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Beyond the Human Condition:  
Bergson and Deleuze

Keith Ansell-Pearson

Introduction

In his interpretations of Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche, and Spinoza, Deleuze is engaged in the search for a superior human nature. In this essay my focus is on Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson and the attempt to think and go beyond the human condition. In his essay on Bergson and difference of 1956, in his lecture course on *Creative Evolution* of 1960, in his text of 1966 entitled *Bergsonism*, and in subsequent writings such as his collaboration with Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze reveals his interest in Bergson's effort to think beyond the human condition. This is perhaps expressed most remarkably and interestingly in *Bergsonism* when Deleuze writes of the human as the being that has the capacity 'of scrambling the planes, of going beyond his own plane as his own condition, in order finally to express naturing Nature' (Deleuze 1966: 107). In short, the question at hand is the following: how can the human become a creator equal to the whole movement of creation and invent a society of creators? How are we to think such a possibility, that is, by what means or methods of philosophy and of action can such a superior human nature become accessible to us? This is what I set out to explore and enlighten in this essay. I shall proceed by focusing largely on Bergson's text of 1907, *Creative Evolution*, and shall draw heavily on Deleuze's readings of this text as well as advancing my own interpretation of it and as one that endeavours to add support to Deleuze's insights.

### Philosophy and the Study of Evolution

In the English-speaking world *Creative Evolution* (CE) appears to have the status of an optional text in Bergson's oeuvre.<sup>1</sup> This is in marked contrast to the French reception where thinkers from Canguilhem to Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze undertook close readings of the text. So long as we lack an encounter with this text we remain ignorant of crucial aspects of Bergson's attempt to reform and transform philosophical thinking and practice and the impact this had on aspects of Deleuze's thinking. Bergson is a diligent reader of the biological literature of his day and intended to make a contribution to the science of biology and to the philosophy of life.<sup>2</sup> The primary aim of the book though is to show the need for a fundamental reformation of philosophy. Bergson wants to show the limits of mechanism, and how, through an appreciation of the evolution of life, philosophy can expand our perception of the universe. This is perhaps the key aspect of Bergson's teaching and the one that had the deepest impact on Deleuze and his promotion of Bergsonism. Today aspects of Bergson's attempt to expand human perception in the text may not be to the taste of many readers, keen, as they no doubt are, to shy away from any romance of evolution. On this point it might be claimed that Bergson is remaining faithful to philosophy's vocation as the product of wonder: 'The effort after the general characterization of the world around us is the romance of human thought'.<sup>3</sup> However, even if today we feel no affinity with this aspect of Bergson's thinking about evolution, I want to show (a) that we can still gain a great deal of instruction from his attempt to get us closer to the realities of life and creative evolution, and (b) that Deleuze is an instructive reader of Bergson precisely on the issues that this effort addresses. We need to do justice to two elements of Bergson on the attempt to think beyond the human

condition: first, how he endeavours to demonstrate the possibility of bringing the human into contact with other realities, such as the inhuman and the superhuman; and, second, how it seeks to show that on the level of a contingent evolution the human represents the significance of evolution in *a special sense*. My essay is an attempt to illuminate these complex issues and with the aid of Deleuze. Why should we feel motivated by this endeavour to think beyond our human condition? Deleuze provides the essential insight that is required here: we find ourselves born or thrown into a world that is ready-made and that we have not made our own. This world always goes in the direction of the ‘relaxed aspect’ of duration, Deleuze argues (Deleuze 2007: 86). It is on account of the fact that the human condition is one of relaxation that we have such difficulty in understanding the meaning of creation - precisely the notion that proves essential for artistic invention, for new modes of ethical being, and for philosophical perception, and that lies, of course, at the heart of Bergson’s project.

Bergson is making two essential claims in his text, and they are interrelated:

- a) First, that we have to see the theory of knowledge and the theory of life as deeply related.
- b) Second, that there is a need to ‘think beyond the human condition’ or ‘human state’. Indeed, Bergson conceives philosophy as the discipline that ‘raises us above the human condition’ (*la philosophie nous aura élevés au-dessus de la condition humaine*) and makes the effort to ‘surpass’ (*dépasser*) it (Bergson 1965: 50; 2007a: 45). This reveals itself to be something of an extraordinary endeavour since it means bringing the human intellect into rapport with other

kinds of consciousness. Bergson does not specify what exactly he means by this in his introduction. I will return to this below, that is, of what it means to expand human perception and just how we are to do this.

How are these two points related? Bergson claims that the theory of knowledge and theory of life are to be regarded as ‘inseparable’. If we do not place our thinking about the nature, character, and limits of knowledge within the context of the evolution of life then we risk uncritically accepting the concepts that have been placed at our disposal. It means we think within ‘pre-existing frames’. We need, then, to ask two questions: first, how has the human intellect evolved (since it does not simply think for the sake of it but has evolved as an organ of action and utility)?, and second, how can we enlarge and go beyond the frames of knowledge available to us?

Bergson has a specific conception of the human intellect and of matter. The intellect has moulded itself on the geometrical tendency of matter and so as to better further its instrumental manipulations of matter. His chief claim is that the intellect has to be viewed within the context of the evolution of human life and that when we do this we can better grasp its limits and how to think beyond it. The task, in short, is to attempt to think beyond the representational and spatial habits of the intellect. For Bergson perhaps the chief function of philosophy is to expand our perception of the world and the universe. Although Whitehead contests Bergson’s view that the intellect has an inherent tendency to spatialize, he does think that ‘the history of philosophy supports Bergson’s charge that the human intellect “spatializes the universe”’, ignoring the fluency of life and analyzing

the world in terms of static categories and a static materialism (Whitehead PR p. 209; see also p. 321).

Bergson's criticism in CE is chiefly directed at what he calls 'evolutionist philosophy', by which he specifically means the work of Herbert Spencer. The problem with this philosophy is that it uncritically extends to the phenomena of life the same methods of explanation that have yielded successful results in the case of the study of 'unorganized matter'. Bergson accuses this evolutionism, which in Kantian fashion claims only to come up with a symbolical image of the real in which the essence of things will always escape us, of an 'excess of humility'. He says this because he thinks that it is possible for us to go beyond the human condition and enlarge our perception so as to provide us with an insight into the 'depths of life'. He also insists that this is not easy to do.

Here we see the character of Bergson's interest in evolution. It forms an essential part of his very conception of what philosophy is: an attempt at an enlarged perception where we think 'beyond the human condition'. The problem with the 'mechanistic' and 'geometrical' understanding is that 'it makes the total activity of life shrink to the form of a certain human activity which is only a partial and local manifestation of life...' (Bergson 2007b: xii). This suggests that 'life' is not one thing for him and can be appreciated in plural ways. In the text itself Bergson will argue that matter itself is to be characterized by certain tendencies, such as spatiality, so when the human intellect thinks in these terms it is representing an aspect of the real. Bergson's point is that this is only one aspect.

How, though, is it possible to think beyond the human condition and outside of its particular framing of reality? This is where Bergson appeals to evolution itself and stresses that the line of evolution that has culminated in the human is not the only line. His idea seem to be a radical one, namely, that there are other forms of life-consciousness that ‘express something that is immanent and essential in the evolutionary movement’, and the critical task is to then bring these other forms into contact or communication with the human intellect. Bergson asks: ‘would not the result be a consciousness as wide as life?’ What does he have in mind? The reader has to wait until the later chapters in the book before being able to comprehend him. Bergson is suggesting that it is possible to cultivate, through intellectual effort, a perception of life where we experience something of the very ‘impetus’ of creative life itself or what he describes as ‘the push of life’ and that has led to the creation of divergent forms of life from a common impulsion, such as plant and animal. In short, philosophy is that discipline of thinking that tries to make the effort to establish contact with the vitality and creativity of life and involving novelty, invention, process, and duration. As I have noted, he doesn’t pretend that it is easy to do this; on the contrary, he stresses that it is necessary to perform a certain violence on ourselves so as to break with our evolved habits of representation and established patterns of thought. In the introduction to CE he tackles the objection that may be raised against the project he is inviting us to pursue: will it not be through our intellect and our intellect alone that we perceive the other forms of consciousness? In answer to this objection he points out that this would be the case *if* we were pure intellects, but the fact is, he thinks, we are not. Around our conceptual and logical modes of thought, and that have moulded themselves on certain aspects and tendencies of the real, there remains a ‘vague

nebulosity' that is made of the same substance out of which the luminous nucleus we call the intellect has been fashioned. Here we shall find, he thinks and hopes, certain 'powers' – powers of insight, vision, and perception – the nature of which we have only an 'indistinct feeling' when we remain shut up in ourselves and exist as closed beings. The task of philosophy is to make these powers 'clear and distinct', Bergson says in clear reference to Descartes.

Bergson thinks we are all born Platonists. By this he means the human need to fit reality into the ready-made garments of our ready-made concepts: 'The idea that for a new object we might have to create a new concept, perhaps a new method of thinking, is deeply repugnant to us' (Bergson 2007b: 48). As in his introduction he now appeals to an expansion of our intellectual habits and forms of thought and so as to develop an idea of 'the whole of life': 'Such is the philosophy of life to which we are leading up. It claims to transcend both mechanism and finalism...' (Bergson 2007b: 50). Bergson, in fact, conceives of philosophy as an effort to 'dissolve into the whole'. Of course, what is not clear at this stage in his argument is why we should endeavour to think in terms of the whole and for what ends. I shall explain what this amounts to and how it might be carried out in the section below on intuition and sympathy. This 'dissolving' has to be seen as the ultimate end of the task of thinking 'beyond the human condition'.

Bergson now attempts to give an indication of the key principle of his demonstration. He conceives of 'life' as 'the continuation of one and the same impetus, divided into divergent lines of evolution' (Bergson 2007b: 53). The development of life has taken place in terms of a 'dissociation of tendencies', ones that 'were unable to grow beyond a certain point without becoming mutually incompatible'. Not until chapter three



of the text does Bergson deal in a concerted fashion with questions of contingency. He notes at this point in the book that there is no reason why we cannot imagine evolution having taken place in the one single individual being and having only the one dimension. However, it is a fact that on earth evolution has taken place through 'millions of individuals' and along divergent lines. He further maintains that something of the whole abides in each one of evolution's parts, and this common element may explain the presence of identical organs in significantly different organisms and forms of life. In short, there is a 'common impulsion' of life and this may account for the phenomenon of convergent evolution.

#### On the Double Genesis of Matter and Intellect

In the opening section of book three of CE Bergson establishes the conditions for a method of philosophy that may prove adequate to a comprehension of the evolution of life. He begins by noting that if the division of matter into separate bodies is relative to our senses and intellect, and if matter could be viewed from the perspective of an undivided whole, then it would be possible to conceive life or creative evolution as a flux and not a thing. In this way it might be possible to prepare the way 'for a reconciliation between the inert and the living' (Bergson 2007b: 186).

The first task is to attempt a genesis of both the intellect and material bodies, while recognizing that intellectuality and materiality have been constituted through reciprocal adaptation. In carrying out this task Bergson rejects both the evolutionist philosophy of Spencer and the critical philosophy of Kant as viable approaches. The claim against the former is that it assumes as ready-made the intelligence it is seeking

to show in its genesis. Spencer accepts, Bergson is contending, the fact that bodies appear as distinct individualities and occupy distinct positions in space. Kant's deduction of the *a priori* categories of thought is more subtle and self-conscious. However, in drawing out of it what has been virtually put into it, compressing the intellect and reducing it to its quintessence, it becomes impossible Bergson claims to demonstrate its genesis. It thus becomes necessary to find a way beyond the critical approach - conceiving the mind its most concentrated state and then expanding it into reality (Fichte is the thinker he now mentions) - and the evolutionist approach that begins with external reality and then condenses it into the intellect. The problem with these systems of philosophy for Bergson is that they assume that the unity of nature is accessible to thought through an abstract and geometrical form. In both the systems of Fichte and Spencer, he contends, one finds only the articulation of differences of degree in nature, whether they be of the order of complexity or the order of intensity. On this basis intelligence 'becomes as vast as reality; for it is unquestionable that whatever is geometrical in things is entirely accessible to human intelligence, and if the continuity between geometry and the rest is perfect, all the rest must indeed be equally intelligible' (Bergson 2007b: 190). But if nature is assumed to be one, and the faculty of knowing taken to be coextensive with the whole of experience, then it becomes impossible to conceive of an engendering of an experience.

Bergson is well aware of the vicious circle supposed in this task, namely, that of going beyond intelligence through the use of intelligence. He replies, however, that this is to misunderstand the nature of a habit, including the habits of intelligence. It is collective and progressive action that breaks vicious circles. Bergson suggests that philosophy

cannot simply occupy itself with the form of knowledge while leaving the matter of knowledge to the physico-chemical and biological sciences. The critique of metaphysics as a critique of the faculty of knowledge underestimates the extent to which this metaphysics and critique come to it ready-made from positive science. As a result the critical philosopher finds his role reduced to one of formulating in more simple and precise terms the unconscious and inconsistent metaphysics and critique that inform the approach science adopts in relation to reality. Bergson writes of his new method of thinking as follows:

This method claims to escape from the objections which Kant had formulated against metaphysics in general, and its principal object is to remove the opposition established by Kant between metaphysics and science, by taking account of the new conditions in which science works. If you read the *Critique of Pure Reason* you see that Kant has criticized not reason in general, but a reason fashioned to the habits and exigencies of the Cartesian mechanism or the Newtonian physic...The doctrine that I defend aims to rebuild the bridge (broken down since Kant) between metaphysics and science...(Bergson *Mélanges* 493-4)

Although Bergson is rarely acknowledged as a serious reader of Kant, an important engagement with his critical philosophy runs throughout his writings. Let me note some especially salient points about his engagement.

Bergson accepts Kant's demonstration that time and space, understood as homogeneous media and situated on the plane of action, cannot be viewed as properties of things themselves, since this leads to the 'insurmountable difficulties of metaphysical dogmatism'. However, instead of resting content with this critique of the dogmatic tendency of metaphysics, and uncritically privileging Newtonian mechanism, the effort should be made to recover the mind's contact with the real. This requires providing a

generative account of the Understanding, which would serve to show that homogeneous space and time are neither properties of things nor essential conditions of our faculty of knowing these things; rather their homogeneous character expresses 'the double work of solidification and division which we effect on the moving continuity of the real in order to obtain there a fulcrum for our action, in order to fix within it starting points for our operation, in short, to introduce into it real changes' (MM 211). In other words, Kant's conception of space and time as forms of sensibility is shown to have an interest, one that is 'vital' and not merely 'speculative'.

Two essential points need to be appreciated. First, Bergson's conception of metaphysics is not the same as Kant's in that it does not suppose that there is a completed task of knowledge (any system of knowledge open to experience and observation is necessarily incomplete). Second, the empirical study of the organic changes of life needs to concern itself not with the spatial results of the change but with the time taken by the change. Bergson writes:

After having proved by decisive arguments that no dialectical effort will ever introduce us into the beyond and that an effective metaphysics would necessarily be an intuitive metaphysics, he added that we lack this intuition and that this metaphysics is impossible. It would in fact be so if there were no other time or change than those which Kant perceived... (CM 128)

In this recovery of intuition Bergson aims to save science from the charge of producing a relativity of knowledge (it is rather to be regarded as 'approximative') and metaphysics from the charge of indulging in empty and idle speculation. The new metaphysics Bergson proposes will operate via 'differentiations and qualitative integrations', and in an

effort to reverse the normal directions of the workings of thought it will have a rapport with modern mathematics, notably the infinitesimal calculus:

Modern mathematics is precisely an effort to substitute for the *ready-made* what is in process of *becoming*, to follow the growth of magnitudes, to seize movement no longer from outside and in its manifest result, but from within and in its tendency towards change, in short, to adopt of the mobile continuity of the pattern of things (CM 190).<sup>4</sup>

Metaphysics differs from modern mathematics (the science of magnitudes), however, in that it has no need to make the move from intuition to symbol. Its understanding of the real is potentially boundless because of this: 'Exempt from the obligation of arriving at results useful from a practical standpoint, it will indefinitely enlarge the domain of its investigations' (191). Metaphysics can adopt the generative idea of mathematics and seek to extend it to all qualities, 'to reality in general' (191). The aim is not to bring about another Platonism of the real, but rather to enable thought to re-establish contact with continuity and mobility. A form of knowledge can be said to be relative when it ignores the basis of symbolic knowledge in intuition and is forced to rely on pre-existing concepts and to proceed from the fixed to the mobile. 'Absolute knowledge', by contrast, refuses to accept what is pre-formed and instead cultivates 'fluid concepts', seeking to place itself in a mobile reality from the start and so adopting 'the life itself of things' (192) and to follow 'the real in all its sinuosities' (CE 363). To achieve this requires relinquishing the method of construction that leads only to higher and higher generalities and thinking in terms of a concrete duration 'in which a radical recasting of the whole is always going on' (ibid.).

Having noted some key features of Bergson's reception of Kant, I now return

to his critique of the intellect. As a work of the pure intellect positive science feels most at home in the presence of unorganized matter since it is this matter that it is most familiar with in terms of the manipulation afforded by its own mechanical inventions. This inevitably leads science to viewing this matter in strictly mechanistic terms. Ultimately, the same approach is adopted in relation to living matter and with disastrous results. It is, therefore, Bergson contends, the duty of philosophy to intervene in order to contest the applicability of the geometrical bent of natural logic to a comprehension of matter, and thus to examine the living and the dead without concern for their practical utility or exploitability. Philosophy is faced with the paradoxical task of freeing itself from forms and habits of thought that are strictly and exclusively intellectual. The 'will to truth' that Bergson identifies within science is not, however, wholly negative for him. On the contrary, he argues that the more it penetrates the depths of life the more it discovers the heterogeneous and the more it encounters the strange phenomena of duration which exceed its understanding. It is here that philosophy is able to supplement science in order to disclose the 'absolute' in which 'we live and move and have our being' (200; 199).

### Intuition and Sympathy

In CE Bergson provides insights into the nature of his method of intuition and its extension through sympathy. The two notions play a crucial role in the task of thinking 'beyond the human condition'. Let me now address this dimension of Bergson's thinking and show something of its significance.

For Bergson intuition is instinct that has become disinterested ('instinct is sympathy', he states) and self-reflective, 'capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely' (CE 176). Intuition is said to be a mode of sympathy 'by which one is transported into the interior of an object' (CM p. 135). The contrast is with the mode of 'analysis', which is an operation that reduces an object to elements already known and that are common to it and other objects. Intuition involves a special kind of attention or attentiveness to life (Bergson speaks of performing an 'auscultation' and in accordance with a 'true empiricism', CM p. 147). Bergson contends that even the most concrete of the sciences of nature, namely, the sciences of life, 'confine themselves to the visible form of living beings, their organs, their anatomical elements' (p. 136). The task at hand is to understand precisely what Bergson means when he says in CE that intuition leads us to 'very inwardness of life' (ibid.).

As Deleuze notes, intuition is the method peculiar to Bergsonism. He stresses that it denotes neither a vague feeling or incommunicable experience nor a disordered sympathy. Rather, it is a fully developed method that aims at precision in philosophy (see Bergson 1965: 11). Where duration and memory denote lived realities and concrete experiences, intuition is the only means we have at our disposal for crafting knowledge of experience and reality. 'We may say, strangely enough', Deleuze notes, 'that duration would remain purely intuitive, in the ordinary sense of the word, if intuition - in the properly Bergsonian sense - were not there as method' (Deleuze 1966: 2; 1988: 14). However, intuition is a complex method that cannot be contained in single act. Instead, it has to be seen as involving a plurality of determinations. The first task is to stage and create problems; the second is to locate differences in kind; and the third is to

comprehend 'real time', that is, duration as a heterogeneous and continuous multiplicity. I will first note some salient aspects of Bergson on intuition and then draw on Deleuze to indicate how intuition aspires to operate as a method of precision in philosophy.

Bergson acknowledges that other philosophers before him, such as Schelling, tried to escape relativism by appealing to intuition (1965: 30). He argues, however, that this was a non-temporal intuition that was being appealed to, and, as such, was largely a return to Spinozism, that is, a deduction of existence from 'one complete Being'. His main engagement, however, is with Kant and for obvious reasons. Bergson argues that in order to reach the mode of intuition it is not necessary, as Kant supposed, to transport ourselves outside the domain of the senses: 'After having proved by decisive arguments that no dialectical effort will ever introduce us into the beyond and that an effective metaphysics would necessarily be an intuitive metaphysics, he added that we lack this intuition and that this metaphysics is impossible. It would in fact be so if there were no other time or change than those which Kant perceived...' (Bergson 1965: 128) By recovering intuition Bergson hopes to save science from the charge of producing a relativity of knowledge (it is rather to be regarded as approximate) and metaphysics from the charge of indulging in empty and idle speculation. Although Kant himself did not pursue thought in the direction he had opened for it - the direction of a 'revivified Cartesianism' Bergson calls it - it is the prospect of an 'extra-intellectual matter of knowledge by a higher effort of intuition' that Bergson seeks to cultivate (2007b: 229). Kant has reawakened, if only half-heartedly, a view that was the essential element of Descartes' thinking but which the Cartesians abandoned: knowledge is not completely resolvable into the terms of intelligence. Bergson does not, let it be noted, establish an



opposition between sensuous (infra-intellectual) intuition and intellectual (what he calls an 'ultra-intellectual') intuition but instead seeks to show that there is a continuity and reciprocity between the two. Moreover, sensuous intuition can be promoted to a different set of operations, no longer simply being the phantom of an unscrutable thing-in-itself:

The barriers between the matter of sensible knowledge and its form are lowered, as also between the 'pure forms' of sensibility and the categories of the understanding. The matter and form of intellectual knowledge (restricted to its own object) are seen to be engendering each other by a reciprocal adaptation, intellect modelling itself on corporeity, and corporeity on intellect. But this duality of intuition Kant neither would nor could admit. (ibid. 230).

For Kant to admit this duality of intuition would entail granting to duration an absolute reality and treating the geometry immanent in space as an ideal limit (the direction in which material things develop but never actually attain).

Deleuze thinks we can learn some valuable philosophical lessons from Bergson on intuition, so I shall now draw on his account. He argues that we go wrong when we hold that notions of true and false can only be brought to bear on problems in terms of ready-made solutions. This is a far too pre-emptive strategy that does not take us beyond experience but locks us in it. This negative freedom is the result of manufactured social prejudices where, through social institutions such as education and language, we become enslaved by 'order-words' that identify for us ready-made problems that we are forced to solve. True freedom lies in the power to constitute problems themselves. This might involve the freedom to uncover certain truths for oneself, but often discovery is too much involved in uncovering what already exists, an act of discovery that was bound to happen sooner or later and contingent upon circumstances. Invention, however, gives Being to

what did not exist and might never have happened since it was not destined to happen, there was no pre-existing programme by which it could be actualized. In mathematics and in metaphysics the effort of invention consists in raising the problem and in creating the terms through which it might be solved but never as something ready-made. As Merleau-Ponty notes in a reading of Bergson, when it is said that well-posed problems are close to being solved, 'this does not mean that we have already *found* what we are looking for, but that we have already invented it' (Merleau-Ponty 1988: 14). For Bergson the genuine philosopher, as opposed to the amateur, is one who does not accept the terms of a problem as a common problem that has been definitively posed and which then requires that s/he select from the available solutions to the problem (the example Bergson gives to illustrate his point is that of Samuel Butler rejecting Darwin's solution in favour of Lamarck's) (Bergson 2002: 370).

A second rule of intuition is to do away with false problems, which are said to be of two kinds: firstly, those which are caught up in terms that contain a confusion of the 'more' and the 'less'; and, secondly, questions which are stated badly in the specific sense that their terms represent only badly analyzed composites. In the first case the error consists in positing an origin of being and of order from which nonbeing and disorder are then made to appear as primordial. On this schema, order can only appear as the negation of disorder and being as the negation of nonbeing (see Bergson 1962: 223; 1983: 222). Such a way of thinking introduces lack into the heart of Being. The more or less errs in not seeing that there are *kinds* of order and forgetting the fact that Being is not homogeneous but fundamentally heterogeneous. Badly analyzed composites result from an arbitrary grouping of things that are constituted as differences in kind. Bergson wants

to know how it is that we deem certain life forms to be superior to others, even though they are not of the same order, and neither can they be posited in terms of a simple unilinear evolutionism with one life form succeeding another in terms of a progress towards perfection in self-consciousness (ibid.: 175; 174). Life proceeds neither via lack nor the power of the negative but through internal self-differentiation along lines of divergence. Indeed, Bergson goes so far as to claim that the root cause of the difficulties and errors we are confronted with in thinking creative evolution resides in the power we ascribe to negation, to the point where we represent it as symmetrical with affirmation (ibid.: 286; 287). When Deleuze says that resemblance or identity bears on difference *qua* difference, he is being faithful to Bergson's critical insight into the character of negation, chiefly, that it is implicated in a more global power of affirmation.

It is through a focus on badly analyzed composites that we are led, in fact, to positing things in terms of the more and the less, so that the idea of disorder only arises from a general idea of order as a badly analyzed composite. This amounts to claiming, as Deleuze cognizes, that we are the victims of illusions that have their source in aspects of our intelligence. However, although these illusions refer to Kant's analysis in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Reason is shown to generate for itself in exceeding the boundaries of the Understanding inevitable illusions and not simple mistakes, they are not of the same order. There is a natural tendency of the intellect to see only differences in degree and to neglect differences in kind. This is because the fundamental motivation of the intellect is to implement and orientate action in the world.

To bring into play a different kind of intelligence is to introduce the critical element into philosophy that will enable us to go beyond the human condition and to

widen the canvas of its experience. It is intuition that allows this critical tendency to express itself through two procedures: the discovery of differences in kind and the formulation of criteria for differentiating between true and false problems. But at this point things get even more complex. If intuition is to be conceived as a method that proceeds via division - the division of a composite into differences of kind - is this not to deny that reality is, in fact, made up of composites and mixtures of all kinds? For Bergson, Deleuze argues, the crucial factor is to recognize that it is not things which differ in kind but rather tendencies: 'a thing in itself and in its true nature is the expression of a tendency before being the effect of a cause' (Deleuze 1956: 83; 1997: 4). In other words, what differs in nature are not things (their states or traits) but the tendency things possess for change and development. A simple difference of degree would denote the correct status of things if they could be separated from their tendencies. For Bergson the tendency is primary not simply in relation to its product but rather in relation to the causes of productions in time, 'causes always being retroactively obtained starting from the product itself' (ibid.). Any composite, therefore, needs to be divided according to qualitative tendencies.

Again, this brings Bergson close to Kant's transcendental analysis, going beyond experience as given and constituting its conditions of possibility. However, these are not conditions of all possible experience but of 'real' experience (for example the experience of different durations). Bergson thinks that all the great masters of modern philosophy are thinkers who have assimilated the material of the science of their time. He adds that the partial eclipse of metaphysics in recent times can be explained by the fact that today it is a difficult task to make contact with a science that has become scattered. However, the

method of intuition, which is to be attained 'by means of material knowledge', is something quite different to a summary or synthesis of scientific knowledge. Although metaphysics has nothing in common with the 'generalization of experience', it is possible to define it 'as the whole of experience (*l'expérience intégrale*).

Intuition is not duration, but rather the movement by which thought emerges from its own duration and gains insight into the difference of other durations within and outside itself. It both presupposes duration, as the reality in which it dwells, but it also seeks to think it: '...to think intuitively is to think in duration' (Bergson 1965: 34). Without intuition as a method duration would remain for us a merely psychological experience and we would remain prisoners of what is given to us. Informing Bergson's thinking, therefore, is a philosophical critique of the order of need, action, and society that predetermine us to retain a relationship with things only to the extent that they satisfy our interest, and of the order of general ideas that prevent us from acquiring a superior human nature.

Bergson insists that his method of intuition contains no devaluation of intelligence but only a determination of its specific facility. If intuition transcends intelligence this is only account of the fact that it is intelligence that gives it the push to rise beyond. Without it intuition would remain wedded to instinct and riveted to the particular objects of its practical interests. The specific task of philosophy is to introduce us 'into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation' (ibid. 115). This is different to what science does when it takes up the utilitarian vantage point of external perception and prolongs individual facts into general laws. The reformed metaphysics Bergson wishes to awaken commits itself to an 'intellectual expansion' of

reflection and intuition is, in fact, 'intellectual sympathy' (2007a: 32 & p. 40).

For Bergson, then, the key move for thought to make lies in the direction of sympathy. By means of science intelligence does its work and delivers to us more and more the secret of life's material or physical operations. But this gives us only a perspectivism that never penetrates the inside, going 'all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it...' (CE 176) By contrast, metaphysics can follow the path of intuition, which is to be conceived as 'instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and enlarging it indefinitely' (ibid.). Bergson has recourse to the example of the aesthetic to develop this insight. It is the aesthetic faculty that gives us something other than what is given for us by normal perception. The eye, he notes, perceives the features of the living in terms of an assembling and not as something involving mutual organization and reciprocal interpenetration: 'The intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together and gives them significance, escapes it' (177). It is just this 'intention' that the artist, he says, seeks to regain, 'placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy...by an effort of intuition'. In his essay on Ravaisson, Bergson alludes to the importance of art for metaphysics: 'The whole philosophy of Ravaisson springs from the idea that art is a figured metaphysics, that metaphysics is a reflection on art, and that it is the same intuition, variously applied, which makes the profound philosopher and the great artist' (CM 231).

It needs to be pointed out, however, that Bergson himself does not subscribe to the identification of art with philosophy. He holds that philosophical intuition goes further than aesthetic intuition since it is capable of capturing the vital before its dispersal

into images (BKW 450). Aesthetic intuition has a limited character, which resides in the fact that it gives us only the individual case. He thus invites us to pursue an inquiry that is turned in the same direction as art, but 'which would take life *in general* for its object, just as physical science, in following to the end the direction pointed out by external perception, prolongs the individual facts into general laws' (CE 177). He concedes the obvious point, namely, that such a philosophy of life will never obtain a knowledge comparable to that which science acquires: 'Intelligence remains the luminous nucleus around which instinct, even enlarged and purified into intuition, forms only a vague nebulosity' (ibid.). In default of knowledge properly so-called, however, intuition provides us with a supplement that enables us to grasp that which intelligence fails to provide. More than this, it is intuition that can disclose to us in a palpable form what the discoveries of modern biology have established.

Just what this means is explained well by David Lapoujade in an incisive treatment of intuition and sympathy in Bergson.<sup>5</sup> I will draw on his inquiry and cover only the essential points. Intuition is a reflection of the mind upon itself and there is no intuition of the material or vital as such. Given this constraint, how can we, with the aid of intuition, open ourselves up to different levels of reality and enlarge our perception of life? This is where sympathy intervenes and assumes an important role. Lapoujade argues that sympathy is not a fusion without distance and so cannot be crudely assimilated to some miraculous intuitive act. Rather, it relies upon reasoning by analogy. The reasoning Bergson has in mind here is not one that appeals to fixed terms but rather to movements. One way to think this is in terms of an analogy between tendencies, in which the 'structure' at work is not one of what is similar but of what is common. So, it

does not work through an exterior relation of resemblances, but rather through ‘an interior *communication* between tendencies or movements’ (DL p. 8). Analogy comes into play for us between the movements of our own interior existence and those of the universe, and we uncover ourselves intuitively as material and as vital through a series of explorations into ourselves. Bergson expresses it in just these terms in his lecture of 1911 on ‘Philosophical Intuition’:

...the matter and life which fill the world are equally within us; the forces which work in all things we feel within ourselves; whatever may be the inner essence of what is and what is done, we are of that essence. Let us then go down into our own inner selves: the deeper the point we touch, the stronger will be the thrust which sends us back to the surface (BKW p. 299).

As Lapoujade pithily expresses it, for Bergson, ‘we are analogous to the universe (intuition), and inversely, the universe is our analogue (sympathy)’ (p. 9). In making the effort, then, to think beyond the human condition we come into contact, through intuition, with movements, memories, and non-human consciousnesses deep within us. Deep within the human there is something other than the human. This means that for Bergson the ‘sources’ of human experience are more obscure and distant than both common sense and science suppose, and these are sources that, Bergson contends, Kant failed to penetrate in his attempt to philosophize about the conditions of the possibility of experience. In essence, this is what Bergson means when he writes of ‘dissolving into the whole’ and experiencing ‘the ocean of life’. Although this dissolving experience may approach the insights of poetry or mysticism Bergson is after philosophical precision and



clarity. He never ceases to emphasize the extent to which intuition requires long and stubborn effort.

As Lapoujade further notes, Bergson is according primacy in reality to alterity: ‘it is because the other is within us that we can project it outside us in the form of “consciousness” or “intention”’ (p. 11). What we ‘project’ onto the world is our own alterity. However, it is clear that for Bergson when we experience sympathy it is not merely sympathy for others we subject ourselves to, but equally sympathy for one’s self and recognition of the alterity that lies concealed within ourselves: ‘...one thing is sure: we sympathize with ourselves’ (CM p. 136). Such an insight perhaps allows us to reconfigure the ‘in-itself’: ‘The in-itself no longer designates the way in which things will never be “for us” but the way in which, on the contrary, things will be very much within us’ (p. 12).

To conclude this section: intuition is the primary method of philosophical thinking for Bergson, and from sympathy it gains an extension that enables it to be deployed as a general method. Intuition puts us into contact with other durations and ensures that we do not exist simply or only as internal duration.

### Contingency and Human Evolution

Bergson once again reconfigures the question of a creative evolution in terms of the relation between matter and consciousness, maintaining that matter is always in descent and is only prevented from achieving a complete descent into stasis owing to an inverse process. It is beyond question, he argues, that the evolution of life on earth is attached to matter. Pure consciousness would be pure creative activity lacking in

invention. In being riveted to the organism evolutionary life is subjected to the general laws of inert matter. To conceive of the evolution of life we need only speak, says Bergson, of a certain retardation in which life is seen to follow from an 'initial impulsion' that has brought into being more and more powerful explosives. These explosives can be construed as amounting to a storing-up of solar energy in which its degradation meets with a provisional suspension, 'on some of the points where it was being poured forth' (247; 246). It is the organism, therefore, that represents an arrest of this dissipation of energy. 'The evolution of living species within this world represents what subsists of the primitive direction of the original jet, and of an impulsion which continues itself in a direction the inverse of materiality' (248; 247). He wishes to stress that the life of species is often a determined life in contrast to that of the creation of a world which exceeds the limits of species and which is always a 'free act'. There is always the reality creating itself in the reality that desires to unmake itself. It is inevitable, he suggests, that each species will behave as if the general movement of life came to an end with it, instead of passing through it. The notorious 'struggle for existence' results as much from the limited perspective of each species as it does from the brutal character of life, he speculates.

What of the role played by contingency in evolution? Bergson notes contingency applies both to the forms adopted and invented, and to the obstacles that are encountered at any given moment and in any given place. The only two things required for evolution to take place are, firstly, an accumulation of energy, and, secondly, an 'elastic canalization of this energy in variable and indeterminable directions' (1962: 256; 1983: 255). This is certainly how living systems have

evolved on earth, but, as Bergson correctly points out, it wasn't necessary for life to assume a carbonic form. He is prepared to go as far as to assert that it was not even necessary for life to become concentrated in organisms as such, that is, in definite bodies which provide energy flows with ready-made and elastic canals.

Bergson reaches the conclusion that there has not been a project or plan of evolution (ibid.: 266; 265). The human is neither pre-figured in evolution nor can it be deemed to be the outcome of the whole of evolution. It is also the case that the rest of nature does not exist for the human. It is the divergent character of evolution, the fact that it has taken place on many diverse lines, which is decisive. It is only in a special sense that man can be considered to be the end of evolution. The interesting question to be posed is why life has assumed the forms it has (plant, animal, vegetable). Bergson answers by suggesting that life is an accumulation of energy that then flows into flexible channels and performs various kinds of work. It is this activity of energy that the vital impulse would 'fain to do all at once', were it not for the fact that its power is limited: 'But the impetus is finite...It cannot overcome all obstacles. The movement it starts is sometimes turned aside, sometimes divided, always opposed; and the evolution of the organized world is the unrolling of this conflict' (ibid.: 255; 254). Bergson insists that all that is necessary for creative evolution (the generation of 'free acts') is the accumulation of energy and the canalization of this energy in variable and indeterminable directions. In the lecture on 'Life and Consciousness' which opens *Mind-Energy* Bergson expresses it as follows: 'But life as a whole, whether we envisage it at the start or at the end of its evolution, is a double labour of slow accumulation and sudden discharge' (1975: 19).

Whereas it is the examination, in palaeontology and comparative anatomy, of material forms that revealed contingency, it is the examination of organisms in terms of their function, and specifically their relation to energy, that allows Bergson to attribute significance to the human. For Bergson, and as we have just seen, life as a whole is a double labour of slow accumulation and sudden discharge of energy. It is along these lines that he distinguishes plant and animal life, which ‘develop two tendencies which at first were fused in one’ (CE 76). The accumulation and release of energy ‘at first completed each other so well that they coalesced,’ but in the history of evolution we see that ‘the animal evolved ... toward a freer and freer expenditure of discontinuous energy’ while ‘the plant perfected rather its system of accumulation’ (CE 76). Their tendency to emphasize different aspects of energy flow leads to the development of different modes of feeding, of movement, and ultimately of consciousness in the plant and the animal. However, his characterization of the evolution of animal life in terms of an increasing ability to use energy leads Bergson into a direct confrontation with the second law of thermodynamics, which states that all energy tends to degrade into heat, which is distributed throughout matter in a uniform manner. Bergson considers this to be ‘the most metaphysical of the laws of physics’ because it attempts to describe the very direction of existence (CE 156). While it may apply within a closed material system – which Bergson describes as ‘a thing unmaking itself’ (CE 157) – it does not apply to life, in which we find an effort to remount the incline that matter descends and which in its creative passage through matter is ‘*a reality which is making itself in a reality which is unmaking itself*’ (CE 159).<sup>6</sup>

Is Bergson here in direct contradiction to empirical evidence? His is an extreme claim, and demands some kind of support. This can be provided by the work of Mae-Wan Ho, a biologist keen to adopt Bergson's work as a valid resource within science. In *The Rainbow and the Worm: The Physics of Organisms*, Ho develops an account of living systems in terms of non-equilibrium thermodynamics. Like Bergson, she claims that living organisms are 'irreconcilable with the statistical nature of the laws of thermodynamics,' hence those laws cannot be applied to life without some reformulation, which Ho develops under the name 'a thermodynamics of organized complexity.'<sup>7</sup> The difference for Ho is this: whereas in material systems, energy tends towards undifferentiated distribution or equilibrium as stated by the second law of thermodynamics, living systems are highly differentiated as a consequence of the way 'energy flow organizes and structures the system in such a way as to reinforce the energy flow.'<sup>8</sup> For this to work, an organism's ability to store energy is key. Hence, in Ho's definition, an organism is a coherent structure maintained far from thermodynamic equilibrium by the ability to store energy, and then release it in a way that magnifies its effect well beyond any potential it would have had in a purely mechanical context. Bergson's description of animal life as a counter-entropic movement can be refined through Ho's work, into an account of life as a local magnification of potential energy resulting through the differentiation of storage and release.

The excess of energy that the animal has at its disposal is, then, the condition for the development of human freedom as much as the brain itself. That is to say, human consciousness is not only to be explained with reference to its material conditions, but also to the contingent conditions of its evolutionary history. Stephen Jay Gould too has

noted this: ‘We shall then finally understand that the answer to such questions as ‘Why can humans reason?’ lies as much (and as deeply) in the quirky pathways of contingent history as in the physiology of neurons.’<sup>9</sup>

Bergson maintains that from the fact that the brains of human and ape are alike, “we cannot conclude that consciousnesses are comparable or commensurable” (CE 263), because from the limited to the unlimited there is all the distance between the closed and the open (in fact, what we have here is a difference of kind and not merely degree).<sup>10</sup> Unlike the case of the animal, the powers of invention within the human are not simply variations on the theme of routine. Rather, we have a machine that has the potential to triumph over mechanism and closure. The human is not a captive of the mechanisms its brain has set up. Bergson duly notes the importance of the role played by language, social life, and technics in the creation of this ‘exceptional life’ of the human animal (elsewhere Bergson calls man ‘the sporting animal’ and conceives the brain as an organ of sport).<sup>11</sup> The complication of the brain, for Bergson, is an effect of evolutionary freedom as much as a condition of human freedom. The development of the brain itself is contingent upon the excess of energy that allows the development of free action along the animal line of evolution:

Things have happened just as though an immense current of consciousness, interpenetrated with potentialities of every kind, had traversed matter to draw it towards organization and make it, notwithstanding that it is necessity itself, an instrument of freedom. But consciousness has had a narrow escape from being itself ensnared. Matter, enfolding it, bends it to its own automatism, lulls it to sleep in its own unconsciousness. ... So, from the highest rung of the ladder of life, freedom is riveted in a chain which at most it succeeds in stretching. With man alone a sudden bound is made; the chain is broken (ME p. 19).

However, the human form is not prefigured in the evolutionary movement and cannot be said to be the outcome of the whole of evolution since this has been accomplished on several divergent lines, and the human species is simply at the end of one of them: '[man] does not draw along with him all that life carries in itself' (CE 266). Nevertheless, for Bergson man is more significant than the species that occupy the other lines of vegetable and animal evolution because he is the being in whose freedom the creative nature of evolution is made most evident. This point is worth stressing so that Bergson is not misheard when he advances these kinds of insights. It is not the specific form of man but his function as a free and creative being that constitutes his significance. It is as if "*a vague and formless being*" (*un être indécis et flou*) – call it, Bergson says, man *or* superman – had sought to realize itself but could only succeed in this effort by abandoning parts of itself in the process: such losses are represented by the animal and vegetable worlds and what is positive in them.

#### Deleuze on Creative Emotion and the Problem of Human Society

Deleuze writes in *Bergsonism*:

Duration, Life, is in principle (*en droit*) memory, in principle consciousness, in principle freedom. 'In principle' means virtually. The whole question (*quid facti?*) is knowing under what conditions duration becomes *in fact* consciousness of self, how life *actually* accedes to a memory and freedom of fact (1966: 106).

This is an important acknowledgement on Deleuze's part since it means that he clearly recognizes, for all his emphasis on the virtual, especially evident in his reading of

Bergson, that the realization of freedom within and through the human being must assume an *actual* form and be an *actual* condition. And what he is addressing in this part of *Bergsonism* is the problem or set of problems that Bergson confronts in his final text of 1932 on the sources of morality and religion. Let me now turn in the final section of my essay to illuminating these problems and to showing the way Deleuze resolves them.

Although Bergson thinks the future of the evolution of life is open-ended, and posits it as such in CE, by the time of his final work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, it is clear that he does not wish to be ethically and politically naïve with respect to human existence. He is now keen to show that so-called advanced or ‘civilized’ societies remain closed societies. In this work he discloses and attends to his chief concerns, such as the problem of over-population, our addiction to pleasure (as opposed to joy) through consumption, and the continuation of the war-instinct. He seems to anticipate the creation of the atomic bomb. The significance of this is that it means is that Kant’s teleology is over: nature does not know better than man what humanity needs and war cannot any longer be said to be a ruse of reason. It is for this reason that Bergson holds that humanity is confronted with the need to make a fundamental decision: does it wish to go on living or not and does it wish to go beyond the standpoint of ‘mere living’?

In his *Bergsonism* Deleuze is well aware of these problems of the human. In the final chapter of the text, which provides a treatment of CE with the *Two Sources*, Deleuze focuses on the question of how the privilege of the human comes about in which the human has the chance to access durations inferior and superior its own and so express naturing Nature. The problem is compounded by the fact that the human dwells in closed



societies and these societies are no less closed than animal species. Deleuze writes of these societies:

...they form part of a plan (*plan*) of nature, as much as animal species and societies; and man goes round in circles in his society just as much as the species do in theirs or ants in their domain. Nothing here seems to be capable of giving man the previously mentioned exceptional opening, as the power of going beyond his 'plane' (*plan*) and his condition (1966: 109).

Deleuze recognizes that Bergson posits the human as the purpose of the process of evolution in a special sense. This is the sense in which the actual becomes adequate to the virtual, that is, the creative vital impetus “gets through” on the line of the human and assumes self-consciousness, that is, it makes of matter an instrument of freedom (the machine that triumphs over mechanism). But this is only in principle, as Deleuze repeatedly stresses. We do not know yet how the virtual becomes something *actual*. Initially we can think this in terms of the production of an interval taking place between excitation and reaction in which, over and above the merely physic-chemical properties of complicated matter – ‘Even in his dreams’ man ‘rediscovers or prepares matter’, Deleuze notes (1966: 107) – ‘the whole of memory descends into this interval, and that becomes actual’ (ibid.). But even here we are largely dealing with a utilitarian memory in which useful recollections are actualized in a cerebral interval and intelligence becomes an organ of the domination of nature and the utilization of matter. Humans form societies on the basis of this domination, in which they provide an intelligent comprehension of needs and a certain rational organization of activities as well as subsisting through absurd and irrational factors (obligation exists, for example, without

ultimate rational ground: the whole of obligation, or having the habit of contracting habits, is a requirement of nature in our case, existing as a kind of virtual instinct). However, when we consider this human sociability and intelligence nothing justifies the privilege of the human simply because the societies that are formed in evolution and history are first and foremost closed societies. For Deleuze, this insight necessitates the search for a different kind of 'interval', one existing at a different level of being and of freedom.

This does not take place on the level of intelligence since although intelligence hesitates and rebels it does so in the name of egoism, one that it endeavours to preserve against social requirements such as conformity and identity. Deleuze holds that something appears in the interval between intelligence and society, and this is not intuition but emotion. This is not just any emotion but what Bergson calls 'creative emotion' and that is the emotion of an 'open soul'. Egoism produces emotions, of course, but it is always connected to a representation on which the emotion is supposed to depend. For Bergson it is not simply a question of replacing egoism with altruism; it is not simply a question of the self now saying to itself, I am working for the benefit of mankind since the idea is too vast and the effect too diffuse. In the closed morality the individual and social are barely distinguishable: it is both at once and at this level the 'spirit' moves around a circle that is closed on itself. Can we say that operative in the open soul is the love of all humanity? This does not go far enough since it can be extended to animals, plants, and all nature. It could even do without them since its form is not dependent on any specific content: "Charity' would persist in him who possesses "charity", though there be no other living creature on earth' (1959: 1007; 1977: 38). It is

a psychic attitude that, strictly speaking, does not have an object. It is not acquired by nature but requires an effort. It transmits itself through feeling: think of the attraction or appeal of love, of its passion, in its early stages and which resembles an obligation (we must because we must); perhaps a tragedy lays ahead, a whole life wrecked, wasted, and ruined. This does not stop our responding to its call or appeal. We are entranced, as in cases of musical emotion that introduces us into new feelings, ‘as passers-by are forced into a street dance.’ The pioneers in morality proceed in a similar fashion: ‘Life holds for them unsuspected tones of feeling like those of some new symphony, and they draw us after them into this music that we may express it in action (1959: 1008; 1977: 40).’ We obey the call or appeal of love, and this shows us the passion of love or a great emotion, for good or ill.

Does Bergson show himself to be an irrationalist here? His argument is against intellectualism: ‘It is through an excess of intellectualism that feeling is made to hinge on an object and that all emotion is held to be the reaction of our sensory faculties to an intellectual representation’ (1008; 40). Take the example of music: are the emotions expressed linked to any *specific* objects of joy, of sorrow, compassion, and love, or is not the case that in listening to music we feel as though we desire only what the music is suggesting to us and in which we become what the music expresses, be it joy or grief, pity or love? ‘When music weeps, all humanity, all nature, weeps with it’ (ibid.) The difference Bergson is getting at is a radical one and it is between an emotion that can be represented (in images and objects) and the creative emotion that is beyond representation and is a real invention. States of emotion caused by certain things are

ordained by nature and are finite or limited in number; we recognize them quite easily because their destiny is to spur us on to acts that answer to our needs.

Bergson is not blind to the illusions of love and to the psychological deceptions that may be at work. He maintains, however, that the effect of creative emotion is not reducible to this. This is because there are emotional states that are distinct from sensation, that is, they cannot be reduced to being a psychological transposition of a physical stimulus. There are two kinds: (a) where the emotion is a consequence of an idea or mental picture; (b) where the emotion is not produced by a representation but is productive of ideas (Bergson calls them *infra* and *supra-intellectual* respectively). A creative emotion informs the creations not only of art but of science and civilization itself. It is a unique kind of emotion, one that precedes the image; it virtually contains it, and is its cause. This position is not equivalent, Bergson insists, to a moral philosophy of sentiment, simply because we are dealing with an emotion that is capable of crystallizing into representations, even into an ethical doctrine. It concerns the new.

As Deleuze points out, what makes the emotion 'creative' is that, (a) it expresses the whole of creation; (b) it creates the work in which it is expressed; (c) it communicates something of this creativity to spectators or hearers (1966: 110-111). More than this, the creative emotion has nothing to do with either the pressures of society (towards closedness) or with the disputes of the individual (against society). This unique kind of emotion is what Deleuze calls 'a cosmic Memory, that actualized all the levels at the same time, that liberates man from the plane (*plan*) or the level that is proper to him, in order to make him a creator, adequate to the whole movement of creation' (1966: 111).

It is here, then, that we can posit the *actuality* of going beyond the human condition and in which we learn what exactly or precisely such going beyond means and amounts to:

This liberation, this embodiment of cosmic memory in creative emotions, undoubtedly only takes place in privileged souls. It leaps from one soul to another...crossing closed deserts. But to each member of a closed society, if he opens himself to it, it communicates a kind of reminiscence, an excitement that allows him to follow. And from soul to soul, it traces the design of an *open* society, a society of creators, where we pass from one genius to another, through the intermediary of disciples or spectators or hearers (1966: 111).

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<sup>1</sup> It is the only text, for example, that Leonard Lawlor does not treat in The Challenge of Bergsonism. In her book on Bergson, Suzanne Guerlac attends only to Time and Free Will and Matter and Memory. An exception is the work of Elisabeth Grosz, though she has not attended to CE as a book that attempts to reform the practice of philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson's work did figure in books of the time on the philosophy of biology. See, from 1914, James Johnstone, The Philosophy of Biology, and that Cambridge University are publishing in a new edition in 2014.

<sup>3</sup> A. N. Whitehead, Nature and Life (Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Bergson MM, 1991, p. 185: 'the task of the philosopher...closely resembles that of the mathematician who determines a function by starting from the differential. The final effort of philosophical research is a true work of integration'.

<sup>5</sup> David Lapoujade, 'Intuition and Sympathy in Bergson', Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy, volume 15, 2004, pp. 1-18.

<sup>6</sup> For Bergson's discussion of Boltzmann's interpretation of the second law of thermodynamics see CE 157.

<sup>7</sup> Ho, The Rainbow and the Worm: The Physics of Organisms, p. xi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Gould, Wonderful Life, p. 281.

<sup>10</sup> Compare Whitehead: 'The distinction between men and animals is in one sense only a difference in degree. But the extent of the degree makes all the difference. The Rubicon has been crossed', Modes of Thought p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Bergson, "Psychophysical Parallelism and Positive Metaphysics," in Continental Philosophy of Science, ed. Gutting, p. 68.