

## Book Review

# Review of Henri Bergson's Book: Creative Evolution

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### ABSTRACT

Spirit, and the mystery implied by vitalism, is reduced to the deep mystery of time and its two windows. Bergson's vitalism appears to us as a great differentiation and fragmentation, followed by a division of labor. But the support given to our eyes to which appearance is given is a sentience capable of the most subtle awareness coming as hindsight, and this quality may go unnoticed in mere appearance that sees only differentiation. Is humanity doomed to its intellect, unable to find the intuition we need? I think there is some room for optimism in the development of an intuitionist logic! We looked an inductive thinking already, and how it opposes deductive thought. Induction is as an instinct that follows the happy-go-lucky habits of life, and it is an already recognized human faculty of reason. It is induction that has a close associations with intuition, particularly when we discover a deduction that contradicts our blind expectations given to us by induction. Wayward induction is found married to its faulty deduction, and what holds the two together is a naked emotionality that may fall for the circular thinking that Bergson's warns us about. You can find this book at [Amazon](#).

**Key Words:** creative evolution, vitalism, deduction, induction.

Bergson (page 44) writes of foresight: "We must therefore have managed to extract resemblance from nature, which enable us to anticipate the future. Thus we must, consciously or unconsciously, have made use of the law of causality. Moreover, the more sharply the idea of efficient causality is defined in our mind, the more it takes the form of a mechanical causality. And this scheme, in its turn, is the more mathematical according as it expresses a more rigorous necessity." This necessity could be the workings of a mechanical clock, with its gears and cogs, fully determined from the offering of our deductive thought that awakens.

Then Bergson writes about the formation of generalities, that imply the workings of a plan: "... this natural mathematics is only the rigid unconscious skeleton beneath our conscious supple habit of linking the same causes to the same effects; and the usual object of this habit is to guide actions inspired by intentions, or, what comes to the same, to direct movements combined with a view to reproducing a pattern. We are born artisans as we are born geometricians, and indeed we are geometricians only because we are artisans." This is a hindsight that differs from the aforementioned deductive foresight, but returns again to time in the form of a now inductive drum beat that becomes instinctive.

Bergson (page 45) writes about the synthesis of these two tendencies: "Whether nature be conceived as an immense machine regulated by mathematical laws, or as the realization of a plan, these two ways of regarding it are only the consummation of two tendencies of mind which are complementary to each other, and which have their origin in the same vital necessities." I

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may conclude that Bergson's vitalism recognizes the synthesis of deduction and induction, and as such it is consistent with the Trinitarian philosophy described in my book.

Spirit, and the mystery implied by vitalism, is reduced to the deep mystery of time and its two windows. Bergson's vitalism appears to us as a great differentiation and fragmentation, followed by a division of labor. But the support given to our eyes to which appearance is given is a sentience capable of the most subtle awareness coming as hindsight, and this quality may go unnoticed in mere appearance that sees only differentiation.

Bergson (page 112) writes about how plants and animals diverged, one giving themselves over to chlorophyll and sun-light interaction, and the other locomotion: "... the vegetable manufactures organic substances directly with mineral substances; as a rule, this aptitude enables it to dispense with movement and so with feeling. Animals, which are obliged to go in search of their food, have evolved in the direction of locomotor activity, and consequently of a consciousness more and more distinct, more and more ample."

Bergson (page 116) writes: "The harmony of the two kingdoms, the complementary characters they display, might then be due to the fact that they develop two tendencies which at first were fused in one. ... While the animal evolved, not without accidents along the way, toward a freer and freer expenditure of discontinuous energy, the plant perfected rather its system of accumulation without moving."

Bergson (page 140) writes: "instinct perfected is a faculty of using and even of constructing organized instruments [life-like]; intelligence perfect is the faculty of making and using unorganized instruments [machine-like]." Bergson tells us that insects perfected instincts, and humans perfected intelligence, representing two divergent pathways. Bergson (page 143) writes: "Here again, then, the greatest success was achieved on the side of the greatest risk [the path to intelligence]. Instinct and intelligence therefore represent two divergent solutions, equally fitting, of one and the same problem."

Bergson (page 149) writes: "Intelligence, in so far as it is innate, is knowledge of a form; instinct implies the knowledge of a matter." Bergson (page 150) writes: "The two tendencies, at first implied in each other, had to separate in order to grow. They both went to seek their fortune in the world, and turned out to be instinct and intelligence. Such, then, are two divergent modes of knowledge by which intelligence and instinct must be defined, from the standpoint of knowledge rather than that of action. But knowledge and action are here only two aspects of one and the same faculty." Bergson (page 151) writes: "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which by itself, it will never find. These things instincts alone could find; but it will never seek them."

Bergson (page 167-168) tells us of the unlikelihood of science ever understanding instinct completely: "The reason is that instinct and intelligence are two divergent developments of one and the same principle, which in the one case remains within itself, in the other steps out of itself and becomes absorbed in the utilization of inert matter."

However, what came as instinct in animals, comes as intuition in human experience. Thus

intuition may give us some of what intelligence misses. Bergson (page 177) writes: "... intuition may bring to the intellect to recognize that life does not quite go into the category of the many nor yet into that of the one; that neither mechanical causality nor finality can give a sufficient interpretation of the vital process." Nevertheless, the doorway points to the middle-term that holds our deductions to our induction, in my view. But can we enter?

Bergson (page 197) writes: "And for having tried to avoid the seeming vicious circle which consists in using the intellect to transcend the intellect, we find ourselves turning in a real circle, that which consists in laboriously rediscovering by metaphysics a unity that we began by positing a priori, a unity that we admitted blindly and unconsciously by the very act of abandoning the whole of experience to science and the whole of reality to the pure understanding."

Bergson (page 267) writes: "Consciousness in man, is pre-eminently intellect. It might have been, it ought, so it seems, to have been also intuition. Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness: intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect goes in the inverse direction, and thus finds itself naturally in accordance with the movement of matter. A complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity would attain their full development."

Is humanity doomed to its intellect, unable to find the intuition we need? I think there is some room for optimism in the development of an intuitionist logic! We looked an inductive thinking already, and how it opposes deductive thought. Induction is as an instinct that follows the happy-go-lucky habits of life, and it is an already recognized human faculty of reason. It is induction that has a close associations with intuition, particularly when we discover a deduction that contradicts our blind expectations given to us by induction. Wayward induction is found married to its faulty deduction, and what holds the two together is a naked emotionality that may fall for the circular thinking that Bergson`s warns us about.

## References

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