün aksine, mekanizme göre yasaların gerçekliği tekil olguların gerçekliğinden üstündür.

Mekanizm tekil olguları yasalar altında toplar ve bu yasalar aracılığı ile olası ihtimaller arasından gelecekte vuku bulacak olan olayları ve eylemleri doğru tahmin etmeyi taahhüt eder. Mekanizme göre muhtemel bir olay önceki durumlar gözetilerek ve yasalar aracılığı ile hesap edilebilir. Mekanistik görüş tıpkı doğadaki diğer olaylar gibi insan eylemlerinin de belirlenmiş ve tahmin edilebilir olduğunu görür. Dinamizm ise olayları yasalara tabii olarak açıklama, önceki durumları karşılaştırma ve ihtimalleri hesaplama amacıyla değildir. Dinamizme göre ise insanın eylemleri yasalar yoluyla hesaplanabilir ve tahmin edilebilir değildir. Çünkü insan özgür ve doğal biçimde eyleyebilir. Mekanizmin ve dinamizmin özgürlük perspektiflerini karşılaştıran Bergson, kendi özgürlük görüşünün dinamik yapıda olduğunu vurgulamayı amaçlamıştır.

Bergson'a göre özgür edimler yaratıcı ve yenidirler; geçmiş eylemlerden çıkarsanabilir, tahmin edilebilir veya hesaplanabilir değildirler. Bergson'un özgürlük kavramı *dureé* kavramıyla yakından ilişkilidir. Tahmin edilebilir eylemler *dureé*'nin düzlemi içerisinde değildir. Hatta asli benliği sosyal benliği ile gölgelenmiş bir bireyin dahi eylemleri hesaplanabilir değildir. Ancak organik olmayan mekanik yapıdaki olaylar matematiksel olarak tahmin

edilip, hesaplanabilir. Özgür edim kendisini dureé'nin koynunda açar ve onun akışına dahil olur.

Özgürlük Antik Yunan'dan beri felsefenin temel meselelerinden biri olmuştur. Yani Bergson özgürlük problemi üzerine yoğunlaşan ilk filozof değildir. Onu bu konuda özel kılan ise özgürlük, dureé ve yaratıcılık arasında kurduğu çarpıcı ilişkidir. Bergson'a göre insanın özgür edimleri hareketlerini gerçek zamanın yaratıcı gücünden alır. Tıpkı dureé gibi insanın eylemleri de akışkan ve bölünemezdir.

Bergson özgürlüğün ancak sosyal benliği aşılması ve asli benliğin ortaya çıkarılmasıyla mümkün olduğuna vurgu yapar. Asli benliğin yüzeye çıkmasıyla doğan özgür edim tahmin edilemediği gibi tanımlanamaz da. Tanımlanamaz, çünkü var olan, bunca zamandır kullanıla gelmiş herhangi bir kavram onu tanımlamak için yeterli değildir. Özgür edimi tasvir etmek için kullanılan kavramlar onun içsel anlamını daraltıp onun özgüllüğünü ihmal eder.

Bergson, yaratıcılıkla özgürlüğü neredeyse denk tutar. Ona göre, özgür olmak demek yaşamın dinamik sürecine dahil olmak ve yaratıcı olmak anlamına gelir. Özgür edim bir müzisyenin müzikal eseri ve bir ressamın resmi kadar yaratıcıdır.

Bergson felsefesi yaşamın doğal ve içsel yapısını incelemeyi konu edinmiş bir felsefedir. Bu doğrultuda bilime adapte olmuş ve bilimin metodlarını ve kavramlarını kullanan felsefi yaklaşımlara karşı çıkar. Bu yaklaşımlar hayatı tarif etmeye çalışırken gerçek hayatın dinamik yapısını görmezden gelir. Bergson'un yaşam felsefesi ise yaşamın içselliğini sezgi metodu ile anlamaya çalışan felsefi bir yaklaşımdır.

Yaşam ne yaratılmıştır ne de statiktir. Yaşam tıpkı dureé gibi oluş hali içerisinde ve evrimsel hareketi devam eden değişimin ve canlılığın bizzat kendisidir. Yaşam içindeki hiçbir şey verili değildir, yaşama içkin olan her bir parça değişim içerisinde.

Bergson, yaşamın sadece dışsal koşullara adaptasyonu sağlayan bir süreç olduğu fikrine karşı çıkar. Ona göre yaşamı bir adaptasyon süreci olarak tanımlamak onun yaratıcılığını inkâr etmek anlamına gelir. Çünkü adaptasyon yaratıcı değil, mekanik bir süreçtir. Yaşam sunulmuş ihtimaller arasından seçilenlerin gerçekleştiği bir zemin değildir. Yaşam tahmin edilemez yeniliklere gebe ve kendini hiçbir zaman tekrarlamaz. Yaşam yaratıcıdır çünkü bir amaçla yönlendirilmemiştir. Yaşam söz konusu olan yaratım gücünü yaşam atılımından (élan vital) alır.

Bergson yaşama hareketini veren élan vital'i yaşamın ruhu olarak nitelendirir. Yaşama içkin olan bu atılım gücü ebediyen yenilikler üreten bir ressam gibidir. Ne var ki böylesi bir yaratımın itici gücü olan élan vital maddenin direnciyle karşılaşır. Fakat yaşamın itici gücü karşısında direnç gösteren madde onun yaratıcılığını sonlandıramaz. Aksine onu yeni olana gebe bırakır. Maddenin direnci élan vital'in yaratıcılığının devamı için olmazsa olmaz bir koşuldur. Çünkü élan vital böylesi bir direnç karşısında gayret sarf ederek yaratır. Sürekli bir yaratım içerisinde olmasından dolayı yaşamı tamamlanmış bir süreç olarak tasavvur etmek pek mümkün görünmemektedir. Çünkü yaşam asla son bulmayacak bir oluşturdur.

Sonuç olarak, Bergson'un yaşam felsefesi sezgi ve dureé nosyonları çerçevesinde şekillenmiştir. Bergson gerçek metafizik olarak tabir ettiği kendi yaşam felsefesinin amacının yaşamın doğasını dolaylısızca araştırmak olduğunu belirtmiştir. Dolaylısız bir metodu seçen Bergson, bilimsel

metodları ve kavramları benimseyen felsefi yaklaşımları eleştirir. Çünkü ona göre böylesi yaklaşımlar yaşamın gerçek akışına dahil olmadan onu, dışarıdan bir bakışla tarif etmeye çalışırlar. Kavramsal bir dille yaşamı anlatma gayesinde olan felsefi yaklaşımlara karşın Bergson sezgi metodunu kullanarak, yaşamın içsel hareketine dahil olarak onu anlamaya çalışır.

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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YAZARIN

Soyadı : Koçkan
Adı : Zöhre
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A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

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