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BERGSON AND HIS PLACE

IN ONE

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

SUBMITTED BY

E. CHAIKES

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BERGSON AND HIS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

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Bergson is popular in philosophic circles and has been hailed as ushering in a new era in the history of thought. His philosophy fundamentally is distinguishable from all preceding systems and contemporaneous systems. His work should be approached from the standpoint of the history of philosophy to get him in his proper historical setting. We must try to discover how the problems Bergson is trying to solve arose. Did these problems originate with Bergson? Let us locate the problems and examine Bergson's solutions to see how far they are new and original and what they add to previous solutions.

An investigation of Bergson's three chief books: *Time and Free Will*, 1889; *Matter and Memory*, 1896; and *Creative Evolution*, 1907; shows the fundamental problem underlying all three to be the old problem of the possibility of the knowledge of ultimate reality. The old question appears again: "Is Metaphysics possible?"

Let us briefly state Kant's position in regard to the question; and then see the relation of subsequent philosophy and finally the philosophy of Bergson to the philosophy of Kant on this point.

Experience is, for Kant, the system of phenomena in which the spatial and temporal synthesis of sensation is determined by the rules of the understanding. Thus nature is the object of an "a priori" knowledge; for the categories hold for all experience, because experience is grounded only through them. And there are certain universally and necessarily valid principles and highest premises of all natural science, which are universally and necessarily valid without any empirical proofs. Such are the principles, that in nature substance is permanent, that its quantum can be neither increased or diminished, that all changes take place according to the law of cause and effect and that all substances are in thoroughgoing reciprocity or interaction. These principles contain what

Kant calls the metaphysics of nature.

In accordance with Kant's presuppositions, however, his metaphysics of nature can be only a metaphysics of phenomena and no other is possible, for the categories are forms for relating and as such are in themselves empty; they can refer to an object only through the medium of perceptions, which present a manifold content to be combined. This perception, however, is, in the case of us men, only the sensuous perception in the forms of space and time, and a content for their synthætic function we have only that given in sensations. Accordingly the only object of human knowledge is experience, i.e. phenomenal appearance; and the division of objects of knowledge into phenomena and noumena which has been usual since Plato, has no sense. A knowledge of things-in-themselves extending beyond experience, is a nonentity, a Chimera.

But has, then the conception of the thing in itself any relational meaning at all? and is not, together with this, the designation of all objects of our knowledge as "phenomena" also without meaning? This question was the turning point of Kant's reflection. Hitherto all that the naïve conception of the world regards as "object" had been resolved partly into sensations, partly into synthetic forms of perception and understanding, nothing seems to remain beside the individual consciousness as truly existing, except the consciousness in general the transcendental apperception. But where, then, are the "things" of which Kant declared that it never came into his mind to deny their reality?

The conception of the thing in itself can, to be sure, no longer have the positive content in the critique of reason which it previously had; it can no longer be the object of purely rational knowledge, it can

no longer be an "object" at all. But it is no contradiction merely to think it. Primarily, purely hypothetically and as something the reality of which is neither to be affirmed nor to be denied--a mere problematic conception.

Noumena, or things in themselves are thinkable, in the negative sense, objects of a non-sensuous perception of which, to be sure, our knowledge can predicate absolutely nothing--they are thinkable as limiting conceptions of experience.

If we should deny the reality of things-in-themselves "all would be immediately resolved into phenomena", and we should thus be venturing the assertion that nothing is real except what appears to man, or to other sensuously respective beings. But this assertion would be a presumption completely incapable of proof. Transcendental idealism must, therefore, not deny the reality of noumena; it must only remain conscious that they cannot in any wise become objects

of human knowledge. Things-in-themselves must be thought, but are not knowable. Thus it is justifiable to designate the objects of human knowledge as "only phenomena".

- Was this position of Kant ever really undermined by subsequent philosophy? This is an extremely difficult question, but one of the greatest importance for our study of Bergsen. The problem which controls the whole of modern philosophy since Kant may be expressed in the sentence--"Ought we to speak of phenomena as the appearance of reality, or define them as the real as it appears?" Kant's immediate successors who develop the post-Kantian German idealism are not altogether satisfied with Kant's treatment of this problem. Jacobi, (Windelland's History of Philosophy, p.573-4), one of the earliest opponents of Kant, asserts that without the presuppositions of realism one could not enter the Kantian system, and with the same could not remain in it; for the conception of the sensibility introduced at

the beginning involves the causal relation of being affected by things-in-themselves, it is forbidden to think. In this contradiction of professing to think things-in-themselves and yet of not being permitted to think them, the whole critique of the reason moves.

Jacobi's criticism is not to fall into nihilism or absolute scepticism; the transcendental idealist must have the courage to assert the "strongest" idealism: he must declare that only phenomena are.

Schultz and Mainon following (Widleland 579-581) continued the attacks on the Kantian conception of the thing-in-itself, the full idealistic disintegration of which was the work of Fichte. According to Fichte consciousness is not a product of things, but things are a product of consciousness, the conception of the thing-in-itself and with it the antithesis of being and consciousness completely disappear. An object exists only for a subject and the common ground of both is the reason, the "I"

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which perceives itself and its action. All being is comprehensible only as a product of reason, and the subject matter of philosophical knowledge is the system of reason.

As far as I can make out, every opponent of Kant's position in regard to the conception of the thing in itself, obliterates the distinction which exists between saying that it is not possible to know whether categories are applicable beyond experience, and saying that they are not applicable. They obliterate the distinction between the denial of the possibility of knowledge of a thing's existence and denial of its existence. Few people can realize that in limiting their assertions they do not limit the universe.

Following Fichte, Hegel develops in wonderful fashion the conception of the system of reason for which we have seen the way is prepared. For him the underlying principle of all philosophic knowledge is that what is reasonable is real and what is real is reasonable. Thus the system of reason is the sole reality and the complete system is

absolute reality. Now it is quite natural to suppose that anyone who has given much time to Hegelian ways of thinking, would be likely to come to the conclusion that concentration of consciousness is reality and this is just what Bergson seems to feel. The difficulty, however, which confronts him, and which his study of biology tends to emphasize, is that the Hegelian system of reason, like the system of Spinoza, is a logical system, and so is timeless. The whole conception seems static, immobile, and very far removed from life as we know it. In fact it seems irreconcilable to the facts of life. Can the Hegelian logical unity be restored inside biological plurality, and thus be converted into a living reality? It is the same old question with which philosophy has been struggling through the centuries--the relation of logic to metaphysics.

The fundamental difficulty with the logical conception of reality as the system

of reason, is that this system in its completeness is timeless. Time, the most essential attribute of our consciousness, is neglected. So Bergson turns to the investigation of the conception of time in order to see if time cannot be introduced into the logical system so that the latter may live. His examination of the conception of time leads him to the conclusion that all attempts to understand real time or duration by means of the intellect end in failure. The intellect regards time as a homogeneous medium capable of division into parts and of measurement. The results of thus introducing into the conception of time that of space are insoluble paradoxes. This forces him to reject the intellect as capable of knowing the ultimate reality as it appears in duration. He decides, however, that it is capable of dealing with matter, and that as long as it is limited to this, its own sphere, it reveals to us reality, and it is only when it attacks the problems of life

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and consciousness that its results are relative, or rather symbolic.

If then, intellect is unable to give us knowledge concerning vital questions, are we to be left forever in the dark in regard to them? No, Bergson says, there is in man another and a deeper faculty, namely intuition, which gives us what we seek. Intuition is a sort of mental sympathy by means of which one may transfer himself into the minds of reality. The mind becomes one with its object. Reality is lived and in being lived is known. The knowledge which is gained in this way is, true enough, flickering and feeble, because intuition in man is in such an undeveloped state, but it is nevertheless absolute knowledge not phenomenal, for it is reality itself which we know. Thus the possibility of metaphysics denied by Kant is now affirmed and the facts which Kant claimed could not become objects of knowledge, facts relating to our personality, freedom, destiny, etc., which he said can only be objects for faith are

restored by Bergson as objects of knowledge by means of intuition.

If, however, the assertion of the successors of Kant, that ultimate reality, is of the nature of consciousness, is dogmatic rather than critical and their consequent annihilation of the conception of the thing-in-itself therefore not justifiable, then Kant's position remains unshaken and Bergson's rejection of the intellect in favour of the intuition does not affect the question of the possibility of metaphysics.

Before we consider the possibility of accepting his claim to have restored metaphysics we must first accept the Fichtean, Hegelian dogmatically idealistic basis on which it rests now, however firmly we may believe that ultimate reality is of the nature of consciousness, we still have no right to claim this as certain knowledge. And so it seems to me that Kant's position stands and that consequently Bergson's attempt to

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re-establish metaphysics has failed.

But if our rejection of Bergson's claim should perchance be justifiable, we should not, of course, be justified in throwing out his whole philosophy. His work is filled with secondary problems of exceedingly great importance and his solutions are very plausible and most suggestive. Let us examine some of his particular problems and see if we can discover in the history of philosophy similar solutions from which his may have been derived and by so doing to throw light upon his philosophy. We recognize that originality is no criterion of value; and that to discover that something which Bergson says has been said before, is in no way to discredit it or him. But it should help us to understand him better.

Bergson's antithesis between the two known kinds of being, "extended things" and consciousness, and also his emphasis upon the superior certainty of the existence of consciousness are of course two of the fundamental ideas of the

philosophy of Descartes. Nor is Bergson's view new that time is an essential attribute of our consciousness. It is a familiar historical fact that it has already been propounded by Kant as may be seen from his psychological scheme which was as follows: (1) The sensuous exterior is the capacity of apprehending those objects which appear in the time order of experience as having spatial relations. (2) The sensuous interior is the power of having and objectifying non-spatial experiences such as pleasure and pain and the other feelings. Also ultimately thought, ideas, imaginations come under this heading. (3) The sensus intimus is the capacity of arranging both (1) and (2) into a unity which entirely is incapable of being divorced from the idea of time.

But Bergson says Kant's great mistake was to take time as a homogeneous medium. If this view of the nature of time is wrong what has Bergson to offer in its place? Time, or, as

he prefers to call it, duration, is neither equivalent to the timeless nor is it the time which is spread out in distinct moments, but it is something between these two. He argues thus: we can think of the elements of a series of succession as constituting a numerical aggregate only if we represent them as co-existing. We can represent them as co-existing only if we picture them as juxtaposed in space: and consequently, to think of the moments: and consequently, to think of the moments of time as forming a series of distinct and numerable moments is to reduce the temporal to the spatial and to convert succession into simultaneity. The categories of quantity in any ordinary sense, are pertinent then only to space and spatial things; and time and therefore consciousness in its true nature is non-quantitative and without any relation to number. If not, then, is not time reduced to the timeless? No, its true nature is revealed by the intuition. Our

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imagination, our ordinary intellectual processes of thought, are bound up with spatial-imagery, given over to the habit of thinking in terms of number and quantity, and accustomed to deal with objects of thought as outside one another. They, therefore, if left uncorrected always misrepresent the nature of time, and consequently the nature of reality. But intuition reveals that in duration the moments fuse, interpenetrate, in fact are "without reciprocal externality". Duration is a succession in which there is no distinction of "before" and "after"; not instantaneous and yet with no quantitative character; a sequence to which the idea of a serial order is wholly inapplicable; and indivisible totality of the past and the present which is at once continually moving. This, though appearing self-contradictory to intelligence is yet the way in which the true nature of duration as revealed by intuition is expressed in words.

Mr. A. Lovejoy in his article in mind,

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Oct. 1913, on "some antecedents of the philosophy of Bergson", discusses this conception of duration. He shows that this apparently paradoxical conception and the reasoning on which it is based is not an innovation of Bergson's, but that substantially the same theory had been earlier developed in the two influential French semi-Kantian schools of the 19th century, the school of Ravaisson and the school of Lenovier. Ravaisson in his "Essai sur l'habitude", 1838, maintains the four following propositions: (1) that to think of a quantity as made up of distinct elements, or to think of members, is to respect the parts or units as coexistent, (2) that coexistence, in twin, can be represented only in the form of spatial juxtaposition, (3) that consequently, to think of anything as an "extensive" i.e. a divisible quantity is to think of it as spatial, (4) that all that belongs to space is out of time: there, although it is true that Ravaisson failed to draw the manifest consequences we have the same fundamental propositions as

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those from which Bergson drew his conclusion that to bring real time--not the mathematician's abstraction, but the time which is the form of consciousness itself, the time that is lived under the category of extensive quantity is to misrepresent it.

Also among some of the disciples of Lenovier in the neo-critical school notably there is to be found a still closer approximation to Bergson's most frequently reiterated metaphysical contention. Lovejoy sums up the contention thus: (1) The primary and most certain reality is of the sort we best know inwardly i.e. our own inner conscious existence; (2) this existence is essentially, temporal. It is a process of absolute becoming; (3) the great task of contemporary philosophy is therefore that of determining the nature of this "real" of inner experience; (4) its nature is habitually misrepresented by our ordinary thought, owing to our habit of thinking of time, under the form of space; (5) when this representation is corrected it turns out that real time is an

existence of which quantitative and numerical attributes cannot be predicated and to which all concepts and presuppositions of mathematical thought are inapplicable.

Of these five propositions the first four were held generally by the neo-critical school, and the third and fourth were specially prominent in neo-critical writings during the decade preceeding the publication of Bergson's first book. In this school all four of these doctrines were in fact an avowedly developed from certain Kantian principles. The fifth proposition, although of less general acceptance, had nevertheless been enunciated by Dauriac and with certain inconsistencies by Moel, and consequently they also attach the doctrine of the psycho-physicists that a mathematical psychology is possible. Bergson supported this fifth proposition in three ways: (a) First, by the psychological observation that psychic states, notably those of the affective sort, cannot be compared as homogeneous quanti-

ties but only as qualities. This observation was converted by him into the belief that psychic states "indivisibly penetrate" one another and this in turn by a confusion of ideas, was transferred from the relation between the content characteristic of two moments of consciousness to the relation between the existential dates of the moments themselves. But this very observation, conversion and confusion had already been made by Dauriac.

(b) Bergson's second support to the fifth proposition was that view about the logical relation between the ideas of number, co-existence and spatial extension which we have seen was expressed by Ravaisson in 1838, though it's full implication had not been drawn out by him. It had also been fully and clearly expressed by Noel in 1883.

(c) The third support lies in the belief that it alone enables us to escape the paradoxes of the continuum while at the same time maintaining the irreducible reality of time. In

the importance which Bergson attaches to these paradoxes Bergson is once more on neo-critical ground, although in the precise way he uses, he is, Lovejoy thinks, without precursor. His solution, though original, seems confusing and unconvincing. It apparently consists of a re-affirmation of both sides of the antinomies, together with the assertion that the contradictions discovered is the attribute of pure duration cannot be real contradictions, because what is real and actually given in intuition cannot be self-contradictory and pure duration with these attributes is a reality given in intuition.

The view of Bergson regarding memory (Brett's History of Psychology, p.308) bear a marked resemblance to those of Plotinus. Both regard memory as distinctively a spiritual manifestation. Plotinus, with the most penetrating insight saw what all attempts to explain memory as an after effect of sensation were fundamentally wrong. "Memory to him is a state

which may be described as an affection of the soul apart from the body. The body may assist or hinder the soul in its efforts, but the body does not remember in the proper sense of the term." (Brett, History of Psychology, page 308). Bergson's position is very similar. Memory, he says, is radically distinct from perception and cannot be explained by it. As long as we confine ourselves to perception, we can hardly be said to be dealing with spirit. But "when we pass from pure perception to memory we definitely abandon matter for spirit". He "is like Plotinus in laying great stress on the fact that "memory is something other than a function of the brain".

In Bergson's definitions of matter the essential idea seems to be that some things are out of my control, they appear and disappear independently of my will, and so I cannot help thinking there is something else in the world beside my consciousness. Matter seems to be essentially first to those things which we cannot control completely at will. This method of

arriving at the non-self is the same which Berkley employed.

In connection with Bergson's theory of the superiority of the intuition over the intellect it is interesting to read the following paragraph in Windbland's history of philosophy, on the philosophy of Jacobi who has been mentioned above as an early opponent of Kant's philosophy. "Jacobi opposes ^{to} the transcendental uncertainty of Kant what he calls Faith. All truth is knowledge of the actual; but the actual asserts itself in human consciousness not through thought but through feeling; just Kant's experiment proves that thought alone moves in a circle out of which there is no access to actuality, in an endless series of the conditioned in which no unconditioned is to be found. The fundamental law of causality may indeed be formulated in exactly this manner. There is nothing unconditioned. Knowledge, therefore, is the sense of thought that can be demonstrated is in its very nature, Jacobi says, a doctrine of the mechanical necessity of all that is finite; and it is the interest of science, that there

be no God--indeed a God who could be known would be no God. Even he who is in his heart a Christian must be in his head a heathen; he who will bring into his intellect the light which in his heart quenches it. But this knowledge is only a mediate knowing; the true, immediate knowing is feeling; in this we are truly one with the object and possess it as we possess ourselves in the certainty of a faith that has no proof. This feeling, however as regards its objects is of a twofold kind, the reality of the sensuous reveals itself to us in perception, that of the supersensuous in the "Reason". For this supernatural sensualism, therefore, "reason" signifies the immediate feeling of the reality of the supersensuous, of God, freedom and immortality and morality. In his limitation Kant's dualism of theoretical and practical reason, and of the primacy of the latter, returned in Jacobi to be placed in the service of a mystical extravagance of feeling, which manifests itself also in the character of a style which is warm and full of

spirit but rhapsodical and more given to assertion than proof.. On reading this paragraph one cannot fail to be struck by the remarkable resemblance it reveals between the doctrine of Jacobi and that of Bergson. Here is the same distrust of the intellect as capable of knowing reality. The true ways of knowing the object, for Jacobi, through feeling; for Bergson, through intuition, seem very much alike. Jacobi's feeling and Bergson's intuition are both processes by which we become one with the object. The knowledge of the reality of the sensuous which feelings has for Jacobi is paralleled by Bergson's knowledge of the reality of matter, and both Jacobi and Bergson restore to knowledge through feeling and intuition those facts of the supersensuous which Kant excluded from the sphere of knowledge.

The skepticism in regard to the intellect as a faculty of knowing, which we see here in Jacobi has born fruit also in somewhat different direction. It has given rise to that method

in philosophy, known as pragmatism, about which we have heard so much in recent years. Pragmatism rejects the claim that intellect by means of a rigorous logic can arrive at truth. All its attempts to do so produce unsolved inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes and there is no hope of settling the age-long conflict of philosophy in this way.

But is there no other criterion of truth than the rule of consistency offered by the rationalists? Yes, the pragmatist says, utility, workableness can be made a criterion, and, moreover, this is the only criterion which gives satisfaction. The test of the truth of an hypothesis or belief is whether it will or will not work. In proportion to its workableness is it true.

Now, in his view of the intellect Bergson is at one with the pragmatists. He is like them in asserting the capacity of the intellect to know the ultimate reality by means of logic. Also he is pragmatic in claiming that the so called truths of reason are tools for action and nothing more, and that therefore utility is their

only possible criterion.

Thus far Bergson is a Pragmatist but no farther. His fundamental doctrines are opposed to Pragmatism. For he asserts the existence of an absolute truth; and one, moreover, to which there corresponds a special knowing faculty, intuition. Thus against the Pragmatists Bergson asserts that we can have absolute knowledge of the ultimate nature of reality.

Bergson's epistemology is a result of his voluntaristic metaphysics, while most pragmatists have no metaphysics, but substitute a voluntarism in its place. And those pragmatists who have any metaphysics at all proceed to it through epistemology and so they and Bergson are moving in opposite directions.

The last half century has seen a great advance in psychology, which, it is claimed, has at last taken its place among the sciences. It is now defined as the science of immediate experience, instead of, as in ancient times, the science of the soul and later as the science of

inner experience. The leader of this new movement is Wilhelm Wundt. Bergson says that he accepts the wundtian psychology so it is interesting and instructive to discover the relation of his philosophy to Wundtian psychology. And here the chief point to determine is the relation of intuition to Wundt's immediate experience. Just what is meant as experience as immediately given is extremely difficult to grasp. To experience things immediately does not seem the ordinary every-day way of experiencing. For, one of the first things that the student of psychology is told is that the psychological point of view is not easy to understand and that it will probably be a long time before he will be able to attain this psychological attitude. In our usual experience, it seems, we do not look at the facts of consciousness from the psychological point of view. We see objects as men, animals, houses, etc. and do not think of them as processes of consciousness. For instance, I am at present sitting in the Reference library, at about two o'clock in the after-

noon, seated at one of the many tables. At other tables there are scattered here and there throughout the large hall, men and women, reading or writing. Along the sides of the hall are bookshelves filled with books, etc. etc. I hear the noisy rattle of street cars as they pass along the street just outside. Inside the hall it is comparatively quiet--the only noises being the rustle of books, the scraping of chairs, the walking to and fro, and an occasional cough. It makes a very good place to work and I enjoy it. These and many other things of a similar nature are in my experience. This is the ordinary common sense way of looking at things.

Now change to the psychological point of view. What is my experience now? I begin with exactly the same experience, but instead of continuing to regard it as before, I proceed to analyze it carefully. I get in perception various colours--green, white, brown, etc., in various qualities and quantities; sounds, bodily feelings, etc., together with certain memory,

imaginational and emotional factors, and all are related together in certain time and space relations. I find that this complex experience at times undergoes great and rapid changes. Sometimes the perceptive factors increase greatly in permanence until they dominate the whole consciousness and some of these perceptive factors may become much more prominent than others.

Sounds, smells, bodily feelings may decrease until there is little but colour left. Again the perceptive factors may all decrease and memory, imagination or emotional factors respectively, may dominate the experience, although, I find, never to the total exclusion of the other factors. My experience is always a complex. I notice further that during all these remarkable changes of my experience, while the emotional, memory and imaginational factors are constantly changing not only in prominence but disappearing as others take their places, yet the perceptive factors, while varying greatly in prominence still remain on hand in a comparatively constant manner. I seem capable of controlling the mem-

ory and imaginal and even the emotional factors in a manner, not at all possible with the perceptive factors.

It seems, then, that when I adopted the psychological point of view all I did was to regard experience with a view to analyzing it. Physics also analyzes but its analysis is of a different nature. It regards processes of consciousness or parts of experience from a definite point of view of matter and motion. All the natural sciences regard objects mediately as if they existed independently of consciousness and they examine them from this point of view. Thus a part of experience falls outside their scope altogether, and this they make no attempt to analyze. Psychology claims to take the whole of experience as it is given immediately and to investigate it without making any abstraction. This is a tremendously difficult thing to do. It is not so difficult when dealing with colours of perception. For example, I can look at a certain space and analyze it into colours of different

quality and quantity in certain time and space relations. But with ideas of a more abstract nature such as, for example, those I represent when I say that I believe that A likes B more than B likes A, it is a very different matter. In such intricate and complex, although very ordinary cases it seems almost impossible to analyze my experience from the immediate psychological point of view. However, the position of psychology is that all experience is capable of such analysis. Another fundamental principle is that experience is always a unity. It is given as a unity of related plurality and always remains a unity no matter what the extent to which the process of analysis is carried. On the other hand it is also always a complex. No matter how little analysis is done plurality is always present.

Now how is Bergson's intuition related to this psychology? Although I am by no means certain of what he means by intuition yet what I think he is getting at is this: his intuition is a

sort of concentration of consciousness by which certain factors come into prominence while others fade. Experience, as we have seen, is a plurality in unity; a unity of plurality. Now when we look at it from the point of view of its unity and concentrate on that aspect of it we come more and more to see experience as a totality in which no analysis has taken place. The distinctions which analysis produces are less and less in evidence. The plurality tends more and more to disappear until finally by an almost superhuman effort of concentration we attain to intuition and the plurality has completely disappeared. We have arrived at pure unity, unity without plurality. All distinction between subject and object has vanished; we become one with reality. We live reality and thereby we know it. We know it in the only way it can truly be known and we discover that reality is essentially duration.

Again concentrating on the plurality aspect of experience the unity finally disappears and we have an intuition of matter.

But the question still remains as to values of intuition as the basis for a method of Philosophy even granting its possibility.

(1) What security have I that I actually grasp the essence of a thing by intuition? Accepting Kant's position which I cannot see has ever been undermined there seems to be no possible security.

(2) Intuitions only come at rare intervals and only last a very short time. It seems doubtful if an intuition could remain as a possession with its acquirer. How can a methodical systematic connection be possible in the sum total of isolated intuitions? This question must remain unanswered until we have been able to reach intuition for ourselves. Then we shall probably know the answer.

The intense personal subjectivism of Bergson, in its resemblance to certain elements in the speculative system of Leibnitz; and in its contrast to the more objective system of the more Kant; completes a close parallel to the relation between Neo-Platonism as represented by Plotinus and the system of Aristotle and Plato. In the general nature of his Philosophy, as well as in many of its particular solutions, Bergson is the

A critical study of Bergson's philosophy, however, is in a most valuable and stimulating undertaking even if all his conclusions were wrong, which it would be ridiculous to suppose, he would still be most valuable because he is making people think and think deeply. For, as he is concerned with the most fundamental questions in philosophy, such as the fundamental questions in philosophy, such as the possibility of metaphysics, the possibility and limits of intellectual knowledge, the relation of mind to body, of time and space one can only hope to refute his doctrines by getting right down to fundamentals. This affords the opportunity and in fact necessitates the re-examining of the fundamental bases on which one's own philosophy rests and assuring oneself of their validity.