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The concept of community in Bergson's philosophy of religion

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University of Hawaii, 1989

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THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY IN BERGSON'S
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis involves a rigorous examination of Henri Bergson's concept of community. I argue that the problem of the individual in society, first as an integral part of a static, closed society and then as a spiritually evolved participant in the dynamic, open society, is the essential topic of Bergson's *The Two Sources Of Morality And Religion*. In the *Two Sources* Bergson offered a vision of what he called the "open society"--a global community of all mankind founded and sustained by mystical love. Bergson argued for the establishment of the open society as the necessary resolution of the inter-societal tension which threatens the survival of mankind.

Chapter One is expository in nature with an introductory section presenting an overview of the content and methodology of Bergson's philosophy. Emphasis is placed upon the key concepts of: change, duration, intuition and the *élan vital*.

Since the emotions play an integral part in Bergson's analysis of the higher expressions of man in community, and represent the means of individual creative change, Chapter Two will examine them in detail. Particular attention will be paid to love--for Bergson the greatest of the emotions and the one he hoped would bring about the open society.
Chapter Three deals with Bergson's two types of community. *Closed societies* represent a static, biological halt in mankind's evolutionary development. Bergson described them as exclusionary in nature and deriving their cohesion from two powerful sources: nature's biological demand for group unity and their cohesive response to perceived outside threats. Their successor, the *Open Society*, whose essence is creative change, is ultimately undefinable. Spiritual in character, it is perhaps best understood as an aggregation of highly developed, "aspirational" persons; each existing as a "species" unto him/her self.

Bergson believed that it is only by means of the spiritual love generated by "complete", socially active mystics that the arresting powers of closed societies can be overcome. Thus, in Chapter Four, the final task of the dissertation will be to critique Bergson's understanding of the nature and role of mysticism and its suitability for the purpose he assigns it.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will examine the concept of community in Henri Bergson's philosophy of religion. I will argue that it is upon this key concept that the whole of Bergson's book *The Two Sources Of Morality And Religion* is founded. Nevertheless, the dissertation is not a mere exposition and critique of Bergson's views on the subject in question. A number of ancillary philosophers are included who provide a backdrop against which Bergson's thesis can be displayed. They also illustrate the indebtedness of Bergson to other thinkers and, in instances where Bergson's arguments are weak or vague, help to shore up his position.

The logic of the dissertation involves a progression from an exposition and analysis of Bergson's basic ideas through to his final vision of community which he called the open society. En route, it is necessary to discuss the emotions since, for Bergson, they are the essential element facilitating the individual transformational changes required to make the open society an existential reality. While these changes are taking place, the nature of closed societies, as
the contexts within which such progress is engendered, remains, for Bergson, a powerful arresting force. Therefore, the problem of man in society, particularly as regards moral obligation, is also discussed. Finally, since mysticism is championed by Bergson as the sole means to bring about the open society, his understanding of the phenomenon and its suitability for the task he assigns it is considered.

Bergson articulated community on two levels. Initially, communities are formed as a protective counter measure against the vagaries of existence. As such they are biological in character, limited in scope and often at odds with one another. While these communities are the natural expression of the *élan vital* or life force as described in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson believed that their deficiencies demanded a new dimension of community re-formed on a higher, spiritual level. I shall be concerned initially with how his analysis of community flows from the corpus of his prior work. In the process I shall focus on the key concepts of change, *durée*, intuition and the *élan vital*. Since they are a vital link in Bergson's philosophy of change, the emotions will be my next concern. The latter half of the dissertation will deal with Bergson's attempt to chart the course of man's transition from the biological determination of life in community to the open society—its spiritual counterpart.
With the appearance of *The Two Sources Of Morality And Religion*, published after an absence from the philosophical scene of some twenty-five years, Bergson introduced a new element into his philosophy. Whereas in *Creative Evolution*, he mentioned spirituality briefly, in *The Two Sources* he makes of it the very foundation for his vision of the future. Bergson saw in the spiritual re-formation of community a base broad enough to include all of humanity. Since in this, his final major effort, he clearly ventures far beyond his previous efforts, so solidly anchored in biology and the vitalistic tradition, it is only natural to ask whether or not he has, in this spiritual enterprise, at last strayed beyond his ken. Indeed, this expresses the problematic of the latter half of this dissertation.

... 

Taken at face value Bergson’s philosophy does not provide ready answers. What it does, however, is recast the age old problems of epistemology and metaphysics in a way which permits each individual to himself become the vehicle for their resolution. By means of the inner, intuitive methodology Bergson espouses each person can experience a deeper level of reality in accord with his or her own dedication and ability. Real success is quickly manifested in an unselfish attempt to promote a community of man transcending the traditional exclusionary barriers. Bergson
goes on to plot a course of development wherein persons can break free of their biological and intellectual limitations to express their full potentiality in a community of spirit.

The specter of world super powers deriving communal cohesion from mutual intimidation and potential annihilation alarmed Bergson, adding an even greater sense of urgency to the problem of establishing a community of all mankind. If it were simply a matter of dismantling and re-forming communities into Community we could at least see the light at the end of the tunnel. The situation is, however, far more complex. Communities of all types abound and lay a variety of claims to our allegiance. Whether a more fundamental universal bonding can transcend these commitments remains to be seen.

• • •

Within the first few pages of The Two Sources Bergson begins to show that community, its articulation, regeneration and ultimate spiritual re-formation via the transformation of individual persons is the topic of the book. Society is likened to a biological organism whose cells are at once linked together and placed within a highly developed hierarchy. Discipline and sacrifice are expected in the interest of the overall group welfare. Of course the coercion of law and habit are often at odds in a society composed of free, or at least independent, wills.
Nevertheless, the strength and pervasiveness of social habits instill a sense of obligation in society's constituents. Indeed, the claims of society, extant within each of its members, express the sum total of its vitality. Religion sustains and reinforces the claims of society filling the gap between a command of society and a law of nature. Social solidarity exists as a direct result of the addition of a social ego to the individual self. The cultivation of this social ego is held to be the essence of our social obligation. Bergson goes on to postulate the maxim that obedience to duty means resistance to self. "The closer a community is to nature, the greater the proportion of unaccounted and inconsistent rules it lays down...obedience to laws, even absurd ones assures greater cohesion to community."1

According to Bergson, mankind always presents the two essential characteristics of intelligence and sociability. Sociability, he thought, is found everywhere in nature and in its finished form at the two culmination points of evolution: in hymenopterous insects (ants and bees) as well as in man. Regarding the social conditions of "order" and "progress" the insect manifests only the former while man, as a result of individual initiative aims, at least to some extent, at the latter as well. The two social characteristics are held to be mutually complementary by Bergson. Though instinct and
intelligence have proceeded along two divergent lines of development, they retain elements of one another. For example, since the activity of intelligence has resulted in initiative, independence and liberty, the residue of instinct, as a rejoinder to the threatened loss of social cohesion, stimulates the employment of the "myth making function". It is at this point that religion enters to serve as the community's defensive reaction against the dissolvent power of intelligence.

Bergson theorized that both civilized communities and the most primitive societies have as their essential characteristic the inclusion at any moment of some individuals and the exclusion of others. Social cohesion and the need for primitive instinct's "varnish" promote the "closed" society which is not concerned with humanity per se. The bonding of community at this level is largely due to the necessity for self preservation. This primitive instinct manifests itself in the form of social duties. It is at this point that Bergson introduces the problematic of the entire book. Since social cohesion is essentially reactive in nature, resulting in the closed society, the element of exclusivity bars non-members. As a result, there cannot be an unbroken progression of community from the family through the state which culminates in the bonding of all humanity. The difference is one of kind rather than degree. Whereas
the intellect can envision a common humanity (the truly open society), instinct demands the tried and true reactive bonds of association. A substratum of instinctive activity ensures that the individual and society are in a sense virtually indistinguishable. Thus, within the closed society, the cell and the organism, man and community, support and regenerate each other effectively locking humanity into the status quo.

Still, Bergson believes the open society is achievable. Love of family and love of country hint at that possibility while their exclusionary nature tends to promote strife and hatred. Love of mankind, on the contrary, is pure and unalloyed. Love itself is held to be a great emotion which has been steadily undervalued in human history due to an excess of intellectualism. Bergson champions emotion as the driving force in literature, art and society. Furthermore, emotions are held to play a major role in the genesis of the moral disposition since they can crystallize into representations and ethical doctrines. The moral structure, while made for closed societies is not immediately abolished in an open society. Rather it appears as a way station en route to the final expression of community.

My aim in this chapter is to provide an overview and skeletal analysis of the main tenets of Bergson's philosophy. This will provide a suitable context for the
discussion of his concept of community. To many people, philosophers and laymen alike, Bergson seemed to be a breath of fresh air in contrast to the stuffy if not stultifying metaphysics, which since Hegel, had championed conceptualization at the expense of experience. Some of the more prominent twentieth century philosophers who have been influenced by Bergson include: William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, Sri Aurobindo and Nishida, Kitaro.

Philosophy, according to Bergson, is not an explication of the "ready made", but rather the continual intuitive discovery of the "being made". By means of the inner, intuitive experience of durée (time as inner duration) the philosopher can experience a deeper reality for himself—directly and within his own person. Durée, is in effect, the port of entry to Bergson's philosophy. Whereas Kant understood time and space to be complementary, Bergson held them to be fundamentally at odds with one another. Durée, internal and identified with states of consciousness, Bergson insisted was real time. Heterogeneous in character, events within durée are nonetheless not discrete. They interpenetrate each other in an expression of perpetual creativity.

While Bergson's methodology is self-directed it is not self-centered. When properly understood and applied,
Bergson's intuition (his basic epistemological tool) extends out into the world to discover that at bottom the essence of self and world are the same--creative change.

According to Bergson, life is best understood as a current (élan vital) which increases its intensity as it advances, yet is never fully realized as it fuses with matter for a time, only to break free once more. The same process holds true in the evolution of human society. Displaying a deep concern for the welfare of all mankind, Bergson tackled the problem of forming a global community, emphasizing the need to provide a non-reactive basis for its cohesion. The emotions, in particular love, are to provide the means to bring this community (the open society) into being.

Be that as it may, the love necessary to effect such a revolutionary change is not the object-oriented variety we are most familiar with; rather it is a powerful spiritual version which Bergson describes as being from God, if indeed it is not God Himself. As such it is not goal-oriented (even as regards the open society) but freely expressed and, above all, transformational. The only precedent for such an occurrence Bergson found in mysticism, particularly that of the Christian tradition. According to Bergson a gradual contagion of such mystically generated love is necessary to overcome the power of closed societies.
THE THEME AND ITS ATTENDANT DIFFICULTY

Although my thesis focuses on the concept of community in Bergson's philosophy of religion we must first examine his basic premises and methodology in order to properly ground our efforts. Bergson's main points, once understood, are deceptively simple. The fact is, however, that our minds are not at ease and within their element in Bergson's dynamic universe. The intellect, as Bergson points out in Creative Evolution, is static in character and automatically steps back out of the flow of reality and into its own "freeze-framed", static facsimile of the world. Bergson calls this the cinematographic effect. It is thus the nature of intellect which forces it to be forever after the fact. "Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially." If this critique of the intellect is correct, what then can serve in its place as the primary means of philosophical inquiry? The answer, according to Bergson, is intuition.

By means of intuition one dissolves the distinction between consciousness and the inner reality of duration. The two, which are at bottom creative change, are now free to engage one another at a deeper level. This in turn provides new insights for the intellect which, as we shall see, has a vital, complementary role to play in the articulation and dissemination of philosophical knowledge and discourse.
Our comprehension of Bergson’s words can, nevertheless, deceive us if we do not employ them as guideposts and stimuli to participatory inquiry. They are not reality itself. We must, if we believe Bergson to be correct, perceive and participate in reality rather than merely manipulate its symbols. Difficulties result largely from the failure to realize that Bergson’s emphasis is experiential rather than conceptual. It is a method and a personal one at that: a method which he expects will eventually lead each participating philosopher to the same grounding in the reality of perpetual change. The systematic conceptualization of reality so highly prized by many thinkers was anathema for Bergson. Be that as it may, there is in his philosophy at once simplicity and depth as well as order and change.

INFLUENCES ON BERGSON

Maine de Biran

In order to better understand the development of Bergson’s thought as well as his place in the history of philosophy some of the more prominent early influences on his work will now be examined. Bergson referred to Maine de Biran as the greatest metaphysician France has produced since Descartes and Malebranche. While refusing to accept the tight strictures Kant placed upon the potentiality of the human mind, Maine de Biran was confident that self knowledge
was the means of transcending the limitations of the phenomenal realm. He made a clear, qualitative distinction between the inner and the outer man. This was not lost on Bergson who was led to consider man no longer as the undisputed "measure of all things" but rather as an intermediary between nature and God. "Thus by means of many different, though converging, trains of thought Maine de Biran was led, if not to transform his philosophy, at any rate to fix its center elsewhere, and this center was no longer the ego, but God."³

Félix Ravaisson

Félix Ravaisson was also a pivotal influence on Bergson's early development, particularly as regards the élan vital. Early in his career Ravaisson was known primarily for his prize winning dissertation on Aristotle's Metaphysics but it was his talent and commitment to art which later added a deeper and more personal dimension to his philosophy.

The whole philosophy of Ravaisson springs from the idea that art is is a figured metaphysics, and that metaphysics is a reflection of art, and that it is the same intuition, variously applied, which makes the profound philosopher and the great artist. Ravaisson took possession of himself, became master of his thought and his pen the day that this identity revealed itself clearly to his mind.⁴

Ravaisson's doctoral dissertation: De l'habitude established him as a creative, vitalistic philosopher. His consideration of the inner workings of nature led him to the analysis of
habit. Since habit is an activity which passes from consciousness to unconsciousness and from will to automatism he asks if we can not ascribe the same process to nature itself "as an obscured consciousness and a dormant will?" If this is so then mechanism is seen to be but a fossilized residue of spiritual activity.

Ravaisson did not pursue an academic career but returned to the philosophical scene some twenty years later when he was commissioned to write a report for the Minister of Public Instruction on The Progress of Philosophy in France. Therein he described two different means of philosophizing. The first, which he called analytical, dissolves, simplifies and abstracts. The end product is materialism. The other method is more vital, it "...defines the most elementary forms by their aspiration toward a higher form of life." and takes into account their mutual agreement and common direction. Bergson firmly appropriated this distinction. It was to become the cornerstone of his epistemology.

Arthur Schopenhauer

If labels of characterization were the sole criteria of similarity one could not, at first glance, see much resemblance between Schopenhauer and Bergson. While it is true that both men are firmly in the Vitalist tradition, for Schopenhauer the will is held to be blind and without purpose. Furthermore, the emotional coloring he employs to
describe the will and life in general is clearly pessimistic in tone. Since Schopenhauer was a strict determinist he was constantly looking backward for antecedent causes. He saw freedom (as did Kant) only in the noumenal realm of the will. The intellect was, as Bergson held, divorced from the main stream of reality; but for Schopenhauer, since the will was negative in character, such a separation of will and intellect was good. Indeed, for Schopenhauer, the more radically intellect could disengage itself from the will's service the closer one came to salvation.

Bergson, on the other hand, describes the élan vital (his version of the all pervasive will) as inherently good and creative--constantly expressing fresh possibilities. As a result man, who rides the crest of the élan vital, lives at the cutting edge of unlimited potentiality. Human freedom for Bergson was not to be realized or even understood from under the yoke of determinism. Bergson believed that consciousness can be freedom itself--a personal achievement which results from the intuitive merging of self with the élan vital.

The aforementioned differences notwithstanding, both Schopenhauer and Bergson were evolutionists who believed that the powerful underlying current of reality was radically anti-mechanical and incapable of final satisfaction or resolution. As Arthur Lovejoy points out:
The Will moves towards ends determined by its own inner nature, though it does not foresee these ends. It triumphs over obstacles in its way, and circumvents obstructions; but it does so blindly and without conscious devices. This notion of a blind purposiveness, which more than any other philosopher Schopenhauer may be said to have introduced into the current of European philosophy, has come in our own day to be a familiar conception in the interpretation of the meaning of evolution, especially in its biological phase. Here again Schopenhauer is the precursor of Bergson. That contemporary too rejects what he calls le finalisme radical not less than the radical mechanistic doctrine, while insisting upon the indispensability of some notion of finality in any attempt to comprehend the development of organisms.

Gunther Jacoby also presents evidence for a strong causal connection between Schopenhauer and Bergson. He claims that Schopenhauer’s idea of time as an intuitive a priori is precisely what Bergson calls "spatialized time" and that their theories of space and matter are essentially the same as well. Jacoby goes on to give evidence that their respective intuitive methodologies are basically the same.

The idea in common, expressed by Schopenhauer and Bergson by exactly the same simile, is that life cannot be perceived by external dissection and recomposition but only by instinctive feeling. This idea is of decisive importance for Bergson’s own thought as well as for Schopenhauer’s, and our discovery that Bergson and Schopenhauer use the same similes in this context several times indicates that their coincidence is more than a mere curiosity.

In the area of conceptual knowledge the two men exhibit a striking similarity. Schopenhauer writes:
The formation of a concept is brought about generally by dropping much that is given in intuitive perception in order then to be able to think of what is left by itself. The concept is therefore a case of thinking less than what is intuitively perceived...The higher we ascend in abstraction, the more we drop, and so the less there remains for us to think. The highest, i.e., the most general, concepts are the emptiest and poorest, and ultimately are mere husks, such as, being, essence, thing, becoming, and the like.  

Bergson too, insists on perception as the only legitimate source of conceptual knowledge claiming that if the senses and consciousness had unlimited powers of perception both conception and reasoning would be unnecessary. In a statement very reminiscent of Schopenhauer he states that: "...a conception has value only through the eventual perception it represents."  

Bergson goes on to define a perfect being as one who "...knows all things intuitively without having to go through reasoning, abstraction and generalization". Indeed, he makes the startling claim that it is the insufficiency of our perceptual faculties which have, via conception and reasoning, given birth to philosophy.

**Herbert Spencer**

Although he read a good deal of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer in his student days Bergson distinguished himself initially as a mathematician. Gradually, as his emphasis shifted away from mathematics and the hard sciences,
Bergson began to concentrate upon philosophy and in particular focused on the work of Herbert Spencer. Bergson was at the time a thorough-going mechanist and wanted to extend and adjust Spencer's ideas to accord with the contributions of science. The concept of time, however, as expressed in Spencer's mechanistic evolutionary theory seemed terribly wrong—distorted and contaminated, as it were, by space. The impetus for Bergson's new articulation of time arose then, largely as a result of this disenchantment with Spencer's analysis. Bergson felt that since Spencer's methodology involved the reconstruction of data at the expense of the movement of life (its essential aspect) the necessary, vital element of the evolutionary explanation was missing.

Such...is Spencer's illusion. He takes reality in its present form; he breaks it to pieces, he scatters it in fragments which he throws to the winds; then he 'integrates' these fragments and 'dissipates their movement'. Having imitated the whole by a work of mosaic, he imagines he has retraced the design of it, and made the genesis. "11

This movement of life Bergson saw as a "continuity of flowing" through time. Furthermore, since moments in time interpenetrate each other, the mechanistic, static notion of time he now saw as an artificial superimposition upon the natural flow. This new understanding of time as essentially change manifesting itself in non-discrete yet heterogeneous process required a new name...Durée.
Immanuel Kant

Whereas Bergson's reaction against the mechanistic philosophy of Spencer led directly to his vitalistic progression, it was his response to Kant's use of time as an innate, pure form of sensory intuition which grounded the matrix of his own philosophy. Since Kant's epistemology presupposes a fundamental distinction between subject and object the mind is portrayed as an entity unto itself which, by means of space and time, the pure forms of intuition, constitutes our knowledge of reality. Bergson would never accept this kind of rigid distinction. We should not fail to mention that for Bergson valid experience cannot be confined to Kantian parameters. "As for me, I have always been an irreducible empiricist, only I take the whole of experience: first external experience, then internal experience." As he himself put it; Bergson aimed to restore the bridge Kant broke between metaphysics and science.

Modern discussion of the concepts of space and time begins with Kant's exposition in The Critique of Pure Reason. "By means of outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all without exception in Space. The inner sense possesses its own form, namely time by means of which events are made possible." Kant's whole metaphysic rises or falls on the reality of discrete entities. He is certainly not a process philosopher.
One should bear in mind a philosopher's most basic priorities in any reasoned assessment of his work. In Kant's case one would have to say that his first priority is reason itself. His *Critique of Pure Reason* clearly demonstrates this commitment.

I do not mean by this a critique of books and systems, but of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience. It will therefore decide as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general, and determine its sources, its extent, and its limits—all in accordance with principles.

Thus, the definition of reality, both practically and theoretically, proceeds forth from the activity of reason so circumscribed. Kant does not accept the philosophical legitimacy of that inner, intuitive experience which, for Bergson, is another, more powerful source of knowledge. From a Bergsonian perspective then, Kant subordinates reality to reason.

Kant's analysis of space and time has such a direct bearing upon Bergson's epistemological foundation that it is necessary to examine it in some detail. Kant's best arguments for the *a priori* nature of space are as follows:

1. The representation of space must be presupposed in order that "certain sensations be referred to something outside me...& similarly in order that I may be able to represent them as outside and alongside one another." Therefore
the representation of space cannot be empirically obtained from the relations of outer appearance. It is the representation of space which makes possible the outer experience of exteriority and contiguity. In effect, there must be prior potentiality in us as distinct from the world to make possible plurality in empirical reality.

One might enter a rejoinder that, while space is certainly a relation that obtains between objects, this does not prove that space exists in us a priori. Kant makes two critical assumptions here: that of a full separation of mind and world and the a priori nature of space. If we take a process view and blur the distinction of self and world we may then perceive an overall blend of inner and outer realities with space understood both as an empirical fact demonstrated by the plurality of objects and a logical a priori proven by the analytical definition of plurality as requiring that which is non-object i.e. space. Consequently we have no need to assign the exterior reality of space to an interior cause. This allows us to remove the burden of the world's construction from the subjective component of the polarity.

2. Kant argues that we cannot imagine the non-existence of space although we can imagine the absence of any and all
objects. However, would not the imagination of a plenum or "pure Being" eradicate space? Also, if the definition of space is nothing—merely the gap between objects—what would it mean to imagine the absence of nothing?

3. Kant claims that space, of which we can represent to ourselves only one, cannot be diverse. There can only be one space. However, if, as I am about to argue, space is by definition nothing, merely the gap between objects, one would be hardpressed to subject it to diversification.

Kant's arguments for the a priori nature of time are so similar to those of space that we will not subject them to close examination at this time.

Stripped down to their essential elements Kant's understanding of space and time is well articulated by Schopenhauer: "...succession is the whole essence and nature of time." and "...[space] is nothing else but the possibility of the reciprocal determination of its parts by another, which is called position." In other words, time and space are nothing more than the gaps logically and empirically inherent in plurality. The separation of events we call time and the separation of objects we call space. Obviously, plurality is a necessary fact of phenomenal existence. For how could there be a world otherwise? Should one, then, ascribe any qualities whatever to these intervals? Strictly
speaking no. They are not required. Bergson meets us halfway in this regard. Time, understood as durée, is indeed qualitative. While space, its qualityless antithesis, is as close to nothingness as Bergson will admit.

**BASIC IDEAS IN BERGSON’S PHILOSOPHY**

**DURÉE**

Bergson charges Kant with "...pushing metaphysics and science to the utmost possible limit of [metaphysical] symbolism" resulting in the misunderstanding of their relationship. As a result, science is seen to be "entirely relative" and in tune with reality, and metaphysics "wholly artificial" and constructive of reality after the fact. Kant’s criticism does not address metaphysics in its totality, according to Bergson, but rather the metaphysics of the ancients, especially Plato, wherein pre-existing ideas structure reality. Consequently the denial of the intuitions of durée and of genuine novelty results in "an immense mathematics" which "imprisons the totality of the real in a mesh prepared for it." Metaphysics, Bergson thinks, can have genuine life and purpose; not in the constriction of reality by means of dead theses, but rather in the intuitive experiences of living philosophers.

In Bergson’s view time and space are fundamentally different from one another. "Space is a sort of shadow or foil to time, and not co-equal. It implies degradation and
unreality, relatively to time. Time remains the unique and ultimate reality. While Kant believed time and space to be complementary, even to the extent of assigning them virtually identical proofs, for Bergson they are antithetical. Bergson held that contiguity and succession are both spatial. Durée, on the other hand, is real time—internal and identified solely with states of consciousness. All separation, whether it be of objects, events, or even number is actually spatial in character. Bergson defines space as an empty homogeneous medium. He says: "...it is thus a principle of differentiation, and consequently it is a reality with no quality." If we define time in this same manner we thus abstract it from its concrete reality in durée and turn it into a homogeneous medium i.e. space. This must be so, Bergson writes, since he cannot conceive of a multiplicity of homogeneous mediums.

Bergson claims that the idea of the nought is an "invisible mover of philosophical thinking". Upon introspection Bergson finds that he is always conscious of either objects, or in their absence, himself. In the case of thoughts of self abolition, an imaginary self would then perceive the former self. He can at any time imagine the nought of an external or an internal perception, but not both simultaneously, "...for the absence of one consists, at bottom, in the exclusive presence of the other." In other
words, consciousness is always intending either actual objects or itself. Furthermore, to attribute non-existence to an object is, in effect, to add the attribute of exclusion from reality to its admitted being. This is because "existence" is at one with its representation. Bergson concludes that "...there is more and not less, in the idea of an object conceived as 'not existing' than in the idea of this same object conceived as 'existing'".

Without the primacy of heterogeneity in durée (and in the world at large) Bergson's whole metaphysic cannot be sustained. The diversity found in conscious states and in the perpetual transition of evolutionary life forms are reality for him. Heterogeneity goes hand in hand with change, i.e. reality, enhancing it and permitting its display. Homogeneity is antithetical, i.e. divorced from reality and as such has an undeniable affinity with the nought. Therefore, if change, which requires heterogeneous expression, is reality, then homogeneity, its counterpart, must be on the other end of the reality continuum, i.e. a form of nothingness. P.A.Y. Gunter points out that "Bergson denies that 'nothingness' exists, or is even conceivable." Of course it doesn't exist as it is the antithesis of reality. Nevertheless, here we are talking about it and in a sense conceiving it—that which is nonexistent and inconceivable. But is it not reasonable to
assume that "nothingness" is a necessary ingredient which makes change and diversity possible? It could also be argued that our discussion is merely constructing a phantom because in the end Bergson is right. Still, there is the nagging impression that we are formulating something which does have some reference to reality.

Bergson denies that homogeneous space and homogeneous time are either properties of things or essential conditions of our faculty of knowledge. If we substitute 'nothingness' for 'homogeneous' we can perhaps see the root of Bergson's difficulty in accepting space as a complementary equal of time. He could then be said to assert that space, which does not exist, is both the indispensable ingredient in the intellect and in the structure of the universe as well as the eroding factor in the intuition of durée. Let us admit that Bergson does not state that homogeneity and nothingness are synonymous. However, what else could he mean when he calls space "qualityless"? Since his vehement denial of the nought he might have been loath to make the equivalence; perhaps because he felt he needed to employ space as a "principle of differentiation" in order to account for any disruption of the flow of durée. Nevertheless, this "principle" does not actually do anything, which is after all Bergson's criteria for reality, therefore, what can it be other than nothing?
Bergson takes Kant to task for asserting time to be a homogeneous medium thus allowing for the recurrence of distinct states in the depths of consciousness. Consequently Kant confuses time with space—when in fact time as duration is made up of "moments inside one another". Bergson reasoned that if the same states can recur in consciousness just as they do in space, freedom becomes "an incomprehensible fact" since causality has the same meaning and function whether in the outer or inner world. Bergson makes this assumption based on Kant's depiction of causality as the same whether in the inner or outer world. As a result, for Kant, freedom could exist only in the noumenal realm. According to Bergson, however, the power of change and the freedom of novelty are such that moments of pure durée are heterogeneous yet interpenetrative; hence "...a cause cannot repeat its effect since it will never repeat itself." By this he means that there is influence but not utter determination since change is always novel, not repetitively cyclical.

Bergson points out that Kant's structuring of homogeneous time and space really does away with the firm distinction between the inner and outer worlds and has the merit of guaranteeing adequate knowledge of the phenomenal while exhibiting the possibility of doing without the "things in themselves". Kant was prevented from taking this step, Bergson held, by the necessity including duty as the
foundation of morality. Since Kant had to ground duty in the unknowable noumena, this necessitated the employment of "practical reason". Bergson himself could have employed this blurring of the self/world distinction to carry his seminal understanding of process beyond durée. He was prevented from doing so by what would have been the appropriation of homogeneous time into the durée of states of consciousness. Bergson could not allow the "real self" known only in durée to be confused with its exterior, spatialized counterpart. Thus, self knowledge in durée remains the locus of freedom.

As an ideal, pure durée represents past and present states of consciousness merging into an organic whole; thus allowing for continuity and heterogeneity without absolute distinction. However, Bergson distinguishes two forms of durational multiplicity. Homogeneous durée is merely symbolic of true durée and as such is suited to the requirements of language and social life. Heterogeneous durée, on the other hand, is the reality of the inner self known by a vigorous psychological analysis.

In other words, our perceptions, sensations, emotions and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property.26
Since states of consciousness always permeate one another the incursion of space into duêe erodes the integrity of intuition. Given the importance of intuition as the only means to metaphysical knowledge, Bergson could not permit this possibility. Duêe is time wherein events occur by non-distinct interpenetration. Consequently, there is at once plurality, succession, and the supposed absence of space. It seems to me though, that when we talk of plurality or heterogeneity, space is, in some sense, inherently present and indeed necessary to make differentiation possible. Viewed in this light one might suggest duêe to be a hybrid of orthodox time and non-discrete change; and that Bergson merely appropriates time, fashioning it to suit his own purposes, in order to account for the dynamic change in states of consciousness. Succession is, of course, undeniable and so time retains its function; but it is the continuum of states of consciousness which is the greater reality.

Bergson pushes his analysis of the homogeneity of space to the limit and perhaps beyond in the following:

This intuition of a homogeneous medium, an intuition peculiar to man, enables us to externalize our concepts in relation to one another, reveals to us the objectivity of things, and thus, in two ways, on the one hand by getting everything ready for language, and on the other by showing us an external world, quite distinct from ourselves, in the perception of which all minds have a common share, foreshadows and prepares the way for social life.27
Here Bergson attempts to get space to do the work of the principle of sufficient reason, as understood by Schopenhauer, in addition to its function of separating the self and the world. The principle of sufficient reason, ("...the dictum that there is a reason, that is, an explanation, for any fact or existent whatever.") can be considered the a priori means by which knowledge is made possible. Schopenhauer claims that by its means the mind is able to assign an origin to its impressions in the non-self. Thus the dichotomous field of self/world displays a means of interaction. Discreteness or "spaceification" as Bergson would have it, is clearly necessary to know the world; but assigning the origin of sensation to an other, non-self is not made possible by a mere gap between the self and objects as Bergson supposes in the above quote. If Schopenhauer is right, it is made possible by the a priori assumption of an exterior cause. On the other hand, a situation of pre-reflective interaction between the organism and its environs from conception is consistent with process theory and does away with the need for an a priori principle to permit the possibility of knowledge.

Process And Paradox

Paradox plays an important role for Bergson in that he uses his refutation of Zeno’s paradoxes of motion as a
springboard to launch his philosophy of change. There is also an element of paradox underlying his whole enterprise resulting from the dichotomous format which pervades his work at every level. From the titles of his books to the concepts within, entities are set off and defined one against the other. While Bergson's method is not 'conceptual' it is experiential and somewhat 'dialectical'. And yet, as we shall see, in the tradition of Process Philosophy, the component parts themeselves demonstrate a certain fluidity while retaining elements of their polar opposites.

Bergson consistently offers his subject matter in a dichotomous format: Space/Time, Intellect/Intuition, Permanence/Change, Instinct/Intelligence, Closed Society/Open Society. Nevertheless, the term polaristic may be more appropriate since in each case he presents the static or less developed side as performing a necessary function, but in the end usurping its proper role due to the exigencies of survival in the world. For instance, intellect, which is inherently spatial and discrete in character, enables us to deal effectively with a multifarious world constituted in the same manner. As a result, its counterpart intuition, which is the means to integrate our minds with a greater reality, remains neglected. Since Bergson aspires to a deeper, more meaningful existence than is provided by intellect, he sees the only hope for success in the heretofore undervalued and
underutilized dynamic pole of intuition. Bergson believes that the deeper understanding to be acquired in this manner not only serves to reconcile the polarities, but brings man into a progressive new dimension of existence. The insights we accrue via intuition are, in turn, applied to our necessary intellectual interaction with the world. Thus we note a constantly evolving dialectic element in Bergson's epistemology.

To understand Bergson's work is, in a very real sense, to see paradox in action. Paradox, I define as the attempt to hold two contradictory elements in the mind at the same time. While either one, taken on its own terms, may readily gain our assent, it is the impossible attempt to harmonize the two concurrently which demonstrates a genuine paradox. Bergson's pervasive polarism is denied any ultimate metaphysical resolution since novel change is for him the fundamental reality. As a result, there exists a state of unresolvable tension which serves as a fertile breeding ground out of which novelty arises in perpetuity. The static polarities are only partially overcome by their more dynamic counterparts since these dynamic elements partially coincide with and remain dependent upon them. Space, for instance, while it is of a lower order of reality than time, nevertheless is required to make "change" i.e. reality, possible. So thus space, in the form of differentiation, provides for durée its necessary heterogeneity. By means of
intuition one may get to the "promised land" to find not only no firm ground; but indeed no ground at all.

CHANGE

That there can be an entity "change" underlying that which changes seems at first to be absurd. That this abstraction can be distilled or, if you will, torn from its contextual manifestation in experience and held to be more real than that which concretely demonstrates its existence is nevertheless the premise upon which Bergson builds his metaphysic. Of course when Bergson proposes a metaphysic it is not in the tradition of the great system builders whose contributions, however elegant, must remain descriptive of a changing reality and forever after the fact. Rather his philosophy is, as Stewart rightly concludes, essentially "a method" as opposed to a system. It is a progressive and empirical method which Bergson hoped would enlist the cooperation of all similarly engaged philosophers.

It should be mentioned that Bergson's efforts are founded on a powerful affirmation of human freedom as elaborated in Time And Free Will wherein: "Bergson attempted to show that the denial of free will is based on the confusion of succession with simultaneity, duration with intensity, and quality with quantity. Once this confusion is dispelled, freedom is seen to be a fact."
As is the case with most philosophers seeking to define and discover metaphysical truth Bergson aimed at establishing an underlying unitary principle of life. His élan vital is biological in character and expresses itself via three main channels: 1. automatism in plants, 2. instinct in insects and 3. intelligence in man. If one were to subject the élan vital to analysis in order to discern its essence the only element more basic would have to be change. Unfortunately Bergson uses the terms change and motion interchangeably and this lack of precision does leave him vulnerable to criticism. This points up a case where intellectual discreteness may be preferred to a seemingly more vague intuitive suggestion. As Oliver Quick points out:

This vagueness tends to obscure important distinctions. It is at any rate fairly obvious that all movement in space involves (1) [a thing to move] [sic which must itself maintain a certain internal identity and fixity, and (2) a relatively static environment of some kind in relation to which the movement takes place.]

Bergson held all change and movement to be absolutely indivisible...in effect, reality itself. He likened immobility to a state of things wherein two trains proceed in parallel directions at the same speed while passengers on both trains interact with one another as though they were stationary. The whole mechanism of our perception of things,
Bergson claimed, is so regulated as to bring about an inner/outer stability comparable to that of the two trains just mentioned. "There are changes, but there are underneath the changes no things which change: change has no need of a support. There are movements, but there is no inert or invariable object which moves: movement does not imply a mobile."33 At this point one might question whether or not this definition of change makes sense. Does it not assume a distinction between agent and action? Yes, but the agent too exists merely as a 'state' and at bottom is itself change.

Bergson calls upon science to support his thesis, claiming that the scientific, in-depth analysis of matter reveals its resolution into actions which move through space in constant vibration. There is no ultimate need of a form or substratum which changes if matter is, in the final analysis, an equilibrium of complementary energy forces.34 Schopenhauer, with whom Bergson shares some common ground, concurs. He holds without reservation that "...matter is throughout causality and nothing else."35

Bergson attempts to shore up his case with a solid drubbing of the assumptions underlying Zeno's Paradoxes. He explains that Zeno posits a discrete series of points which, if need be, can be extended to infinity. Next, Zeno disregards the continuity of motion; spatializing it, as it were, into discrete units. Bergson is quick to point out,
However, that motion cannot legitimately be reduced to the ground it covers. It must be permitted the integrity of its own action which is continuity of movement and not a spasmodic hop from place to place. By the same token, Bergson holds that all change is continuous and indivisible. Nevertheless, one might argue that change is not all pervasive since the arrow does maintain a fixed identity in space, separate and distinct from its environment. To an extent Bergson undercuts this argument by holding that, "...motion is the change of an entire situation, not mere translation through space." Bergson further maintains that there is a utilitarian bias of sight which accustoms us to superadd movement to pre-existing form as an accident.

Bergson enlists the sense of hearing to demonstrate a clear continuity of movement in the perception of music. In an example reminiscent of Gestalt Psychology he asks: Does not the integrity of melody exist over and above the juxtaposition of particular notes? In listening to a melody the impression we have of succession is unmistakably clear, yet, Bergson notes, its continuity is so strong that we are powerless to break it up. This is because the past continues to enter the present to form an undivided whole.

What Bergson calls the substantiability of change is nowhere so visible as in the "melody" of our inner life. True duration is precisely this indivisible continuity of
change. He insists that this durée réelle is the true nature of what we have always called time. Time which is unspatialized and perceived as indivisible. Only in space is there a fully discrete, clear-cut distinction of parts.

Durée is best understood not as the product of the cool, static detachment of reflective consciousness, which Bergson felt to be a spatializing force, but rather in the direct inner form of intuition. By means of intuition one bypasses the subject/object dichotomy of discrete intellection and places one's self within the flow of durée. He immerses himself and merges with it. Bergson stressed, however, that such instances are rare, brief and not easily accomplished.

Erosion of durée by means of the incursion of spatial concepts into our consciousness is the basic problem in Bergson's metaphysic. Errors in philosophy are, for the most part, held to be due to this unwarranted confusion.

Since durée represents the heart and soul of Bergson's philosophy of change it would be difficult to exaggerate its importance. Not only is the concept the centerpiece of his work but it so clearly manifests its inner dynamic that one could form an accurate overall impression of Bergson's philosophy by studying it alone. This is not to imply that the task is an easy one however. Largely responsible for the ensuing difficulties is the continual encroachment of homogeneous space upon the heterogeneity of durée. Space is held to be qualityless and immobile whereas durée expresses
itself as qualitative change. In addition, knowledge of *durée* leads us to the realization that states of consciousness are organic and creatively alive. Moments of pure duration are known in the free act of introspective intuition. This new concept is characterized as "invention", the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new." It is at these rare moments when, closest to the *élan vital* or life force, we are most vibrantly alive. This is obviously not knowledge in the usual conceptual sense. Rather it is an experiential merging or blending of unfettered consciousness with its very source. It is here at the experiential matrix that Bergson sows the seeds of what was to become modern Process Philosophy.

Hartshorne, who along with his mentor Whitehead, was clearly influenced by Bergson, reins in the parameters of Bergson's version of process when he points out that successive states interpenetrate in *one temporal direction only*. They are dependent upon their predecessors but never on their successors. As we shall be making further use of the term 'process' let us define it as follows: The foundation of process is the tenet that the reality of entities is a dynamic of mutual abstraction and interaction. Defined in relation, rather than as fully discrete, the integrity of each component is maintained only so long as our tolerance for ambiguity is sustained.
Intuition

To metaphysics, then we assign a limited object, principally spirit, and a special method, mainly intuition. In doing this we make a clear distinction between metaphysics and science. But at the same time we attribute an equal value to both. I believe that they can both touch the bottom of reality. I reject the arguments advanced by philosophers, and accepted by scholars, on the relativity of knowledge and the impossibility of attaining the absolute.”

The preceding is a most important paragraph for understanding the range and epistemological basis of Bergson’s philosophy. Consistent with his dichotomous format Bergson presents his intuitive methodology as part and parcel of a polar relationship with intellect. Here he grants to both intellect and intuition complementary epistemological roles. Each has its own sphere of competence. Intuition prevails in the inner dimension with sporadic and short lived success. Conversely, the thrust of intellect proceeds outward and by means of the scientific method enjoys excellent results. The affinity between intellect and matter is such that “An identical process must have cut out matter and the intellect at the same time, from a stuff that contained both.” In fact, says Bergson, intellect has evolved specifically to enable man to gain mastery over matter.

Bergson was well aware of an organism’s need to satisfy the conditions of life prior to the quest for metaphysical knowledge. Since man is subject to the vagaries and
exigencies of his life cycle on the planet he requires tools, weapons and strategies in order to survive. It is only after he prevails on a biological level that man can aspire to something higher. The many threats to him as an individual spatialize his existence and serve to lock his consciousness into a priority of intellect. As a result, since consciousness can effectively proceed in just one direction at a time, man's intuitive capacities tend to remain dormant. Furthermore, when the time does come for serious metaphysical problems to be addressed both questions and answers are quite naturally subject to the intellect's spatial bias. The intellect's success in the phenomenal arena is expected to carry over into the noumenal. But if this inner dimension is, as Bergson insists, a dynamic continuum *sui generis*, then we are using the wrong tool for the job. What we end up with is a manipulation of symbols by the statically disposed intellect. What we require, according to Bergson, is an intuitive approach in which the philosopher himself exhibits a certain malleability and potential for growth.

Bergson's limited interpretation of intellect can, for our purposes, be understood as an effective counterpoint. A backdrop, as it were, against which he can display his intuitive method. Bergson's ultimate goal is spiritual in nature and he defines spirit as:
a reality which is capable of drawing from itself more than it contains, of enriching itself from within, of creating or recreating itself ceaselessly, and which is essentially resistant to measurement because it is never entirely determined, never fully made but always in process of becoming." 41

In order to clear the way for this achievement Bergson had to establish the legitimacy of intuition as a viable method in its own right. This was no small task in view of the widespread acceptance of the Kantian critique of metaphysics and the scientific mechanism so prevalent in his day. Against the latter he succeeded brilliantly since he was able to offer a vitalistic alternative which caught the imagination and struck a responsive chord both within and without the philosophical community. The fact that this popular enthusiasm did not carry through to the end of his own lifetime is due first, to his early decision to quit lecturing and more importantly, I believe, to the experiential nature of the philosophy he espoused. For once his main points are understood the responsibility rests with the reader. He must then commit himself to making the radical break and disengaging his consciousness from its natural phenomenal habitat to follow an essentially uncharted inner course. A course replete with difficulties and with no guarantee of ultimate success.

Bergson never came to grips with the question of whether or not the intuitive process can properly be called
knowledge. Whereas in classical epistemology separateness is inherent in the subject/object dichotomy, this 'space' is just what is to be avoided in the intuitive method. Bergson relies on a form of identification to bring about the desired result. Intuition he defines as "the intellectual sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it." One then recognizes the commonality of subject and object. Analysis, on the other hand, maintains the distance between subject and object and, Bergson insists, merely reduces the object of knowledge to its constituent elements.

While intuition enables one to understand a variety of interior states, including the emotions and the aesthetic experience, it is the intuition of durée which is the most significant for Bergson. As can be seen from the following it is the foundation of his entire philosophy.

A mon avis, tout résumé de mes vues les déformerà dans leur ensemble et les exposerà, par la même, à une foule d'objections, s'il ne se place par de prime abord et si l'il ne revient pas sans cesse à ce que je considère comme le centre même de la doctrine: l'intuition de la durée. La représentation d'une multiplicité de 'pénétration réciproque' -- la représentation d'un durée hétérogène, qualitative, créatrice -- est le point d'où je suis parti et où je suis constamment revenu... Une fois qu'on est arrivé à cette représentation et qu'on la possède sous sa forme simple (qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec une recomposition par concepts), on se sent obligé de déplacer son point de vue sur la réalité."
Since Bergson characterizes one kind of intuition as "the direct vision of the mind by the mind", perhaps the term "self realization" is more appropriate than knowledge in this case. If, by means of intuition's revealed continuum, we could extend durée into the world the possibility would then present itself of eroding the traditional self/world distinction. We might ask, at that point, what if anything would be the legitimate role of space?

Despite his belief in the great promise of intuition Bergson admits of certain needs and limitations. "Intuition will be communicated only by intelligence." More than an idea, intuition nevertheless requires the use of ideas and comparisons and metaphors will suggest what is otherwise inexpressible. For example, the Absolute, being synonymous with perfection, can only be given in an intuition. In effect, it presses in upon the edge of the unconscious. But it is not, nor can it be, contained in a concept. In this case the intellect can aid in the triggering of insight regarding the Absolute and to some extent in its communication, but it must always play a subordinate, supporting role in the area of ultimate concern.
It is clear from the preceding that Bergson had genuine spiritual aspirations; but we shall see in this section that he had a powerful grounding in biology as well. So strong was this grounding that we must consider the possibility that it may have usurped the proper function of other disciplines, as is implied in the following.

Let us then give to the word biology the very wide meaning it should have, and will perhaps have one day, and let us say in conclusion that all morality, be it pressure or aspiration, is in essence biological.43

Perhaps the main philosophical advantage accrued from Bergson's biological emphasis was the scientific foundation to which he could anchor his intuitive methodology. Still, this was in no sense a makeshift construction designed to give credence to his insights. There is no doubt that the evolution of life, a seemingly endless flux of novelty with no clear beginning and no foreseeable end, fascinated Bergson. But more importantly, it provided him with the concrete example, par excellence, of the principle of durée in the world. He was now able to base his conclusions on empirical facts.

Bergson's presentation of the élan vital is set over and against the doctrines of mechanism and finalism. Teleology, he holds, is actually an inverted mechanism since in it life processes are predetermined according to a pattern or
designed to serve particular ends. Consequently, the processes are determined and mechanistic. Both mechanism and finalism deny the unforeseen creation of form. Bergson maintains that the reason for the persistence of these unsatisfactory explanations is the mind's natural disposition to over-extend the use of concepts. Furthermore, mechanism as well as finalism are encouraged by the intellect's propensity to calculate mathematical laws. Bergson's refutation of radical mechanism is drawn from the understanding of durée.

Bergson insisted that mechanistic explanations are only valid in the realm of detached observation. As regards the totality of experience, he thought a thoroughgoing mechanism would obliterate the essence of time. For, he argues (not too convincingly), if the future can be calculable as a function of the present then it would pre-exist. Hence, there would be no future as such, since to an intellect with sufficient data and the requisite powers of calculation all would be given. I must interject, however, that knowing what is going to happen is not equivalent to its actual
occurrence. Nevertheless, for Bergson, the reality of durée can be known with such certainty that it is understood as "a stream against which we cannot go" and "the foundation of our being and the very substance of the world in which we live."47

Radical finalism must be rejected for the same reason. However, Bergson does admit to limited use of the doctrine in the sense that although no grand universal scheme is predetermined; given the integral spontaneity of durée and the élan vital, a certain purposiveness can be discerned in nature. He believed there to be an inner guiding principle made manifest in the expression of the élan vital...an "immense current of consciousness" organizing matter en route in the expression of its freedom. Nevertheless, due to resistance from inert matter as well as the instability and explosive force of the élan vital, the evolution of life has not been a simple process.

The distinction between the inert and the living has an important place in Bergson's epistemology. He claims that whereas the inert is a natural ally of the intellect the living can be subsumed into its "frames" only artificially. As a result, the methods of positive science, while of inestimable value in the mechanical domain, are not up to the task of comprehending the living. Intellect, he claims,
"...is characterized by the natural inability to comprehend life". It is the duty of philosophy, therefore, to move into the depths of life where positive science proves inadequate. This is the true province of metaphysics.

Matter, which is in reality perpetual becoming, serves as an obstacle to the creative movement of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital}. It came into being as an early detour frozen into static form. Bergson writes that: "Extension appears only as a tension which is interrupted". Since there is no finalistic plan being worked out creation exhibits not only great diversity but antagonism as well. Conflict is involved in the collision of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital} with material obstacles. Because movement is not always in one progressive direction there are instances when the \textit{\'{e}lan vital} seems to come to a halt or deviate or even retrogress. As the \textit{\'{e}lan vital} passes through matter it is in turn influenced by it and adapts itself. This adaptation is the genesis of both instinct and intelligence. A species formed in the expression of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital} is thought to be a stagnation or way station of sorts wherein life and matter fuse. The result is a cyclical expression of life within the limitations of the species. Eventually however, the vital impulse breaks free to advance to a new species which in turn retards its expression for a time.

Bergson believed that life should never be considered as an abstraction. It is best understood as a current which
actually increases its intensity as it advances, passing through many individuated manifestations en route. Be that as it may, individuality in nature can never be perfectly defined since this would apply only to a completed reality. Bergson states that: "vital properties are never entirely realized, though always on the way to become so."50 The conflict of man's needs with the resistance of matter led Bergson to suggest a strictly pragmatic origin of man's intelligence. The term Homo faber, he felt, is more indicative of him than Homo sapiens. This is so because the original feature of intelligence is its ability to manufacture artificial objects such as tools. It is true, of course, that animals as well as insects employ tools. However, their tools are integral parts of their bodies and quite limited in form and application. Man's tools, on the other hand, can be fashioned for particular situations within the lifecycle of a particular individual. They can also be modified and easily discarded when no longer needed.

The history of evolution records the overcoming of inert matter and helps to explain the diversity of life forms. Matter, in offering up substantial resistance to the élan vital checks the full power of its creative need. But in seizing matter, which is necessity itself, the élan vital "strives to introduce into it the largest possible amount of indeterminism and liberty."51 The nature of the élan vital
itself, being spontaneous and creative, is primarily responsible for its multifarious directions and manifestations. In the ascent of the *élan vital* the first great division separated the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Fixity and insensitivity in the former are contrasted with mobility and consciousness in the latter. The animal kingdom continued to progress, evolving to higher and more complicated forms. The arthropods ended in the hymenoptera while the vertebrates developed into man. Instinct was the means of survival and facilitated some limited progress in the arthropods. They grew their tools as bodily appendages whereas the vertebrates employed a burgeoning intelligence to manufacture theirs. Bergson charts man's evolutionary journey as follows:

> It is as if a vague and formless being, whom we may call, as we will, man or superman, had sought to realize himself, and had succeeded only by abandoning a part of himself on the way. The losses are represented by the rest of the animal world, and even by the vegetable world, at least in what these have that is positive and above the accidents of evolution.

Let us note that, consistent with his overall methodology, Bergson offers a dichotomous representation of instinct and intelligence. He defines them at first in a roughly hewn manner. "*Instinct* perfected is a faculty of using and even of constructing organized instruments; *intelligence* perfected is the faculty of making and using unorganized instruments." In the case of instinct knowledge is acted
and unconscious, while in the case of intelligence it is thought and conscious. Since they share a common origin, instinct and intelligence retain elements of their mutuality and interpenetrate one another. Being tendencies and not things they are not amenable to rigid definition. Bergson goes on to claim that neither is ever found in a pure state. Indeed, there exists at all times "fringe" areas surrounding them both. "There is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct are not to be discovered, more especially no instinct that is not surrounded with a fringe of intelligence." Bergson believed that man's intuition comes out of the instinctual fringe and that the sudden flashes of insight which occasionally illuminate the discursive intellect are attributable to this phenomenon. In terms of potentiality: "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them."

Consciousness comes into the picture as a result of the necessity of choice. In cases of routine, habitual behavior such as in the life of the insect there is little demand for decision making and consequently consciousness dwindles. On the other hand, where there is a plurality of real choices consciousness becomes intense. By means of intuitive sympathy, consciousness can participate in reality by turning
inward, but its range of discovery, Bergson thought, is quite limited. When shaping itself into intellect, however, consciousness exhibits great skill in the manipulation of both objects and itself in relation to them; thus opening up an unlimited field. This is so because if things and ourselves are always in the process of novel change, then the resultant possibilities can never be exhausted. The success it enjoys in this outer dimension eventually frees consciousness to turn inward, at which point it can awaken the slumbering potentialities of intuition. We should bear in mind that Bergson was a great believer in the ability of machines and industry to free consciousness from the time consuming drudgery of subsistence living. Only then could the majority of mankind have the leisure time necessary for spiritual pursuits.

Bergson concludes that consciousness is the motivating principle of higher evolution and that man occupies a privileged place on its scale. The difference between himself and the animals is one of kind rather than degree. In reply to the question: "How does this work if durée is categorical and "kinds" are introduced by intellect?" One might answer that the world is a function, rightly or wrongly, of the "reality" of space and that the constant creation of new forms validates such a gap. Or one might just credit Bergson with a "teleological suspension of the rational".
For Bergson man stands at the summit of an immense wave of the life force, expressing his freedom with a continually developing consciousness. Bergson goes on to postulate that "...man might be considered the reason for the existence of the entire organization of life on our planet." But he quickly adds the disclaimer that the foregoing is, in the final analysis, just a manner of speaking since the whole evolution of life is but the current of existence (élan vital) and its opposing current (materiality).

Let us imagine a vessel full of steam at a high pressure, and here and there in its sides a crack through which the steam is escaping in a jet. The steam thrown into the air is nearly all condensed into little drops which fall back, and this condensation and this fall represent simply the loss of something, an interruption, a deficit. But a small part of the jet of steam subsists, uncondensed, for some seconds; it is making an effort to raise the drops which are falling; it succeeds at most in retarding their fall. So, from an immense reservoir of life, jets must be gushing out unceasingly, of which each, falling back, is a world. 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.

Toward the end of Creative Evolution Bergson ties durée and the élan vital together in a partnership of progress in the universe. Here the unmade endures, inseparably bound to the being-made and intuition is added to intellect. Finally, philosophy can unfold as "...the turning of the mind homeward, the coincidence of human consciousness with living principle whence it emanates."
NOTES


15. Ibid., p. 68.


18. Ibid., p.232.


22. Ibid., p. 302.


25. Ibid., p. 233.

26. Ibid., p. 129.

27. Ibid., p. 236.


32. Oliver Quick, "Bergson's Creative Evolution And The Individual Mind.", 22, No. 86, April 1913, p. 220.


34. For a fascinating exposition of this aspect of Bergson's philosophy see *Bergson And The Evolution Of Physics* Ed. and Trans. by Gunter, P.A.Y. This collection of essays examines a number of unresolved issues in the field and shows Bergson's thought to be in the forefront of some of the debate.


43. In my opinion, all summaries of my work will be totally distorted by a multitude of objections if one doesn't emphasize in the beginning and constantly return to that which I consider to be the core of the doctrine; namely intuition and duration. The representation of diverse mutual interpenetration as the duration of heterogeneous, qualitative creativity is the point at which I depart and to which I always return. When one arrives at this understanding in its simplicity, not confusing it by means of reconstructive concepts, one is then obliged to alter his point of view on the nature of reality. Écrits et Paroles, III, p. 456.

44. Creative Mind, p. 48.

45. Two Sources., p. 101.

46. Generally speaking, he who intuitively understands duration will never be content to accept universal mechanism since in the mechanistic hypothesis real time as duration becomes a useless, even impossible concept. But duration is the most obvious fact for anyone who places himself within it. It is for this reason that I say that one can never fail to refute mechanistic philosophy from an empirical basis. Écrits et Paroles, III, p. 457.

47. Creative Evolution, p. 41.


49. Ibid., p. 258.

50. Ibid., p. 13.

51. Ibid., p. 265.

52: Ibid., p. 281.

53. Ibid., p. 147.
54. Ibid., p. 143.
55. Ibid., p. 159.
56. Ibid., p. 195.
57. Ibid., p. 261.
58. Ibid., p. 391.
CHAPTER TWO

THE EMOTIONS

For Bergson, the emotions play a vital and necessary role in the transition from the closed, reactive communities of the past and present to the open society of the future. Out of the emotional matrix Bergson envisions a contagion of love—the cohesive force able to bond all human beings together on a spiritual plane. While closed societies have heretofore effected conformity by means of nature's "social instinct" and imposed constraints upon its members, the new community is to form and cohere by the aspiration of its constituents toward an unlimited spiritual potential. "Whereas natural obligation is a pressure or a propulsive force, complete and perfect morality has the effect of an appeal."1 This appeal will be engendered by a small number of spiritually advanced persons who, by means of their lived example, elicit in a widening circle of others, the necessary transformational qualities. The open society will succeed by enlarging, not restricting, the capacities and potentialities of man. As a result, it will not be locked into short sighted and self-serving strategies aimed at mere preservation, but will instead be free to grow spiritually, expressing itself in perpetual creation.
My main concern in this chapter will be to examine the viability of Bergson's emotional theory as a means to bring about the open society. We shall see that the emotions are, for Bergson, a proven means for bonding individuals together in experiences of community. I begin by examining the emotions per se with an eye toward understanding them as dynamic forces for change within the individual. In so doing I shall seek out their genesis and try to determine the nature of their intimate connection with the self, a self which is in large part characterized and shaped by the emotions it expresses. Showing the self to be an organic and maleable entity, I believe, both supports Bergson's premise regarding the primacy of change and also lends credibility to his vision of the emergence of the open society as a result of individual transformations. I shall also examine the nature of love, which Bergson held to be the greatest of the emotions. What, in the view of Bergson and certain other representative thinkers, is love; and what is its role in the progression of man's life in community? Finally, I shall consider whether or not love is, as Bergson understands it, truly an emotion, or if it is perhaps a spiritual principle or power best understood sui generis.

In the modern era the emotions were examined first by Descartes and Hume and have continued to arouse interest as a challenging and fruitful topic. A review of the relevant
philosophical literature quickly reveals two important facts. First, that the emotions themselves defy both precise analysis and differentiation and second, that they are most often dealt with *vis a vis* their contextual expression in the world. It is not within the bounds of my efforts here to attempt to delve deeply into this area. How the emotions are triggered by the self's interaction with the world and other people has been treated rather extensively by Amelie Oksenberg Rorty and others. I will, however, have something to say about the emotions *per se*; not in regard to separating the emotions in their expression, one from another, but rather in seeking out the dynamics of their genesis. For those of us who are interested, as was Bergson, in how emotion can perhaps bring about the open society via individual transformational change, an in-depth, intra-personal study seems the highest priority.

THEORIES OF THE EMOTIONS

Robert Solomon

Of all the contemporary philosophers concerned with articulating human emotions Robert Solomon appears to present the most thorough and balanced analysis. He is particularly sensitive to the intimate relationship between the self and its emotional repertoire. Seeking to return to the "self" proper control and recognition of the responsibility for the
dynamics of emotion Solomon holds emotions to result from our efforts to engender and maintain "self-esteem".

In place of the self-denying myth of the passions, I want to substitute a self-esteeming representation of emotions as our own judgments with which we structure the world to our purposes, carve out a universe in our own terms, measure the facts of Reality and ultimately "constitute" not only our world but ourselves.³

Solomon takes it to be a mistake that emotions are thought to happen to us; whereas in fact, they proceed from us. He categorizes the passions into three fundamental categories. Intentional in character, the emotions are the most complex and sophisticated of the three and by and large define human subjectivity. "...there are no fixed standards of interpretation or evaluation of any emotion, and so every emotion must be viewed as constitutional, as an existential decision concerning the way one is to view his world."

Passions which need not begin with a particular incident or object or be about anything in particular are moods. Moods are more diffuse than emotions and reflect a wide-ranging attitude toward the world while not necessarily focusing on a particular object or situation. Depression is a prime example of a mood. A particular emotion is held to be "...the precipitating particle that crystallizes the mood."³ Desires can be based upon the emotions and result
from a complicated network of emotional needs, hopes, and wishes as well as more "primitive" biological needs.

Solomon believes that, in studying the emotions, the heart of the matter lies in laying bare the "emotion felt" while keeping in mind that there are no clear boundaries between the emotion and its expression. "What is ultimately important is the maintenance and strength of the emotions, not their satisfaction." We tend to express emotions which are actually the least likely to be satisfied and supported by the employment of rituals, incantations and magical gestures, and use them to define our lives. Consequently, these emotional structures afford us a certain sense of security and stability in the world.

For Solomon the emotions are intentional and rational in character. As rational judgments "...they require at least minimal intelligence and a sense of self-esteem, and they proceed purposefully in accordance with a sometimes extremely complex set of rules and strategies." In addition, rationality is held to inhere not only in reflective thought but in intuition as well. For example, emotions are held to exhibit a certain pre-reflective logic: "...the logic of an emotion keeps continuously in mind its abstract and ultimate purpose--the maximization of self-esteem--and tailors itself to particular objects and situations." Nevertheless, they often work at cross purposes, as each tends to become obsessed with its own goal-directed behavior. Wisdom, according to Solomon, is the attainment of proper emotional
strategies resulting in what the Greeks called "harmony of the soul".

Solomon assigns to the emotions an integral role at "the very core of our existence". He takes issue with the Platonic view that it is the function of reason, as a separate entity, to bridle passion in the attempt to establish and maintain justice in the tripartite soul. Standing conventional wisdom on its ear Solomon argues that, by itself, reason is a sterile, even impotent tool which "...requires the anchorage and earthly wisdom of the passions." Furthermore, the passions, far from being irrational, are essentially rational. Indeed, they are the necessary components of human existence which give to reality its shape and structure. In fairness to Plato we should add that Thumos (Plato's principle of high spirit) requires not the heel of suppression but the harmonious interaction illustrative of the just soul. Both men recognize the necessary role of the emotions but differ as to the source of potential disharmony. We should also bear in mind that for Plato the world is a "way station" of sorts and hence relatively unreal when compared to the ultimate standard. Solomon, on the other hand, evidences no such transcendental backdrop and may, as a result, be attempting to wring every last ounce of potentiality from man's emotional component. He claims: "The business of philosophy is not to transcend the human, but to illuminate it."
Recognition that there is in fact no ultimate distinction between reason and the passions Solomon holds to be an aid to illuminating "the darker passages of the mind". This in turn brings about a basic transformation from resentment (for him the basic negative emotion) to love. It should be pointed out at this juncture that, although Solomon endorses the emotions and affirms their expression, he does not feel all of them to of equal value.

Like Bergson, Solomon posits love as the highest emotion and states as his goal the attempt to effect a positive transformation of individual human beings by letting them fulfill their potentialities or, as he puts it, "become who they would be". Paraphrasing Herbert Marcuse, Solomon claims that radical social change requires a radical change in consciousness as its necessary first step. Thus, an enlightened acceptance of the self-enhancing emotions and elimination or suppression of the non-productive others can have powerful social repercussions for the advancement of mankind.

Insisting that thought must be anchored in basic experience, Solomon demands that thinking be tied to what is for him the passionate source of meaning, i.e. our emotions, moods, and desires. The passions and reason must remain welded together as one unit. Since "emotions are judgments" they are at once the life force of the soul as well as the
source of most of our values. Rather than distort reality, emotions constitute it. "It is our passions, not our reason (and surely not 'nature'), that constitute our world, our relationships with other people and, consequently, our Selves." 1

Solomon argues that insistence upon an overly objective view of reality erodes any real understanding of the emotions since it is not consistent with the power of emotions within each individual to contribute to the formation of reality. Therefore, the subjective "bringing to" aspect of experience must be recognized. Even the objectivity of science is to be understood as merely a "perspective" and not the whole of human experience. He coins the term "surreality" to describe the melding of objective reality with one's personal perspective in order to constitute an individual's "lived world". Solomon insists that this endorsement of individuality through emotional expression does not, in the final analysis, represent a divisive force; rather it serves to commit and bind people to one another "in anger and resentment as well as in love and hate". 12

Solomon denies the self to be a substance or "thing". It is instead a reference point "...from which we interpret or constitute our world." 13 It is a world defined not so much by objects and knowledge as by personal relationships and the organic, connective "plasma" of these relationships is the passions.
Regarding our self-concept Solomon notes, after Sartre, that it is the intrusive observation of other people which is primarily responsible for the phenomenon of self-consciousness. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that, whereas other people play an important role in defining our "selves" we are, of course, more than they determine us to be. "Self-esteem is the ultimate goal of every passion" and results from our own self-concept, which is influenced, but not wholly determined, by the actions and opinions of others. Stressing proper dependence upon our own ideals, values and judgments, Solomon cautions against being overly vulnerable to the often flawed perceptions and opinions of others. It may be suggested that while we should, of course, not allow ourselves to be so victimized, the question at hand is really why such tremendous power is vested in other people. For it seems that no matter how "successful" "well-adjusted" or even isolated one becomes, one remains vulnerable to the mere gaze of another person. Indeed, outside of insanity, one is unable to eradicate this difficulty. Why is this so? Jean Paul Sartre is one philosopher who has dealt with this phenomenon in detail.

Jean Paul Sartre

For Sartre "the Other" necessarily completes one's existence in the world. The Other also serves to determine
the nature of the self. He states: "I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being." His analysis of shame is a good example of the power of others. He defines shame as a self-consciousness disclosing one's self as standing before the Other. For example, in such a situation: "I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other."

While Sartre's treatment of the relationship between the self and the Other does offer valuable insights, it does so at the expense of the positive, non-judgmental and self-enhancing aspects of encounters which are marked by mutual acceptance. It does not necessarily follow that because we are often perceived as mere objects by other people, that such is always the case. Does Sartre's limited perspective result from an attitude of judgment which is projected outward, ultimately to turn back upon itself? We will deal with this and related questions shortly in our analysis of pride.

In his brief, yet thought provoking, analysis of the emotions, Sartre has argued that they can bring about what he terms "a magical transformation of the world". When, in personal experience, the world provides an unpleasant if not insoluble context man may respond by transforming the situation from the inside out. By employing elements of his
emotional repertoire, he can inject a measure of control into a situation of relative powerlessness. Sartre is quick to point out, however, that this is not a truly effective behavior since the crux of the problem is not acted upon directly. Indeed, Sartre does not look favorably upon emotion as an aid to philosophy. "Thus the origin of emotion is a spontaneous and lived degradation of consciousness in the face of the world." 

Although Sartre does provide a number of insights regarding the emotions, his theory is clearly biased since it focuses from the periphery of the self out into the world. Thus it fails to address the issue of the world transforming the self and more importantly for our purposes--how the emotions may affect and transform the self. For if we can show the plasticity of the self coupled with the emotions' power to effect productive change we will have gone a long way toward demonstrating the feasibility of Bergson's vision of the open society--a community which is to be brought into being by the power of individual, emotionally-based transformations.

**Arthur Schopenhauer**

In order to shed some light on the root causes of emotional expression we will examine Schopenhauer's analysis of the relationship between the will and the emotions. His
treatment of the role of intellect in its relationship to the emotions differs from that of Bergson and Solomon and merits inclusion as a plausible alternative to their melding of intellect with emotion. Simply put, the fundamental question Schopenhauer confronts us with here is: Are we, in essence, "knowing" or "willing" beings? Or are we, as Bergson and Solomon insist, an inescapable amalgam of the two?

Kant is at once Schopenhauer's mentor and point of departure for the development of his own philosophy. After taking the a priori forms of time and space from Kant, Schopenhauer then rejects eleven of the twelve Kantian categories as "painted windows" and appropriates only "causality" in the broad form of the principle of sufficient reason, to consider the world as representation. An intimate union of time and space is the condition of reality produced by the understanding; which by means of the principle of sufficient reason creates the necessary condition for the possibility of all experience. On the heels of this he shows, at least to his own satisfaction, that what Kant stopped short of identifying, namely the thing-in-itself, is capable of identification immediately and indubitably as Will. Since will is the noumenal reality it is subject to neither the forms of time and space nor the law of causality. As a result, the mind is incapable of arriving at knowledge of the will via the normal channels of intellect.
which is simply not built for this purpose. Clear and
certain knowledge is, however, immediately given in one's own
consciousness of willing. Indeed, this self-consciousness
itself is the direct manifestation of the will perceiving
itself as a distinct willing being. This distinction, to
which Schopenhauer refers as the principium individuationis,
he takes to be the source of all major philosophical
difficulties. As a result of this transitory and really
illusory separation from the unity of reality, ego (the
self-conscious boundary) believes the manifestations of will
suffusing throughout its being are, at least to some degree,
determined by independent, intellectual volition. The fact
of the matter, Schopenhauer would argue, is that intellect
is, in reality, an appendage. It is an outgrowth of a
singular objectification of the will (one's body) which
serves to give the will a look at its overall objectification
(the world).

Included under willing are all striving and emotional
expression. These necessarily relate to either the
satisfaction or frustration of the will; which always has for
its object things external to itself. Schopenhauer puts a
pessimistic cast on the actions of will in the world;
claiming that pain, requiring no antecedent, is positive (his
term) while pleasure, on the other hand, is negative,
occurring as it does only upon satisfaction of the will's
bothersome demands. The period between satisfaction and the arousal of another demand is characterized by languor or boredom. Will is by nature bound as unending, purposeless striving; expressing itself as all action from gravity to the most minute activity. Furthermore, Schopenhauer denies even the possibility of will developing purpose. What seems purposeful nevertheless exists in the phenomenal realm and hence is a lower order of reality than the noumenal will. There is no creative evolution here.

Schopenhauer assumes a strong connection between the vehemence of the will as expressed in violent, sometimes irrational emotions and intelligence. He reasons that since intelligence is the result of a preponderance of knowledge via perception it may become very powerful. Thus, conduct tends to be guided more by the energetic impressions of perception rather than by the sedate concepts. Speaking of men of genius he says: "Accordingly, the impression of the present moment on them is very strong, and carries them away into thoughtless actions, into emotion and passion." For its part the clarity of consciousness leads to the will becoming more aware of itself, which in turn further heightens the emotions.

Despite the fact that they interact on an intimate level within the person, Schopenhauer argues for a fundamental cleavage between will and the intellect. Since the former is
held to be the thing-in-itself, it is primary and never tires while the latter, which arose and developed in the will's service, is transitory and subject to fatigue.

All knowing is associated with effort and exertion; willing on the contrary, is our very nature, whose manifestations occur without any weariness and entirely of their own accord. Therefore, if our will is strongly excited, as in all emotions such as anger, fear, desire, grief, and so on, and we are then called upon to know, perhaps with the intention of correcting the motives of those emotions, then the violence we must do to ourselves for this purpose is evidence of the transition from the original, natural activity proper to us to the activity that is derived, indirect and forced.19

Like Bergson, Schopenhauer assigns to music an important role in the expression of emotion. Schopenhauer credits music with expressing the range and subtleties of the will; while at the same time giving it aesthetic shaping. Music differs from the other arts in that it does not copy things of nature; but rather is a copy of the will itself. Music directly expresses the will and in turn acts directly upon certain manifestations of the will—its feelings, emotions, and passions. Thus, it could be said that music discloses the person to himself.

The inexpressible depth of all music, by virtue of which it floats past us as a paradise quite familiar and yet eternally remote, and is so easy to understand and yet so inexplicable, is due to the fact that it reproduces all the emotions of our innermost being, but entirely without reality and remote from its pain."21
The pleasures of music notwithstanding, Schopenhauer believes that the emotions remain a snare to the man whose intellect exceeds the needs of his willing. Such a man, by means of the aesthetic experience, can for a few brief moments, in the presence of great art or philosophy, transcend the conditions of his willing to become one with the object of his contemplation (in essence the Platonic Ideal). Since it is these moments alone which are truly blissful the philosopher, Schopenhauer believes, should cherish them and eschew the trappings of emotion no matter how pleasurable they may be.

For Schopenhauer, then, the emotions arise as a direct consequence of the will's demands. Its satisfaction accounts for pleasurable emotions and its frustration those of pain. Thus, Schopenhauer traces the emotions back beyond the self to the will and denies their importance as a vehicle or catalyst for transformational change within the person. Be that as it may there is substantial argumentation in the philosophical literature to suggest otherwise.

Bergson's Theory Of The Emotions

Although the emotions came to play a vital role in Bergson's philosophy of religion his early treatment of emotion in *Time And Free Will* was merely a physiological analysis of violent emotions such as rage, passionate love,
and violent hatred. In principle Bergson favored James' theory of the emotions which held them to be nothing more than our awareness of the body's physiological reactions to stimuli. Nevertheless, Bergson insisted upon adding what he called "an irreducible psychic element" which "determines the direction of the emotional state". Bergson was later to broaden his emotional horizon, concluding that it is due to the hubris of intellect that feeling becomes focused and narrowed on a particular object and in turn all emotion is mistakenly held to be a sensory reaction to intellectual representation.

Bergson credits the emotions with being the source of all the great creations in art, science and civilization in general. "A work of genius is in most cases the outcome of an emotion, unique of its kind, which seemed to baffle expression, and yet had to express itself." Far more than just stimuli, the emotions reach deep into the soul to effect powerful, creative innovations within the individual. These core emotions are to be distinguished from those Bergson calls "infra-intellectual" which are the result of sensory representations. It is to these "supra-intellectual" emotions we must turn for the production of original ideas as well as profound personal transformations.

In dealing with the relationship between the will and the emotions, Bergson claimed, that beside instinct and habit,
there is no direct action upon the will other than by feeling (emotion). Furthermore, new and original emotions are continuously being created to enrich our lives. For example, Bergson cites Rousseau’s creation of an original emotion to express his love for mountains. Rousseau did this by gathering together and harmonizing certain aesthetic sensations from nature with his personal response to create this new emotion. He was then able to express his creation in writing which served to extend the experiential range of his readers.

Bergson was also deeply concerned with the question of morality. He felt it important to trace the evolution of the moral disposition; not as emanating from a base of mere sentiment, but rather from certain key emotions "capable of crystallizing into representations" and even into ethical doctrines. Acting from their foundation within the individual, these genuine moral emotions are uplifting in character and religious in tone. Bergson contrasts this phenomenon with the external morality typical of the closed society which is codified and gets its effective force from constraint or necessity. The key emotions which engender ethical doctrines in turn foster a higher, aspirational morality which proceeds by a natural inclination. This, by virtue of the fact that aspirational morality has become an integral part of the spiritually transformed individual who
is not hindered by potential conflicts between his personal values and rules imposed by society. As a result of this participatory morality souls can be won over by genuine religious experience to a degree not possible by metaphysical argument.

Although the higher, aspirational morality does proceed from "the depths of our hearts" it, like everything else in Bergson's philosophy, is itself transitional and subject to the need to pause and regroup in time. Hence, it will, in the promotion of its aims, tend to employ formulae (rules and regulations) within its social context. Thus, the new morality can be seen to share, to some extent, the obligatory, rule-oriented character of the old. Nevertheless, through an effort of intuition, it remains possible for individuals to rekindle the original sparks of spiritual discovery into a bright new flame. After doing so we can then follow the example of the religious founders and reformers, saints and mystics who have raised mankind toward a higher unity. A major difficulty we encounter in this effort is that the two moralities have merged and are no longer found in their pure states. Be that as it may, Bergson insists that we must attempt to separate the two in terms of their dynamic, whether it be pressure or aspiration, in order to clear a path beyond the closed societies. One might liken the relationship of closed communities of the
past and present with the open society of the future to the
difference between a cyclical eddy and the main stream of
progress. Our aim, according to Bergson, must be the
ultimate transformation of a divided humanity into a global
community of spiritually transformed persons.

Whereas there can occasionally be feelings of well-being
and satisfaction associated with compliance to the rules of
closed societies, the open society will always effect its
morality from within by personal enthusiasm. While the
expression of morality in the open society is clearly
progressive, its ultimate goal, if it can be held to have
one, will remain forever undefined. Since the effort of
aspirational morality is in essence active, rather than
reflective, it may engender, but not be dependent upon,
metaphysical theory for support. Thus, it lends experiential
authenticity to any genuine metaphysics which may arise in
its wake.

* * *

Although his analysis of aesthetic experience is at odds
with modern theorists such as Collingwood,\textsuperscript{25} Bergson held
music to be a genuine force for the promotion of community in
that it enables people to be bound together in the
simultaneous experiencing of such familiar emotions as joy,
sorrow, pity, and love. We become the emotion and "...we are
what it expresses". Bergson goes on to state that it is not
these feelings which are introduced into us but rather we who
are introduced into them. Bergson does not address the question of whether music should be considered aspirational or imposed. He implies that it is aspirational yet one can imagine instances of an imposed contagion of emotion through music which is not communal in the best sense of the word. Bergson went on to develop this theme into a sort of recipe for the pioneers of morality. "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." In the foregoing Bergson argued forcefully for the dynamic interaction between the self and the emotions. The following pursues the matter further.

**EMOTION AND THE PLASTICITY OF THE EGO**

Concerning the transiency of pleasant emotions such as joy and friendliness it has been pointed out that these "positive" emotions play themselves out rather quickly. Perhaps there is a clue here as to the underlying emotional dynamic of the self. Are these emotions brief because they "carry" the ego in transit from a self-constricting emotional state to a state of relative freedom? If it is the case that selflessness lacks emotional content then these emotions can be considered pleasant because they mark a release from the "bound" self. Full release means that since emotions no
longer bind the self a large measure of freedom is experienced. The intensity as well as the brevity of the concomitant joy or bliss may be a direct result of the speed and completeness of the release. By the same token negative emotions may be such because they re-form and solidify the self; for example, when one feels "wounded" or embarrassed by criticism. As a result of such experiences the ego becomes encrusted, knowing itself to be distinct and feeling the strictures of alienation as well as the sting of wounded pride. If this analysis is correct then can we not consider the self as potentially pure intellect—a knowing entity without volition; and that release from the emotions which solidify the ego are pleasant as they mark the exit of consciousness from its egoistic bondage and non-existent in the state of freedom? One might counter that there are indeed pleasurable emotions which do no such thing; for instance those associated with gustatory and sexual pleasures. But these can be held to be, for the most part, temporary inducements for the body to serve the will's craving for existence through the survival of the individual as well as the species. Furthermore, while these emotions may indeed signal a release from the distinct self concomitant with physiological pleasure, the release may be illusory in that ego only appears diffused, whereas in reality it fuses into a somatic consciousness.
counterproductive to transcendence. In Platonic terms, such pleasures "nail the soul to the body". As a result, we can now posit two types of pleasurable emotions: those which, in the service of the will, serve to bind the self as a distinct body and those which mark a release from this bondage, both physiological and egoistic. We can further differentiate between emotions purely on a basis of whether they are ego-diffusing or ego-constricting. The former can be studied as conducive to aspirational transformation while the latter can be identified and controlled as counter productive to this end. Perhaps the most powerful of the ego-constricting emotions is that of pride.

**PRIDE**

It is noteworthy that Hume, who is one of the key contributors to the philosophy of emotion, begins his analysis with a discussion of pride. He does so by playing it off against its traditional foil, humility, and links it inextricably to the self. "Pride and humility being once rais'd, immediately turn our attention to ourself, and regard that as their ultimate and final object..." Elated by pride and defeated by humility the self can, according to Hume, never be the cause of either. He goes on to assert that the mind has a natural disposition to produce an impression or emotion called pride and that the self is
always part and parcel of this experience. Regarding the
dynamics and ontological status of pride Hume states:

"...I find, that the peculiar object of pride and
humility is determin'd by an original and natural
instinct, and that 'tis absolutely impossible
from the primary constitution of the mind, that
these passions shou'd ever look beyond self, or
the individual person, of whose actions and
sentiments each of us is immediately
conscious."³⁰

While there are any number of definitions of pride in the
philosophical literature with little consensus as to its
meaning or dynamic, the one area of agreement is the
recognition of its importance vis à vis the other emotions.
I should like to propose that pride, although known
emotionally, is not itself an emotion; but rather a dynamic
formative element of the inner self which exists along with
will as major emotional determinants. A review of Hume's
characterization of pride as a natural disposition and an
original and natural instinct supports this claim. We shall
now see that Solomon has a similar view.

Solomon approaches the question of pride by making a firm
distinction between "inner" and "outer" emotions. The latter
deal with particular situations, objects or people. Fear of
an exterior threat or anger at the behavior of another are
prime examples of "outer" emotions. The "inner-directed"
emotions e.g. shame, embarrassment, guilt, vanity, etc.
focus on the self. Solomon states that in some of these
emotions other people may be implicit. He cites, for instance, embarrassment and shame as examples of this; but goes on to focus attention on the self as the locus of these emotions. Let us ask, at this point, whether this locus can be further identified. In a key passage Solomon writes: "...pride is an emotion which lies close to the heart of all the passions, the subjective demand for personal dignity and self-esteem." He goes on to assign to pride the strategy of maximizing self-esteem through external accomplishments as well as the recognition accorded to one by others.

While I am in substantial agreement with Hume and Solomon regarding the view that pride is something more than an ordinary emotion which comes and goes, I wish to take their position even further and posit pride as a dynamic element constitutional of our very nature as human beings. It may be further suggested that pride is an element which is adversely affected by public exposure. This could account for our perpetual vulnerability, in Sartrian terms, to "the gaze of the other". Perhaps the nature of pride is such that exposure implies judgment which tends to be viewed with trepidation as a result of any residual guilt feelings. Furthermore, could shame and embarrassment possibly be the first garments at hand which the self employs to cover its naked pride? Given the luxury of time and opportunity strategies are employed by the self to cloak pride in an attractive appearance or admirable deeds.
Pride then, is held to be a fundamental cause of emotional expression. Those clearly "visceral" emotions, such as affection, fear and hatred, which we have in common with the animals are understood to be physiological in character and tied to survival I take to be a function of the will. The others, (basically Solomon's "inner" emotions) which seem to be far more the property of man, are more abstract and intimately connected with his self-concept. These emotions I take to result from dynamics of pride.

My efforts in the preceding section have been to examine the nature of pride and its connection with the emotions most commonly associated with it. I have, I think, exhibited some evidence to support the contention that pride is a constitutional force in its own right over and above its usual understanding as one of a number of basic emotions. As such it would seem to be a factor to be reckoned with in any attempt to establish the open society. As far as a more definitive analysis is concerned, it may be that pride is noumenal and can only be recognized intuitively in the same way that Schopenhauer claims will is to be known. Which is the recognition and admission that we are it. Despite its position as an integral component of the human personality, according to many philosophers, pride remains vulnerable to the transformative power of love.
BERGSON ON LOVE

Bergson begins his discussion of love in the *Two Sources* by contrasting the love of family and country with the love of mankind. In the former case social cohesion is due, for the most part, to the necessity for the community in question to protect itself against the vagaries of nature as well as other people. As a result, it is largely a reaction to the perceived threat inherent in these situations which engenders and maintains cohesion and love within these communities. Bergson traces this phenomenon back from its genesis in primitive instinct to its expression in contemporary society. He claims that, while it is quite natural for us to love our parents and fellow-countrymen; "the love of mankind is indirect and acquired".\(^{32}\) Bergson goes on to state explicitly that it is only through God that we become able to love all mankind with spiritual love necessary to bond human beings into an aspirational community. Bergson envisioned a contagion of love generated by mystical persons as the sole means of making the open society a reality.

It is easy enough, Bergson argues, for the philosopher to reason about our shared human dignity and the right of all persons to command respect; but the prevailing, instinctively grounded, exclusionary barriers of closed societies serve effectively to lock us into our particular reactive communities. Thus, all the high-minded musings of
philosophers which theoretically propose a natural progression of love from family to nation to all mankind appear dashed to pieces against the tried and true mechanism of the social cohesion which is nourished by fear and hatred.

Whereas theory and persuasion continue to fail to bring about the open society, certain exceptional individuals have, nevertheless, by the example of their lives, demonstrated a means of overcoming our pervasive and dangerous social stagnation. These persons emerge from a variety of diverse cultures and historical periods. They are the saints, sages, prophets and mystics who offer an alternative to the compulsive authoritarian morality of closed societies. The morality they offer differs from the norm, not in degree, but in kind. Since this new morality takes the form of an appeal it flowers and spreads slowly by non-coercive means; requiring individuals who are open to productive, spiritual change.

Bergson further elaborates the distinction between the two moralities by stating that the "natural obligation" characteristic of closed societies does not exclude hatred and is capable of love and attraction only to objects which directly attract it. As a result, it encourages barriers between individuals and serves to constrict human potential. The new morality, on the other hand, is all love and does not
yield to the attraction of particular objects: "...it has shot beyond and reached humanity only by passing through humanity." 

Since, in the case of the closed society, nature and personal existential circumstances make compliance to the old morality almost automatic, Bergson asks what it is which induces the followers of genuine spiritual leaders to participate in this new dimension of existence. He answers that: "We have no choice." Such is the strength of this spiritual love that the soul which has merely opened itself to its wave is swept along by its power and attractiveness. 

Bergson traces the genesis of love back to man's enduring affection toward woman (and presumably vice versa). He claims that there has existed, since time immemorial, a loving inclination which, although concomitant with desire, was nonetheless distinct from it. Romantic love dates from the Middle Ages when someone merged this love with the religious emotions of Christianity. As a result, the language of love became enriched by the accounts of mystical experience. The terms rapture and ecstasy were appropriated from mysticism to express the passion of romance. 

In cases where love borders on adoration, there exists what Bergson calls a "disproportion between the emotion and the object". Consequently, unless one is willing to venerate
rather than embrace the object of his love, he is subject to deep personal disappointment. Bergson goes on to caution against the illusions of love. Historically these were, at first, merely illusions of the senses. To these man has added certain illusory expectations of love. Later, when religious emotion came to submerge and pervade love's expectations there emerged an enormous margin for disappointment—"...for it is the gap between the divine and the human."

Bergson envisions the flowering of the open soul as following on the heels of a personal break with both nature and what had been the foci of value in the closed society. The new experience is understood to be one of liberation and its accompanying exhilaration renders the person indifferent to sensory pleasure and riches. Indeed, the amenities of daily life often prove to be burdensome hindrances on the spiritual journey. Yet the open soul carries a burden of its own. It is charged with carrying the rest of humanity along with it. For it is by example and not by preaching that mankind progresses spiritually. This entails, on the part of the pioneers of morality, a genuine heroism, which inspires a few like-minded individuals to follow suit. Even persons on the periphery of the phenomenon are moved on occasion to do likewise and contribute to the goal. This heroism knows no obstacles, Bergson declares. In tune with the greater
spiritual reality it does away with spurious barriers by refusing to grant them credence. Bergson holds that it is from the "generative principle of the human species" that men have drawn sufficient strength to love mankind. The nature of this love, which "absorbs and kindles the whole soul", is infectious.

Religion expresses this truth in its own way by saying that it is in God that we love all other men. And all great mystics declare that they have the impression of a current passing from their soul to God, and flowing back again from God to mankind.²⁵

Regarding the reception of love in mystical experience Bergson says: "True mystics simply open themselves to the oncoming wave."²⁶ and allow the resultant stream to flow through them toward their fellow-men. Be that as it may, each mystic stamps the expression of this love with his own personality. Bergson further suggests that there lies dormant within us, as individuals, a mystic awaiting the call to waken in response to the love of the spiritual pioneers. As for mysticism's answer to the question of the nature of God Bergson states:

God is love, and the object of love: herein lies the whole contribution of mysticism. About this twofold love the mystic will never have done talking. His description is interminable, because what he wants to describe is ineffable. But what he does state clearly is that divine love is not a thing of God: it is God Himself.²⁷
For the philosopher attempting to understand this experience Bergson suggests becoming experientially one with the emotion of love. No easy matter, this entails granting the phenomenon's authenticity while conceding its ineffability. Love, Bergson believes, is an indivisible emotion which suffers compression in any attempt to express it intellectually. Nevertheless, there have always been attempts to express the ineffable and Bergson recognizes two basic types. The first example depends upon concepts and terminology already at hand which man attempts to refashion in light of his own understanding. The results may be satisfactory; even original and vigorous, but in the final analysis, they fail to satisfy. The second method, while more ambitious, is less certain:

It consists in working back from the intellectual and social plane to a point in the soul from which there springs an imperative demand for creation. The soul within which this demand dwells may indeed have felt it fully only once in its lifetime, but it is always there, a unique emotion, an impulse, an impetus received from the very depths of things. 38

Although the difficulties involved in such an enterprise are formidable indeed, philosophers and mystics are impelled to try to articulate and communicate the experience. For any success enriches humanity with a genuine spiritual thought which can be reinterpreted afresh in subsequent generations.
Has this love an object? "Not necessarily" Bergson replies;
if we bear in mind that an emotion of such quality is self-sufficient. Still, Bergson finds it difficult to conceive of love as not directed toward anything. Citing accounts from the mystics he reasons that God needs us, just as we need Him. God requires, it seems, worthy beings upon whom He can shower His love. The universe itself, Bergson claims, bears witness to the fact that matter and life are coexistent and interdependent. Therefore, the philosopher should follow the lead of the mystics in seeing the universe as "...the mere visible and tangible aspect of Love and of the need of loving together with all the consequences entailed by this creative emotion." From this point Bergson makes an audacious leap beyond the conclusions reached in Creative Evolution wherein he posited the tests of biology as the final arbiter of metaphysical knowledge. Now, citing the legitimacy of allowing for degrees of certainty in philosophical knowledge, as well as the need for intuition and the necessity of using mysticism to extend these two, Bergson defines the fundamental creative energy of the universe as love.

Love In The Western Tradition

In order to be more specific about Bergson's notion of love, we must clarify this concept by appeal to its roots in our western tradition. As has been seen, love is the vital,
cohesive force in generating and sustaining Bergson's open society. For Bergson, love is an emotion which serves a two-fold purpose. First, as a means of personal transformation, it prepares individuals to help form the open society. Secondly, as a living manifestation of Spirit, it fosters and maintains relations within this community. In western philosophical literature we find love divided into two basic types: eros and agape.

**Eros**

Homer's use of the term eros is generally held to represent "love" or "desire" and the idea that love is capable of uniting people into bonds of community can be traced back to the Pre-Socratics. "According to Parmenides, love was created by the goddess Necessity, and in the writing of Empedocles, love emerges as one of the two universal forces (the other being strife) that explain the course of cosmic history."41

Plato's Symposium offers a diverse assortment of perspectives on love; the most highly regarded of which deals with the soul's love of wisdom. This activity, in turn, provides a source of harmony and preservation of goodness in the world. In practice, the love of wisdom is manifested in the ideal love of beauty; which is understood as the effective link between the phenomenal and eternal realms of
Being. According to the speech of Diotima, there exists a
scale of beauty rising from its more mundane manifestations
in bodies and culminating in the ideal of Beauty itself.

The longing for transcendence from the mundane self to a
higher personhood has a distinguished history in the Greek
tradition. For the early Greeks one’s daimon represented his
inborn potentiality—ultimately his true self. To
progressively realize one’s personal daimon in the course of
an individual’s life represented his destiny.

By contrast, what Eros loves is the indwelling
ideal; hence this love is a constant reminder of
the actual self’s insufficiency and an enduring
dynamic of growth. And because the self is but a
particular expression of the larger humanity,
self-love is by no means exclusive of the love of
others but the ground of such love.

Perhaps the most articulate presentation of eros in the
history of philosophy is contained in Eric Voegelin’s account
of the efforts of Socrates and Plato to point the way toward
an ennobled humanity. This was to be expressed in an
existential community of spiritually inclined individuals
sharing the same erotic intention and longing for the Good.

The older man, Socrates, speaks to the younger
man and, through the power of his soul, awakens
in him the echoing desire for the Good. The Idea
of the Good, evoked in the communion of the
dialogue, fills the souls of those who
participate in the evocative act. And thus it
becomes the sacramental bond between them and
creates the nucleus of the new society.
Voegelin stresses the intimate and thought-provoking connection between eros and thanatos (the desire for death) as "orienting forces in the soul of Socrates". The power of thanatos acts as a personal catharsis, freeing the soul from its bondage to the world of appearance and directing it toward the Good. Conversely, as a result of his desire to maintain himself in life, man sees in procreation a means to continue his upward, erotic journey. "Those in whom the desire is only bodily have physical children. Those in whom it is spiritual rejuvenate themselves through procreation in the souls of young men..." As the paradigm example of the soul properly oriented toward the Good, with the just measure of both eros and thanatos, Socrates is able to positively influence young men who are willing to open their souls to the higher reality.

For Plato the existential community is held together by philia; a term which he employs to characterize the bond between heaven and earth, man and God. "Because philia and order pervade everything, the universe is called kosmos (order) and not disorder or license (akosmia, akolasia)." Philia was further developed by Aristotle into what we commonly call "friendship" in the eighth and ninth books of the Nicomachean Ethics. Bergson does not employ the term philia as such. Perhaps this is because there is, in the general usage of the term, the sense that it is a function of
a relationship among equals. This, in turn, seems to imply that the participatory selves are already formed—or at least more "static" and defined than may be the case in the Open Society.

Agape

Whereas *eros* has come to represent man's upward love toward God, *agape* is that love which proceeds downward from God to man. The origin of *agape* can be traced to two distinct sources: Mystical Neoplatonism and the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The cosmology of Plotinus credits God with creating the world from an overabundance of his own nature. "Thus the sole reason for God's creativity and love is His own nature, which spontaneously overflows itself without suffering the least depletion." 46

While Old Testament theology reveals numerous instances of the bestowal of *agape* in God's relationship with Israel, the term itself owes its development and elucidation largely to Christian theology beginning with Paul (I Corinthians 13) and the First Epistle of John (I John 4:8, 16). It should be mentioned that there has developed within Christianity, a schism regarding the nature of *Agape*. Catholic doctrine maintains that, while God takes the initiative in the bestowal of *Agape*, man's salvation depends upon the cooperation of his will with the will of God. Protestant theologians, however, from Luther onward have emphasized
instead the futility of man's attempts to reach God as a result of his own devices. Salvation is held to be strictly a matter of grace rather than merit.

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Anders Nygren, the contemporary Swedish theologian, contrasts Eros and Agape as two different and irreconcilable "general attitudes to life". His exposition of Agape includes four main features:

1. Spontaneous and "unmotivated", Agape reflects not what man is like, but what God is like.
2. Since Agape is indifferent to value, it extends beyond sin to embrace the sinner.
3. Unique in kind, Agape does not recognize and respond to value; but rather creates value.
4. Agape initiates a fellowship with God which cannot be accomplished by human beings.

In relation to God and his neighbour, the Christian can be likened to a tube, which by faith is open upwards, and by love downwards. All that a Christian possesses he has received from God, from the Divine love; and all that he possesses he passes on in love to his neighbour. He has nothing of his own to give. He is merely the tube, the channel, through which God's love flows. 

Paul Tillich calls Love "the moving power of life" and supports the view that love functions as an effective means of forging community. Contrasting love with what he calls
"loveless self-centeredness" Tillich claims: "The moment of love is a moment of self-transcendence." Although he thinks love is accompanied by emotion Tillich insists that love is not in toto emotional. He feels that it is essentially the tendency toward a union which is actually a reunion of the estranged (man and God). This, of course, presupposes the original oneness of all forms of love.

Aristotle's cosmic theory of love underscores the essential oneness of love and accounts for both its divine origin and the imperfections of man's erotic response to the divine call. Aristotle's theory of the Unmoved Mover does however, imply a certain cool distance between God and man since, complete and perfect in Himself, God does not love; but instead generates love by attraction. All beings then respond to this love according to the dictates of their own natures.

In Kierkegaard the distinction between love as "natural" i.e. this worldly and "supernatural" i.e. Godly, is overcome in the realization that the ultimate grounding of all love is in God.
The world can never get this into its head, that God does not...merely become the third party in every love-relation, but really becomes the sole object of affection, so it is not the husband who is the wife's beloved, but it is God; and it is the wife who is helped by her husband to love God, and conversely, and so on. The merely human interpretation of love can never get any further than reciprocity: the lover is the beloved, and the beloved is the lover. Christianity teaches that such a love has not yet found its right object--God. A love-relationship is threefold: the lover, the beloved, the love; but the love is God. And, therefore, to love another man is to help him to love God, and to be loved is to be helped to love God."

Kierkegaard maintains that natural love always retains the element of self-interest and can never be freely extended to all men. Thus, in Bergsonian terms, while it is able to support the cohesion of reactive communities, natural love must, by its very nature, fall short of bringing about the Open Society. Supernatural love is, on the other hand, entirely benevolent in character. Since it is sacrificial it demands no reward. This being the case the practice of supernatural love promotes a facile grouping of like-minded practitioners into community. Kierkegaard also believes Christian agapistic love to be a matter of the highest moral duty and equates it with fundamental change. "Christian love must not be regarded as a more precise definition of what in paganism and elsewhere has been called love, but as a fundamental change." 50

Martin D'Arcy, a contemporary cleric well within the Catholic tradition, has attempted a synthesis between eros
and *agape*. "Eros should stand for both the ecstatic, irrational and self-effacing mood of love, and the rational, self-assertive and possessive form, as they are found in human experience." Agape is defined both as "God's special love" and man's inspired and energized response to it. Consequently, it can be concluded that it is supernatural love which generates and sustains Eros in man. "We aspire to be loved by one whose love breaks down the last reserve of the self, so that we can belong utterly to him".

* * *

As is the case with Bergson's other fundamental concepts i.e. *durée, élan vital*, love is properly known by means of intuitive experience rather than by conceptual abstraction. Consequently, we have from Bergson no precise definition of love. Nevertheless, since Bergson comes to identify love with the "fundamental creative energy of the universe", even with God Himself, in my opinion, we ought to accord it the status of a spiritual principle as opposed to merely an emotion.

The reciprocal nature of *eros* and *agape* in D'Arcy's work is, I believe, most compatible with Bergson's presentation of love. It displays a strong process like interaction between God and man as expressed in the two forms of love. In addition, his affirmation of the self's transformational potential is consistent with Bergson's vision of the initial dissolution and re-formation of self on a spiritual level.
NOTES


   Ibid, p. 31.

   Ibid, p. 32.

5. Ibid, p. 133.


11. Ibid, p. 15.


20. Two Sources, p. 32.


26. For Collingwood all expression, including art, is linguistic and feeling is not, strictly speaking, an act of consciousness.

27. Ibid, p. 32.


29. Ibid, p. 4.


32. Ibid, p. 25.

33. Ibid, p. 31.

34. Ibid, p. 34.

35. Ibid, p. 45.

36. Ibid, p. 90.


39. Ibid, p. 244.

40. Ibid, p. 244, f.f.


44. Ibid, p. 13.

45. Ibid, p. 36.


CHAPTER THREE

MAN IN SOCIETY

While the individual has thus far been seen as the locus of change en route to the open society, Bergson, nevertheless, places great emphasis on the interactive role of society in this process. He explains that as a result of the pressures to conform which closed societies bring to bear upon their constituents, formidable obstacles exist in the path leading to the open society. We shall see that, for Bergson, each individual exists in a state of tension, both within himself and in the various communities within which he functions. This tension is the result of the conflict between one's self as an independent individual and the often oppressive demands of what Bergson calls nature's "social instinct" which seeks to ensure social cohesion. It is the purpose of this chapter to describe the coercive power of closed societies, articulate the interaction between the individual and society, and inquire as to the nature of the open society.
Bergson supports his analysis of the coercive powers of closed societies by asserting that mankind posesses the two essential characteristics of intelligence and sociability. Yet, in order to properly place man within the general evolution of life, he requires a biological interpretation. Sociability, Bergson believes, is everywhere in nature but is found "in its finished form at the two culminating points of evolution...in the hymenopterous insects e.g. ants and bees and in man." Indeed, the two disparate life forms display their sociability in distinctive ways. In insect society the social tendency is basically instinctive and immutable while for human beings it is, for the most part, intelligent and subject to change. If we were to differentiate further the two by ascribing to them the terms "order" and "progress", the insects would be distinguished only by order, whereas man would be characterized by progress as well. In the beginning, this progress is due solely to individual initiative; but Bergson claims that in studying the individual, one cannot overestimate the fact that he or she is meant for society. It is due to the lack of appreciation of this fact, Bergson notes, that "Psychology has made such meagre progress in certain directions." Indeed, an abundance of the psychological literature assumes the individual to be a far more independent and discrete entity than would otherwise be the case if the powers of instinct and society were properly recognized.
Despite their differences Bergson believes these two types of social life (man and insect) to be mutually complementary. Such is the power of its social obligations that Bergson believes human society to be not unlike one of nature's most dedicated social structures—the ant hill. But, whereas the insect in a hive or ant-hill is locked into his task by his structure and social organization, "the human community is variable and open to every kind of progress."

We must, says Bergson, be clear about the fact that, while particular obligations may or may not be ascribed to instinct, obligation in toto certainly is. Despite Bergson's depiction of the power of nature's many obligations we must not lose sight of the fact that he holds fast to his view that mankind is in essence a collectivity of free beings and it is these very instinctual pressures, along with man's cognizance of them, which evidence human freedom. "A human being feels an obligation only if he is free, and each obligation considered separately, implies liberty." In other words, the lack of automatic acquiescence in human behavior argues for the necessity of decision-making at some level which in turn implies an element of creative self assertion, i.e. freedom.

In Bergson's view, the strength of man's social obligations can be brought more sharply into focus in studies of primitive societies where the closer these communities are
to nature in terms of their "primitive" life style, the greater the number of unaccountable and inconsistent rules in place. By this Bergson means that the intrinsic merit of the rules is seen to take a back seat to their cohesive function. It has only been with the passage of time and with increased personal and social sophistication that logic and a rational order has emerged and become incorporated into a formal structure of rules and principles within society.

**MORAL OBLIGATION**

Bergson asserts that closed societies, i.e. aggregates of individuals which are by nature exclusionary, are the only form of communal grouping human beings have known thus far. In the *Two Sources* he begins his exposition of these communities by stressing the power of moral obligation. Bergson equates moral obligation with social conformity and defines morality as that **underlying force of nature** which ensures group unity. Morality is thus seen as an existential fact of social life rather than an articulated body of rules. The very form of social obligation which nature imposes upon its creatures Bergson characterizes as "moral". Is morality then just another name for the associative glue that binds individuals together as an organic unity? For Bergson an act is deemed moral not because it is "right" under the circumstances but because it conforms to the biological will of nature. The force of moral obligation,
"which is to the soul what force of gravity is to the body, ensures the cohesion of the group by bending all individual wills to the same end."

These pressures begin early. Bergson writes that our earliest childhood memories are those of "forbidden fruit" and of the inhibitions inculcated in us by parents and teachers. Furthermore, and contrary to what one might suppose, it was not due to their personal qualities or even their particular relationship to us that parents and teachers wielded such power and authority, but rather because they functioned as cultural proxies for the cohesive power of nature.

All of the pressures to conform and the habits of obedience to which we are subject create for us a climate of obedience which exerts a constant and heavy pressure on our individual wills. The strength and regularity of this phenomenon led Bergson to believe it to be more than just a social pressure to conform, but at bottom what Bergson terms, a "law of nature". These obligations are likely to provide a context of inner tension when our personal desires and freedoms conflict with their demands. As indeed they must when the very basis of the life force (élan vital) is by nature free and creative whereas the mortar of society (moral obligation) is restrictive and conforming.

Because, in his view, social habits of obligation are all interconnected and mutually reinforcing, Bergson believes that the pressure of these social habits is far greater than
that of any other kind. As a result, each obligatory habit enjoys not only its own authority but, synergistically, the combined authority of the whole. All of these social habits considered together Bergson calls the "totality of obligation" which he holds to account for the strength and persistence of even minor obligations. While it is true that particular obligations are contingent on man's voluntary compliance, behind these particulars the "totality of obligation" ordered by nature remains a constant and powerful force. Obligatory habit, Bergson claims, plays the same role in our communities as necessity plays in the order of nature.

The members of a civic community hold together like the cells of an organism. Habit, served by intelligence and imagination, introduces among them a discipline resembling, in the interdependence it establishes between separate individuals, the unity of an organism of anastomotic cells. According to Bergson, the influence of society is always with us whether we physically remain within its confines or not. Indeed, society has ineradicably structured our very modes of consciousness—in language, daily routine, family, and professional life.

Instinct gave place temporarily to a system of habits, each one of which became contingent, their convergence towards the preservation of society being alone necessary, and this necessity bringing back instinct with it. The necessity of the whole, felt behind the contingency of the parts, is what we call moral obligation in general—it being understood that the parts are contingent in the eyes of society only; to the individual, into whom society inculcates its habits, the part is as necessary as the whole.
Such is the strength of the "totality of obligation", as described above, that Bergson labels it a "virtual instinct". This is because it is a direct manifestation of the residue of instinct existing as a "fringe area" surrounding intelligence. Thus, nature acts here to exert the same sort of socially cohesive pressure that it does with instinct, but does so in a manner appropriate to man, whose intelligence and freedom often disclose anti-social tendencies. Bergson supports his case by likening society to an organism, albeit one whose "cells" are persons with free wills. Social life he calls: "a system of more or less deeply rooted habits, corresponding to the needs of the community." These are, for the most part, the habits of obedience which exert pressure on our wills and engender in us a sense of obligation. As an actual presence within each of its constituent members, society makes claims upon them which express the sum total of its vitality. Nevertheless, Bergson insists that human communities are unique in that they are collectivities of free beings. Consequently, in dealing with recalcitrant individuals, means needed to be found which could harness inappropriate behavior. To this end "static" religion developed as a natural adjunct to mainstream biological pressures. Religion as such exists largely to "sustain and reinforce the claims of society", filling the gap between society's commands and nature's
laws. It "attaches man to life, and consequently the individual to society." Its counterpart, "dynamic" religion, on the other hand, attaches man to the source of life—the élan vital. It is aspirational in character and conducive to the development of the open society in that it often works within the confines of closed societies to expand the range and depth of their spiritual consciousness.

Whereas Bergson, as has been seen in Chapters One and Two, emphasizes the necessity of individual effort and personal transformation en route to the open society, his analysis of man in society is clearly group oriented. As a matter of fact, the individual and society are implied in each other: individuals make up society by their grouping together; society shapes an entire side of individuals by being prefigured in each one of them. The individual and society thus condition each other, circle-wise.10

Individuals, Bergson asserts, belong as much to society as to themselves. Individual freedoms notwithstanding, our relationships with the other members of society are characterized by interdependence. The essence of our obligation to society, Bergson thinks, is the cultivation of the "social ego", an aspect of the self, which forms at the point of our attachment to other personalities and is as solid as this link. The "social ego" thus incorporates a part of society into our being. No one is ever free from its
influence since at the very least "the soul of society is inherent in the language he speaks".

George Herbert Mead

Since he was also concerned with the tight bond between the individual and society a brief reference to the work of George Herbert Mead is included here as an alternative analysis of this phenomenon. Mead believed that man functioned in a context of reciprocal interaction with his environment and developed his sense of self accordingly. Mead's thought was in large part influenced by Darwin's impact on Nineteenth Century thought. As a result of the theory of evolution man and the universe came to be seen as adaptive and interactive, "...as a process rather than as a set of fixed, unalterable essences that remain invariant over time." For Mead, actions occur as part of a communicative process beginning with the "gesture" which is a preparatory movement enabling other individuals to become aware of one's intentions. Mead defines mind as "the ability of an organism to take the role of the other toward its own developing behavior." Reflexitivity is one's ability to reflect upon one's self and is a necessary condition for the emergence of mind as part of the social process. As a result, a social act can occur entirely within a person. The internalized role of the other Mead calls "me". One's "I", on the other
hand, is a capacity for spontaneous activity. When one alters a response or creates a new response to the "me" the "I" is expressed. In organized group situations the individual learns to accept within himself a whole social organism which exerts control over his actions. Mead's term for this is the "generalized other". As a result of this process, "social institutions enter into an individual's thinking as a determinative factor and cause him to develop a complete self...The religious experience occurs in situations where each person becomes closely identified with the other members of the group."\(^{12}\) The result is a fusion of the "I" with the "me".

Ibn Khaldun

Since there is obviously a good deal more to the dynamics of communal associations than has been mentioned thus far, Bergson might well have bolstered his case for the importance of social inter-dependence with a consideration of the binding powers of psychological identification. A perceptive and germane analysis of this phenomenon was given by the Islamic philosopher Ibn Khaldun in the *Mugaddimah* (1377) wherein he offered a consideration of society subject to an organic life cycle. In his model of society we see the waxing and waning of communities articulated in a way Bergson never thought to do.
Ibn Khaldun differs from Bergson in that he understands the associative glue of community to be the function of an interactive, voluntary identification of individuals with the group and its rulers. In effect, the individual sheds much of his claim to personal advantages, honor, and rights, etc., in the interest of the greater goal of social cohesion.

The bond of loyalty arising from such identification is recognized by Ibn Khaldun as 'asabiyya in the broadest sense. The paradigm case of 'asabiyya is in the most primitive human institution, the family, where identification of self with other is most natural and least often called into question. But by various fictions and extensions the relation grows to encompass wider groups, the clan and the tribe... 'Asabiyya in some form is, in Ibn Khaldun's view, the foundation for all social cooperation and specifically for all political relation, for only through 'asabiyya can any claim be enforced.'

Let us note that Ibn Khaldun does not attempt to carry 'asabiyya through to universal applicability and thus is spared the problem of overcoming inter-group enmity which Bergson faced in attempting to forge a community of all mankind. Of course neither did Ibn Khaldun characterize society as deriving its cohesion from a perceived outside threat as did Bergson. Quite the contrary, for Ibn Khaldun it was strictly a matter of the contagion of 'asabiyya which provided the self-generating force and vitality for the social organism.

History, as Ibn Khaldun saw it, was a cyclical process of violent interaction and subsequent conquest between desert
tribe and civilized kingdom within a format of inevitable organic growth and decay. For both societies must die—the kingdom as a result of the inevitable erosion of its vital force and the tribe either by suffering conquest or, in victory, by its metamorphosis into kingdom. The two forms of community can also be seen to represent polar opposites in the fruition of their development. The tribe breeds a desert warrior who is savage, courageous, healthy, and self reliant. His vitality argues for the virtues of asceticism. The kingdom, on the other hand, provides for its citizens the leisure time and division of social responsibilities necessary for the accomplishment of great art, science and other highly developed forms of cultural expression. The trade off is that the force and vitality necessary to build a kingdom, taking it from tribe to complex society, is eroded and siphoned off with the fruits of civilization and the re-emergence of selfishness. This is the inevitable result of the community-at-large losing its 'asabiyah as enculturation replaces savagery as the dominant theme of individual endeavors.

In short, there is a cleavage among the values which human beings may represent such that one composable set is incompatible with another. The highest, best, and most beautiful product of men’s efforts, civilization, was not the state in which the purest, simplest, bravest spirits ranged.14
In the preceding we note the inherent pessimism of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical view of man in society. Here it is the savage who is noble and the "civilized" man who has retarded, even reversed, the course of his individual development. This is, of course, in direct contrast with Bergson's optimistic, open-ended consideration of human potential; yet, as a realistic, though limited in scope, alternative model of the dynamics of community, Ibn Khaldun's analysis merits inclusion in our study.

The Power of Moral Obligations

Bergson defines moral distress as the disruption of harmony in the relationship between the social and individual selves. Be that as it may, as a rule we conform to our obligations automatically and without pause. The situation is complex, though, for within a given society a variety of groups lay claim to our allegiance. Bergson likens them to a number of ever-widening concentric circles extending from the family at the center to the nation-state at the periphery. Each group, in turn, adds to an increasing number of moral obligations. Bergson implies that the widely-held view that our feelings and sympathies keep pace in intensity with their progressive broadening is illusory. In this he is in partial agreement with Mencius who argues that one must reinforce this state of affairs and deliberately make
qualitative distinctions between persons; otherwise the special love naturally accruing toward family and friends loses its meaning. Although he does not say so directly, owing to its depth and universality, Bergson's aspirational love would seem to essentially disregard these priority distinctions.

It is important to remember that, stronger than mere sanctions, obligations are moral not because of their inherent righteousness, but because they are direct expressions of nature's "social will". Since they are so numerous we tend to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of these obligations and may develop an attitude of passive acquiescence. Furthermore, we are likely to experience a comfort in this accommodation which serves to increasingly dull our conscious sensitivity to these forces. As a result, pressures which began as merely obligatory have now become habitual. It is usually only when we seek to depart from these habits that we begin to feel their power. The pressure to conform we feel concomitant with even the slightest desire to break from group norms is thus "composed of the accumulation of all social forces", i.e. the "totality of obligation". Despite the influence of the "totality of obligation", duty is not an automatic, compliant response on the part of individuals and often means resistance to self. Be that as it may, Bergson claims that obedience to laws,
"even absurd ones, assures greater cohesion to the community." In primitive communities the reality of group solidarity is such that a serious moral lapse of the part on any one member is felt to some degree by all of the members. If left unchecked such a lapse poses the danger of contaminating the whole society.

The idea of a criminal being punished as an isolated social entity is, in Bergson's opinion, a fairly recent phenomenon. Bergson does not address the problem of the adjudication of morality and so we are left to wonder just how or on what basis such decisions are really made. Since, in effect, morality is social unity, we might posit as a rule of thumb that for primitive societies what promotes group cohesion is "good" and what fragments the group is "bad". However, we would likely be doing Bergson a disservice by ascribing such a simplistic analysis for the role justice plays in all societies since, in his account of the changes in our idea of justice, the reality as well as the rights, of individuals are increasingly accentuated.

Religion

Bergson claims that, the coercive powers of nature and society notwithstanding, it is in humanity alone that nature has found the means, via the individual, to continue its progress. Bergson is concerned with the risks to social
discipline as societies necessarily evolve by means of individual initiative. Since, in Bergson's view, one's own intellect counsels egoism first, the individual would gladly rush forward in that direction were it not for the opposing power of religion. Religion, Bergson writes: "is then a defensive reaction of nature against the dissolvent power of intelligence.""11 Customs and laws, especially in primitive societies, clearly represent the individual's moral obligation to society and are inextricably bound up with religion. "Originally the whole of morality is custom; and as religion forbids any departure from custom, morality is coextensive with religion."119

Émile Durkheim

Much of Bergson's early thinking on religion and society was a direct result of his attention to the work of Émile Durkheim (Elementary Forms Of The Religious Life, 1912). In this book Durkheim analyzed the simplest religion he could find (the natives of Central Australia) for the purpose of determining the elementary forms of religious life and of generalizing from the results of this investigation to the nature of all religions. It is clear that, for Durkheim, religion is a sociological phenomenon and that the personal experiences of the individual believers do not count for
much. "It [religion] is, above all, a system of ideas by means of which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members."29 It is also evident that, for Durkheim, one religion is as "respectable" as another and thus it is perfectly acceptable to generalize from the most elemental, irreducible form of religion to all the others. Durkheim believed that the sociologist ought to seek out the underlying reality which is the basis for all dogmas and ceremonies. For his working definition of religion Durkheim adopted the following:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a Church, all those who adhere to them.21

The distinction between the sacred and the profane Durkheim claims to be the one common ingredient in all religions. Of particular interest for our purposes is Durkheim's concept of the "moral community" which he calls a church. The church distinguishes religion from magic which has no such bonding of individuals. The underlying reality of religion Durkheim believed to lie outside particular individuals and natural phenomena as well since neither can be "sacred" in itself. The sort of religion which best and most simply expresses the underlying reality Durkheim was searching for he found in totemism. Durkheim noted the
intimate connection between the clan and the totem—which is at once "the name and the emblem of the clan" while it is a "sacred animal, plant or other object". "The common totem...bonds the individual members of the clan together." Since, in his view, the totem in and of itself does not appear to be very impressive or awe-inspiring, Durkheim concluded it to be merely symbolic. Furthermore, since there is no deity per se in this basic religion, Durkheim understood the underlying reality he was searching for to be a force he called the "totemic principle" which is itself based on the reality of society. The reasoning, as Imogen Seger explains it is that, "if the totem symbolizes at the same time the totemic principle—i.e. a superhuman impersonal force—and the clan, it follows that the totemic principle and the clan are one." In sum, it is society itself which evokes divine and sacred feelings and, as an empirical reality assuming moral ascendancy over its members, society is the source of moral obligations. Thus, in Durkheim's reductionistic final analysis, God is merely a symbol for society.

Bergson holds some points in common with Durkheim, mainly as regards the powers of closed societies and the ability of social custom to be, in and of itself, moral law. Nevertheless, Bergson refused to see society as the be all and end all of man's religious potential. Bergson is content
to accept a version of Durkheim's religion as representative of "static" religion, but could never countenance this form of religion as in any sense the last word on the subject. While Durkheim acknowledged religious change as such he thought it only valid along the lines of a social evolution which individuals merely express. The most common and obvious criticism of Durkheim's theory is its deprecation of the individual and the validity of his personal religious experience. Bergson's championing of the individual as the fundamental unit of value in society was anathema to Durkheim.

THE MYTH MAKING FUNCTION

Bergson believed that historically, in the interest of social stability a counter to the dissolvent power of individual intelligence was required. Because instinct had been superceded by intelligence long before it could perform this function directly, it required some assistance from "static" religion. Instinct could, in consort with religion, stir up the imagination to influence and deflect the work of intelligence. This accounts for development of the "myth-making faculty". There is no question but that Bergson's characterization of "static" religion is unflatteringly utilitarian if not downright negative in this respect. On the whole it reinforces the status quo of the
closed society and presents a real obstacle to an individual's spiritual progress.

Bergson claims that the "myth making faculty" acts in human society exactly as does instinct in animal societies. He likens the "myth making faculty" to the telling of those stories with which we lull children to sleep.\(^\text{24}\)

As a matter of fact, the myth-making function, which belongs to intelligence, and which yet is not pure intelligence, has precisely this object. Its role is to elaborate that religion we have been dealing with up to now, that which we call static...\(^\text{25}\)

Besides its direct influences on social preservation religion acts indirectly toward the same end by "stimulating and guiding individual activities". Bergson felt that perhaps its greatest contribution in this area is its promise of the continuation of life after death. Religion serves the individual "as a defensive reaction of nature against the representation, by intelligence, of the inevitability of death."\(^\text{26}\) This function of religion also helps integrate the individual into a multi-generational societal context giving society itself continuity, duration, and stability.

For Bergson, the overall aim of "static" religion is to preserve and tighten the group bond. In the process it provides a common belief system, fosters association among members in rites and ceremonies, distinguishes the group from other groups and, as a result of its cohesive influences,
provides a defense against common danger. This form of religion, then, can be seen to fulfill two basic functions: moral and tribal or "national". Furthermore, "static" religion, born of the "myth-making" function and moral obligation together "are the very substance of closed societies".27

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

In Time And Free Will Bergson claimed to establish human freedom as a fact since it is an immediate datum of consciousness. It is only subsequent to the free act that intelligence comes into play in its quest for intelligibility. In regard to the key question of the intellect's part in Bergson's notion of human freedom, Idella Galagher writes:

Bergson's view of the nature and function of intellect prevented him from allowing it an essential role in the free act. The essence of the free act is spontaneity and unforeseeability and not rationality. We often weigh reasons before a decision, but if the act that follows is truly free, it is not because it was motivated by these reasons. The free act rushes up from the deep-seated self and bursts forth through the outer crust of the superficial self. It is free because it arises out of and agrees with the individual's innermost being. The free act is without a motive, and the deeper the freedom goes, the more striking is the absence of any tangible reason.28
Bergson felt that freedom cannot be, strictly speaking, proven; but that it can be known irrefutably in creative experience. Creative emotions in turn provide the intellect with new as well as more adequate concepts. Freedom, for Bergson, consists not in the ability to choose between alternative possibilities, but rather in the novelty of creation. This view of freedom can be seen to flow directly from Bergson's intuition of durée and the élan vital. It is clearly related to his separation of the self into two aspects: the "deep seated self" (le moi fondamental) and the "superficial self" (le moi superficiel).

The deep-seated self is a duration in which conscious states melt into each other. It is a succession of qualitative changes, a gradual growth and progress that is unforeseeable and creative. Because this is the dynamic self, it constitutes the true personality. The superficial self is the external projection of the deep-seated self, that is, its spatial and social representation, the self as it is refracted through intelligence. When by an effort of will the individual enters into his deep-seated self and experiences his own duration he feels his freedom as an indisputable reality. 

Thus, it follows that man is free to the extent that he becomes one with durée and the élan vital which are both manifestations of the underlying reality of change. When he is in accord with this free and perpetual creation man expresses his freedom in the form suitable to his particular genius.
WAR AND CLOSED SOCIETIES

As we have seen, Bergson claims that man's original and fundamental moral structure is made for closed, simple societies and that within these small, exclusionary groups nature ordained a close unity. However, relations among these self-sufficient groups are often characterized by hostile tendencies. They tend to live in a constant state of potential hostility, ever ready for attack or defense. Nevertheless, one benefit of this perilous situation is that within these groups, social cohesiveness is greatly strengthened by the perception of a common danger. This situation encourages a selfless dedication to the public welfare at the same time as intergroup tensions escalate. As Bergson says: "Self-centredness, cohesion, hierarchy, absolute authority of the chief, all this means discipline, the war-spirit." 32

Bergson ascribes to man's tool-making intelligence a significant role in the promotion of inter-group conflicts. For it is often easier for a group to take tools ready-made from an enemy than to make them. According to Bergson, the origin of war lies in ownership, be it individual or collective. He also argues for an innate martial spirit, maintaining that instances of little boys fighting are evidence for a "war instinct". Furthermore, Bergson feels that there is an element of practice or sport to be seen in
most of the conflicts in recorded history. In the case of "essential wars", fought to maintain or achieve a minimal standard of living, "below which they [nations] believe that life would not be worthwhile", not just soldiers, but whole societies take a hand in the conflict. In a chilling paragraph, Bergson partially anticipated the unfolding of our contemporary international dilemma as follows:

At the pace at which science is moving, that day is not far off when one of the two adversaries, through some secret process which he was holding in reserve, will have the means of annihilating his opponent. The vanquished may vanish off the face of the earth.3

We should bear in mind that, although communities have continued to grow larger and more complex with the passage of time, their essential characteristics as closed societies remain the same. As we have seen, the forces locking mankind into this halt in the evolutionary progression are powerful indeed. Nevertheless, the underlying metaphysical reality of change is constantly at work, attempting to shatter even the circular stagnation of closed societies. It is acting to do this by means of a small number of spiritually advanced individuals who are in tune with, indeed a part of, the élan vital of creation itself. The process begins with them and then spreads outward in a ripple-like contagion culminating in the open society. The aspirational morality, which is their hallmark, gains its adherents by means of its appeal and promise of self transcendence as opposed to the coercion
and constriction of the self so prevalent in closed societies.

JUSTICE

In examining how moral ideas differ in the two societies Bergson suggests that the concept of justice is most instructive since it includes most of the others and is expressed in simpler formulae. Bergson begins by tracing the origin of justice back to the regulation of exchange and barter. In time the scope of justice was extended to regulate other dealings such as disagreements among citizens. At this stage it was still governed by the principle of reciprocity and retribution. Originally, in primitive societies, an injured party and his family would seek redress or revenge from the perpetrators and, in the process, often set up an escalating cycle of violent reprisals. It was as a result of this unsatisfactory situation that the community itself came to exact punishment from the guilty and thus repress the cycle of violence. Consequently, the concept of justice became both refined and further utilized.

Since the concept of justice initially arose in response to the needs of society it came to assume an obligatory status. Communities also extended the concept to guarantee the rights of persons. According to Bergson, this latter
form of justice cannot have its roots in the regulation of commerce or the punishment of crime, but rather traces its genesis to a creative emotion in the consciousness of one group of aspirational persons—the Prophets of Ancient Israel. Thus, we see an admixture of aspirational morality absorbed into the moral fabric of closed societies. This infusion of fresh, spiritually based moral ideas is both a transformative element within a closed society and a source of potential friction as well since there are few things as volatile as the clash of deeply held competitive values. As a case in point, the words of prophets are representative of the emotions Bergson characterizes as aspirational in character. Yet, the prophets, in the promulgation of the new, aspirational morality, were very much at odds with those citizens whose interests were entrenched in the static formulations of morality which they came to pervert in their own interests.

Let us note, however, that the prophets do not easily fit the Bergsonian description of "aspirational" persons. This contention is supported by the work of Abraham Heschel in his insightful contribution to the nature of the phenomenon in The Prophets (1962).

Religious experience, in most cases, is a private affair in which a person becomes alive to what transpires between God and himself...prophetic inspiration is for the sake, for benefit, of a third party...its purpose is the illumination of the people.
The social activism of the prophets was manifested within their unique socio-historical context and their message was a call to a life or death decision on the part of the society at large. They were not spiritual role models as such, but served as intermediaries between God and the community with which He entered into a covenant. Heschel also points out that it was not so much that the prophets were concerned with articulating an advanced concept of justice but rather that they were expressing, through their own person, Divine indignation at the "monstrosity of injustice".

The prophets sometimes offered a positive vision of the future it is true, e.g. (Isaiah.55), but more often they were responding to the very real specter of immanent disaster. Bergson, it seems, has glossed over the negative aspects of prophecy in order to include the prophets themselves on his list of spiritual giants worthy of emulation. Perhaps this is because he considered Israel a closed, tribal society. Nonetheless, in reading the words of the prophets today one is not necessarily called upon to emulate the prophetic message or life style. They had a particular function within their own social context. Although many, if not all of Israel's faults are also extant in today's societies, who would feel it particularly uplifting to bitterly reproach his community as did Jeremiah or go about naked for three years as did Isaiah? With this in mind, would it not be difficult
to make a case for the prophets as precursors of the open society? Bergson admits as much when he says that although Jesus Christ may be considered the "successor to the prophets of Israel...we hesitate to class the Jewish prophets among the mystics of antiquity: Yahweh is too severe a judge, and between Israel and its God there is not enough intimacy." Still, Bergson credits the prophets with providing an "impetus" toward Christianity as well as furnishing the latter with some of its social dynamism.

The next advance in the progression of justice in the world resulted from the Christian message of universal love and brotherhood. This, "open justice" Bergson holds to be the full flowering of the phenomenon. It should be noted that Bergson credits the organizing and consolidating power of intellect and not intuition with being responsible for articulating the new sense of justice as universal brotherhood, equal rights, and the sanctity of the person. This is the context within which the open society can emerge.

Confucius

Unfortunately, Bergson does not develop his theory of the evolution of justice much beyond the foregoing. Had he done so he might well have been disposed to make reference to Confucius. Let us note that, whereas the history of western society has evidenced a strong concern for the discrete
relationship between the individual and society, the
contribution of Chinese philosophy, in particular that of
Confucius, has proceeded from a significantly different
matrix. Social and political philosophers in the Western
Tradition have long questioned the rights and duties of
individual citizens as distinct from the powers accorded to
the state. Part and parcel of this concern has been a
preoccupation, since Plato, with the nature and definition of
justice. For Confucius, though, the cultivation of the
personal life of individuals, fully integrated into the
socio-political context, has been of primary importance.
Justice, perhaps the west's greatest social value, has, as an
abstract entity, been seen as over and apart from the
concrete individuals who put it into practice. In the
Confucian tradition, however, justice is not a self
sufficient entity but emerges in practice as a natural result
of the exemplary leadership of the sage as ruler. Bergson
would certainly have no quarrel with the contextual
definition of the person in society nor would he fail to
applaud the sage's rule by emulation.

For Confucius, society is not locked into the Bergsonian
model of a closed community drawing sustenance from adversity
and cohesion from the will of nature, but evolves instead as
a creative achievement. At its best Chinese society is a
harmonious blend of ritual action (li) expressed by both
developed persons (jen), who lead by non-action (wu-wei), and the masses (min) who are the essential grounds out of which the full potentialities of humanity begin to emerge: "Sociopolitical order is something that they [the people] accomplish rather than have created for them." One can discern a strong affinity here with Bergson's scenario for the creative unfolding of the open society. Therefore, despite their obvious differences, the thought of Confucius provides a concrete historical example of how some aspects of Bergson's aspirational morality can be put into practice.

Although he does not mention Confucius specifically, certainly Confucius qualifies as a sage representative of Bergson's aspirational person. The social context which Confucius aims to establish conforms to Bergsonian principles since, in expressing a process dynamic, it is replete with novelty and is designed to bring out the spiritual potential and interactive harmony of society's constituents.

It would be remiss not to point out that the reverence for tradition and investment of self in ritual action, so much a part of the Confucian tradition, is not shared by Bergson, although to the extent that such emphasis enables the masses, I'm certain Bergson would approve. One might, with some justification, characterize the main difference between Confucius and Bergson as backward versus forward looking. The former anchors his whole rationale on the sage
accomplishments of the past while the latter envisions a future of limitless possibilities.

ASPIRATIONAL MORALITY

The aspirational morality of the open society Bergson labels "complete" and "perfect". It proceeds upwards into something that, as Bergson says, transfigures the primitive basis of obligation. This, in distinction to the closed morality which proceeds downward from nature and imposes itself upon man. Although complete morality is not amenable to precise definition, it is found incarnate in a small number of spiritually advanced individuals such as saints, sages, mystics, and Hebrew prophets.

Bergson denies that aspirational morality can flow as a natural extension from the morality of the closed society. He deems it impossible that, starting from the family, virtue and love can proceed in an unbroken progression to encompass all of humanity. Bergson argues that since social cohesion in the closed societies is largely reactive in nature due to the need for self-protection, "it is primarily as against all other men that we love the men with whom we live." The morality of the open society, on the other hand, is intrinsically different and will proceed freely from a spiritual basis to eventually encompass all of humanity. This radical departure from the past cannot be accomplished
by man alone. It requires the entry of God into the picture. For, Bergson believes, "it is only through God, in God, that religion bids man love mankind."  

Bergson separates the two moralities to such a degree that they become polar extremities. The static, closed morality is best expressed in concrete, impersonal formulae while, on the other hand, dynamic, open morality is a consequence of the actions of privileged individuals who radiate their moral teachings by example.

Love, as expressed within closed morality, is object oriented and proceeds by attraction. Open morality, in contrast, "does not yield to the attraction of its object."  It may not even have an object per se. Regarding the expression of the new morality it can be said that the objects of aspirational love, while they are there for it, do not determine it. As Bergson says: "Its form is not dependent on its content."  In the former case one feels pleasure and a sense of well-being but the love expressed by the open soul includes these and much more.

Since, as we have seen, open morality does not proceed automatically from the will of nature as does its closed counterpart, it must be acquired by diligence and personal commitment. While the closed morality is amenable to formulation, being an active function of individual transition and progress, aspirational morality is not.
Complete and perfect morality works not by the rigid, rule determined control of behavior, but rather by creating "a certain disposition of the soul" so that it flows naturally from the hearts of individual persons.

**REASON AND MORALITY**

Bergson is adamantly opposed to any attempt to trace the foundation of morality to what he calls "the cult of reason". He argues that morality is already in society as a result of the social demands of nature. In effect, when philosophers formulate moral "laws" and principles it is a case of reason "rediscovering" a morality which is already there. As for the higher, aspirational morality, it is largely a matter of the heart rather than the head. Nevertheless, its loving character is reflective and may produce more adequate formulations of existing ethical concepts. Still, it does not require formulation but is expressed freely whatever the circumstances. For Bergson, then, reason *per se* has never been the true source of either open or closed morality. In the realm of morality, Bergson grants that intelligence serves to articulate principles, weigh reasons and consider alternatives, but in itself does not determine what is moral behavior. Intellect contributes to morality by structuring our moral concepts in a comprehensible, logically ordered manner. This is consistent
with the function of intellect, as described in Chapter One, which is mainly: "the utilization of matter for the survival of the species. It enjoys a certain freedom which makes progress possible and which is denied to instinct, but its freedom ends at the point where it threatens social cohesion."39 It is at this point that the "myth-making function" enters to reorder intellect's priorities in the service of instinctual social cohesion.

THE OPEN SOCIETY

And what of the nature of the open society, which Bergson describes as embracing all of humanity—"a dream dreamt now and again by chosen souls"49? Unfortunately, this is not a question which Bergson addresses directly. We must, if we are to make any progress toward answering this difficult question, display our comprehension of the open society against a backdrop of the closed society. This is both consistent with Bergson's polaristic methodology and necessary for our circumstances since Bergson says very little about the open society per se. What he does, for the most part, is suggest a scenario which he firmly believes to be the only realistic means for the open society to evolve. We shall now concern ourselves with articulating the little Bergson did say about the nature of the open society and its evolution.
According to P.A.Y. Gunter some key characteristics of Bergson's open society are that:

It offers a broadening and deepening of humanity across the boundaries of class and race and gives to human life a purpose and an ultimate significance... The open society is the locus of moral and religious creativity and the interaction between these two social tendencies (openness and closure) defines the course of human history.4

In Bergson's own words: "The open society is the society which is deemed in principle to embrace all humanity."4

According to Bergson: "We must, in a single bound, be carried far beyond it [the open society], and without having made it our goal, reach it by outstripping it."41 Could it be then, that the universal application of aspirational morality and the open society are one and the same?

Although the primary source of open morality can be traced to the transformational experiences of aspirational persons, engendering this higher morality in the population at large is most often the result of personal contact with these aspirational persons. This is the only way for most people to begin to realize its nature in lieu of the rare, radically transformative experience. Yet, it seems possible to partake in some small measure of this experience directly. Bergson writes: "the word which we shall make our own is the word whose echo we have heard within ourselves."44 Furthermore, Bergson claims that it is in the realm of possibility for such a person, if he can expand his
consciousness well into the intuitive fringe surrounding his intelligence, to then live the mystic life."

But we know that all around intelligence there lingers still a fringe of intuition, vague and evanescent. Can we not fasten upon it, intensify it, and above all, consummate it in action, for it has become pure contemplation only through a weakening in its principle, and, if we may put it so, by an abstraction practised on itself?"

Bergson claims that while the potency of natural obligation is a factor of its impersonality, complete morality is all the stronger for its multiplicity and individual representation. The open society, then, does not seem to be a concrete entity as such but rather the non-coercive association of developed, aspirational human beings. Would the open society then, best be described as a collective aggregation of diverse mystics?

If we are to be true to Bergson's polarization of the two disparate moralities we ought not to invest the term "open society" with any residual elements characteristic of the closed society. Thus, it seems likely that such a society will have a minimal amount of formal structure. Bergson even goes so far as to suggest that each aspirational individual himself constitutes a new species." As to the objection that these species/individuals may, in manifesting their own creative self-expression, actually promote some sort of anarchic situation, one might suggest, as a rejoinder, that it would seem that the more an individual develops into an
aspirational person, the less of himself as a self-interested, willing being there remains. As a result, it is likely that such persons would take on the saintly characteristic of serving as selfless conduits for the élan of love. Regarding the absorption of aspirational morality into the confines of closed societies Bergson writes: "...the circle that has momentarily opened closes again. Part of the new has flowed into the mold of the old; individual aspiration has become social pressure; and obligation covers the whole." Current morality, which continues to incorporate elements from the small number of aspirational persons, can be seen as a way station en route to the open society. As mankind progresses morally old methods are altered by the addition of new aspirational insights and fitted into more progressive general methods as "the dynamic reabsorbs the static". It should also be noted that dynamic religion, which can be characterized as an attunement with living spiritual principles, is subject to certain limitations since it: "is propagated only through images and symbols supplied by the myth-making function." Bergson draws an intimate connection between the two types of societies and the two types of moralities. In the first case the closed morality of obligation is a result of the pre-existing society and functions in its service. In
the second case, the open morality of aspiration antedates the open society and actually brings it into being.

Let us, nevertheless, consider separately, in themselves, pressure and aspiration. Immanent in the former is the representation of a society which aims only at self-preservation; the circular movement in which it carries round with it individuals, as it revolves on the same spot, is a vague imitation, through the medium of habit, of the immobility of instinct. The feeling which would characterize the consciousness of these pure obligations, assuming they were all fulfilled, would be a state of individual and social well-being similar to that which accompanies the normal working of life. It would resemble pleasure rather than joy. The morality of aspiration, on the contrary, implicitly contains the feeling of progress. The emotion of which we were speaking is the enthusiasm of a forward movement, enthusiasm by means of which this morality has won over a few and has then, through them, spread over the world. "Progress" and "advance", moreover, are in this case indistinguishable from the enthusiasm itself. To become conscious of them it is not necessary that we should picture a goal that we are trying to reach or a perfection to which we are approximating.

Bergson thinks, as did Rousseau, that man was designed for very small societies and good government is not likely to be found in a large, complex society. This, he feels, is evidenced by the paucity of great statesmen in world history. In cases where large nations have forged themselves into a unity, it is due, not so much to the force of constraint working as a cohesive power from above, but rather to the unity within the hearts of a number of elementary societies joined together. Bergson calls this "the power of patriotism".
DEMOCRACY

Bergson does offer some vague hints as to what may be the collective nature of the open society in his discussion of democracy, of which he was a strong advocate. Bergson felt it to be the system farthest removed from nature which, to some extent, alters the conditions of the closed society since it confers upon its individual citizens certain unalienable rights. These rights go hand in hand with duty so that citizens, by doing their duty and respecting the rights of others, guarantee, in turn, their own rights. The greatness of a democracy lies in the fact that duties and rights mutually complement and guarantee each other. Bergson thought the well-functioning democracy to be an intermediate society and a signpost pointing the way to the open society. Bergson traces its sentimental origins to Rousseau, its philosophic principles to Kant, and its religious basis back to both these men.

Bergson held a high opinion of the progressive potential inherent in the American political system. In countering objections to the vagueness of the American Declaration of Independence Bergson maintains that this is necessarily the
case since within a context of liberty and equality "...the future must lie open to all sorts of progress and especially to the creation of new conditions under which it will be possible to have forms of liberty and equality which are impossible of realization, perhaps of conception, today."²¹ The non-democratic society, by contrast, is antithetical to progress since it is distinguished by authority, hierarchy, and immobility. Bergson credits the democratic mind itself with "a mighty effort in a direction contrary to that of nature."²²

JOHIAH ROYCE

Royce offers an distinctively different view of community which draws its cohesion from the investment of loyalty into interpersonal relationships. These relationships can consist of merely two parties, a whole nation, or even mankind itself. Be that as it may, Royce balks at endorsing large, exclusionary communities, preferring instead to retain the unique variety of elements endemic to provincial versions.

Royce defines loyalty as: "The willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause."²³ It is also "...the will to manifest, so far as is possible, the Eternal, that is, the conscious and superhumanity of life, in the form of the acts of an individual Self."²⁴ Let us note that the above in no way affirms the validity of the
individual as an independent moral agent. In fact Royce means quite the opposite. Royce indicates a negative opinion of the inherent worth of individual persons. Speaking of moral independence he says: "a man's self has no contents, no plans, no purposes except those which are, in one way or another, defined for him by his social relations." He goes on to assert that the only way to be an ethical individual is to choose and serve a cause. The merit of particular causes for Royce is not in their inherent worth, although some may be suspect or even bad in themselves, but rather accrues from the investment of loyalty in them by their members.

In Royce's view the ultimate value of a cause for mankind lies in its loyalty to loyalty. By this term Royce means an affirmation of the ultimate worth of loyalty per se which engenders a contagion of loyalty in persons subscribing to any of a number of diverse causes. Thus, a cause is evil insofar as it demands an exclusive loyalty effectively overthrowing and restricting the loyalties of persons to other causes. This serves to erode the cause of loyalty itself. It is loyalty itself which Royce claims to be "the fulfilment of the whole moral law." As a result, "loyalty to loyalty" is Royce's highest good.

While Royce affirms loyalty as the bonding force in community, he makes no mention of any distinction as to the
relative spiritual development of its constituent members.

Evidently everyone qualifies for membership.

Regarding the merits of ethical individualism Royce takes a stance almost diametrically opposed to Bergson.

Ethical individualism has been, in the past, one great foe of the great community. Ethical individualism, whether it takes the form of democracy or of the irresponsible search on the part of individuals for private happiness or for any other merely individual good, will never save mankind.

The foregoing appears to deny the validity of the individual's inner quest for spiritual discovery and aspirational development. It also flies in the face of traditional theological affirmations of faith as the key element in the relationship between man and God. In Royce's scheme faith has been replaced by loyalty and God by community. "Disloyalty" Royce claims "is moral suicide". In sum, for Royce, "The detached individual is an essentially lost being". As such the individual is incapable of evolving into the aspirational person Bergson feels is necessary to form the open society.

Royce also deprecates democracy as being merely "masses of lost individuals".

...it is only the consciously united community—that which is in essence a Pauline church—which can offer salvation to distracted humanity and can calm the otherwise insatiable greed and longing of the natural individual man, the salvation of the world will be found, if at all, through uniting the already existing communities of mankind into higher communities."
Royce's highest expression of loyalty in action he calls The Beloved Community. Bearing some similarities to Bergson's open society, The Beloved Community is a religious bonding of individuals which exists to overcome, by means of love, "individual self-centeredness"—evidently for Royce the essence of sin.

THE OPEN SOCIETY AS A SPIRITUAL REALITY

There is another view of the open society which places it not at the end of man's collective evolutionary development, but rather considers it to be a dimension of a spiritual consciousness which extends beyond time. Dante Germino (Political Philosophy and the Open Society, 1982), credits St. Augustine with being an important contributor to literature of the open society. Germino goes on to claim that, "Augustine's analysis of the "two loves"—love of self and love of God—that compete for man's loyalty brilliantly anticipates the Bergsonian distinction between the openness and the closure of the psyche." Despite a sympathetic analysis of Bergson's open society, Germino faults Bergson with failing to appreciate the qualitative distinction between universality and ecumenicity such that the open society is seen to be a future possibility instead of "an ever-present spiritual reality".
Thus far, we have established that the symbol of the open society points to the reality of the person's simultaneous participation in two communities. There is the concrete, visible community organized for action in time and the world, and there is the universal community of the spirit transcending space and time and knitting together all human beings of good will from mankind's obscure origins to its unknown end... Thus conceived, the open society is not an ideal or a project to be achieved within time and the world but a spiritual reality or "fact". "

What Germino apparently does not fully realize is that the compelling situation of present day closed societies bringing the world to the brink of annihilation gives Bergson's more mundane version of the open society a greater sense of reality—indeed urgency than might otherwise be the case.
NOTES


2. Ibid, p. 95.


5. Bergson does not assert the existence of any particular design or foresight in nature, merely that as a "...biologist assigns a function to an organism; he merely expresses thus the adequateness of the organ to the function." *The Two Sources*, pg. 47.


9. Ibid, p. 199

10. Ibid, p. 188.


17. Ibid, p. 16.

18. Ibid, p. 112.


27. Ibid, p. 256.


29. Ibid, P. 64.


36. Ibid, p. 25.


40. *Two Sources*, p. 256.


42. *Two Sources*, p. 256.
43. Ibid, p. 25.
44. Ibid, p. 27.
45. Ibid, p. 257.
46. Ibid, p. 201.
47. Ibid, p. 256.
49. Ibid, p. 256.
50. Ibid, p. 43.
52. Ibid, p. 272.
54. Ibid, p. 996.
56. Ibid, p. 901.
57. Ibid, p. 860.
59. Ibid, 1155.
60. Ibid, 1155.
62. Ibid, p. 139.
CHAPTER FOUR

MYSTICISM

Let a mystic genius but appear, he will draw after him a humanity already vastly grown in body, and whose soul he has transfigured. He will yearn to make of it a new species, or rather deliver it from the necessity of being a species; for every species means a collective halt, and complete existence is mobility in individuality.

Bergson envisioned that the transformational contagion of love engendered and sustained by theistic mystics would undercut the divisive powers of closed societies and enable mankind to re-form as a global community of free, creative individuals. As such, mysticism appeared to Bergson to offer the only foreseeable solution to the dangers posed by antagonistic closed societies in an age of potential annihilation.

In light of the importance of mysticism as the essential ingredient in Bergson's evolutionary vision of the open society, the task of this final chapter will be to examine the validity of his understanding of theistic mysticism. In so doing I shall focus on the nature of transformational mystical experiences as well as the particular nature of the on-going relationship between the mystic and God. Has Bergson fully understood the nature of these mystical
experiences in light of Otto's definition of the holy and the reports of the mystics themselves? And furthermore, has he fully considered the nature of the relationship between the mystic and God? Finally, I shall address the question of the existential feasibility of his vision for the evolution of the open society.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL JUSTIFICATION OF MYSTICISM

Just as it was Bergson's initial task to establish the validity of intuition as a philosophically valid form of knowledge, it was necessary for him to extend the same argument in order to substantiate the merits of mysticism.3

To what point does intuition go? It alone will be able to say. It seizes a chain [un fill]: it will be up to it to see if this chain reaches up to heaven or stops at some distance from the earth. In the first case, the metaphysical experience will be bound to that of the great mystics: we believe it to be established, for our part, that such is the truth.3

In order to achieve credibility for Bergson's claim it remains necessary to respond to Kant's powerful critique which aims to deny the very possibility of metaphysical and mystical knowledge.

It was Kant's claim, based upon the dissolution of metaphysical reasoning into the Antinomies, that man's intellect is simply not equipped to deal with the question of
the nature of an underlying noumenal reality. Kant's powers of persuasion were such that philosophers seemed to be left with no acceptable means of acquiring metaphysical knowledge and extending their range of spiritual potential other than the self-serving patchwork of "practical reason" Kant designed to permit the retention of ethical values.

Bergson's response was one of partial agreement. He concurred with Kant regarding the impotence of intellect in metaphysical matters but held that such knowledge was indeed available since the potentiality of consciousness includes far more than the static domain of intellect. It is rather by means of intuition that consciousness first merges with durée and the greater underlying reality of change, thus giving it access to metaphysical knowledge. This is not discursive knowledge, i.e. given in terms of a subject/object dichotomy, but rather the realization that the nature of the self and the nature of noumenal reality are at bottom one and the same. Thus, for Bergson, there are two legitimate forms of knowledge, each with its own sphere of competence. The domain of intellect is the world and the intellect has evolved for the purpose of enabling man to gain mastery over matter. It has a social function as well in that it breaks the flow of reality into discrete concepts for ease of articulation and discourse. Bergson felt it his task to redress an imbalance in favor of intellect and establish the
validity of intuition as the proper means of attaining
metaphysical knowledge—a knowledge which is not so much
acquired as it is "realized"—or "made real"—in personal
experience. Bergson came at last to believe that the proper
extension of this process to its highest-deepest level is
mystical union. Consequently, instead of "change" being
regarded as the essence of reality it became the spiritual
love of God "if not God himself". Bergson, perhaps
influenced by William James, argued for the ability of lay
persons to partake of this knowledge. "When it [mysticism]
does call, there is in the innermost being of most men the
whisper of an echo."4 Regarding the truth value of mystical
experiences, Bergson concurred with James that, when well
developed, mystical states have the right to be absolutely
authoritative over the individuals to whom they come. While
others need not accept the revelations uncritically these
states do show rationalistic consciousness to be only one
kind of consciousness.

There is a long and well respected tradition in
philosophy of accepting the insights and transformative
experiences of mystical philosophers as part of the body of
the enterprise. As a philosopher/historian deeply concerned
with this problem Eric Voegelin understood the history of
man's spiritual progress as the history of order. According
to Voegelin this advancement is not the result of the emergence of human potential, rather it is a function of transformative mystical experience. He assigns Anaximander a pivotal role in the affirmation of an infinite unknown (apeiron) as the origin of the "qualitatively differentiated content of the world". This was a distinct departure from Thales who had speculated that the origin of becoming (physis) could be ascertained via the senses i.e. experienced as water. Voegelin credits Parmenides with being the first philosopher to attempt the articulation of transcendental experience. The faculty of the soul which conveys the vision of transcendental reality he called Nous while Logos is that power of the mind which ascertains truth and combines with Nous to determine the nature of Being. The poetic fragments of Parmenides represent the seminal instance of both components complementing each other in the history of philosophy. As Voegelin sees it:

The historical process which results in the concept of Being does not itself move on the level of philosophical speculation; it rather is the process of the soul in which Being as absolute transcendence...comes ultimately into experiential grasp."

For Plato the Good, as the object of transcendental experience, is the source of order and as Voegelin points out, "...the order of being becomes visible only to those whose souls are well ordered." Voegelin goes on to
articulate the role of the philosopher so favored in a manner perfectly compatible with Bergson.

The discovery of transcendence, of intellectual and spiritual order, while occurring in the souls of individual human beings, is not a matter of "subjective opinion"; once the discovery is made, it is endowed with the quality of an authoritative appeal to every man to actualize it in his own soul; the differentiation of man, the discovery of his nature, is a source of social authority. The assertion of such authority as well as the appeal to the ignorant to actualize the potentialities of their humanity, is a permanent factor in the dynamics of order.

Such experiences are not, however, achieved by everyone. Aristotle marked a departure from the group of mystical philosophers which had included Parmenides, Socrates and Plato. As Voegelin sees it, with Aristotle Nous was no longer the spiritually perceptual means to contemplate the Good as it was in Parmenides and Plato. It was forced into a conceptual function "derailing" the transcendental symbols of mystical experience into topics of speculation. "The derailment occurs when the symbols are torn out of their experiential context and treated as if they were concepts referring to a datum of experience."

The fullness of experience which Plato in the richness of his myth is in Aristotle reduced to the conception of God as the prime mover, as the noesis noeseos, the "thinking of thinking". The eros toward the Agathon correspondingly is reduced to the agapesis, the delight in a cognitive action for its own sake, moreover, no longer is the soul as a whole immortal but only that part in it which Aristotle calls active intellect, the passive intellect, including memory, perishes, and finally, the mystical via negativa by which the soul ascends to the vision of the Idea in the Symposium is thinned out to the rise toward the dianoetic virtues and the bios theoretikos."
In contrast to this situation, Bergson's whole epistemological thrust was an attempt to reestablish experience as the primary source of metaphysical knowledge. Bergson tried to find a way back to the direct source of metaphysical knowledge because, from his perspective, Kant was guilty of severely restricting the potentiality of human consciousness to the limitations of an intellect designed for static formulation. As a result, intuitive self-realization became Bergson's answer to the epistemological impasse created by Aristotle and Kant. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that intellect was de-emphasized but never disparaged by Bergson since he felt it to be a necessary adjunct for the articulation and transmission of intuitive knowledge.

Arthur Schopenhauer on Intuition

As a philosopher with a great deal in common with Kant and Bergson, Schopenhauer was particularly concerned with the question of the philosophical suitability of what he called "inner, illuminative knowledge". While Schopenhauer considered Kant his mentor he departed from Kant in regard to the possibility knowing the thing-in-itself. In this effort Schopenhauer employed what can only be termed an intuitive methodology to discover that, in essence, we ourselves are the noumenal reality--namely Will. He states:

...on the path of the representation, we can never reach the thing-in-itself, i.e. that which exists generally outside the representation, but that for this purpose we must pursue quite a different path leading through the heart of things and opening for us the citadel by treachery so to speak. 11
By this he means that we cannot know the Will as subject to object, but instead, in our ceaseless existential craving, we may realize ourselves to be a superficially distinct extension of the universal will. True to his Kantian heritage, Schopenhauer was careful to limit the nature and extent of such knowledge.

The inner being-in-itself of things is not something that knows, is not an intellect, but something without knowledge. Knowledge is added only as an accident, as an expedient for the phenomenal appearance of that inner being; it can therefore take up that inner being itself only in accordance with its own nature which is calculated for quite different ends (namely those of an individual will), and consequently very imperfectly. This is why a perfect understanding of the existence, inner nature, and origin of the world, extending to the ultimate ground and meeting every requirement, is impossible. So much as regards the limits of my philosophy and of all philosophy.¹²

Here Schopenhauer argues for the reality of our epistemological limitations and, within those confines, one can acknowledge his point. However, it is perhaps incorrect to assume that all possibilities for a personal, transformative change, which would soften or even obliterate this limitation of self, are forever denied. Is it not because of this self-constricting denial of the possibility of conscious growth and not because of his emotive labeling of the will's activity as "blind", "stupid" and "meaningless" that Schopenhauer's philosophy can truly be called pessimistic?
In a sense Schopenhauer undermined his own case since, as we have seen, in order to establish knowledge of the will as the thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer employed what can only be termed an intuitive method quite compatible with Bergson’s. Both methods involve self-realization—for Schopenhauer it is the will, while for Bergson it is durée and the élan vital. Be that as it may, Schopenhauer had no wish to avail himself further of this alternative source of knowledge. This is clear when we examine his treatment of mysticism. Although Schopenhauer had great respect for the Christian mystics, in particular Meister Eckhart, Madame Guyon, and Jacob Boehme, he felt it necessary to propose the establishment of the parameters of philosophical knowledge such that intuitive cognizance of anything beyond the knowledge of the self as will was illegitimate.

In the widest sense, mysticism is every guidance to the immediate awareness of that which is not reached either by perception or conception, or generally by any knowledge. The mystic is opposed to the philosopher by the fact that he begins from within, whereas the philosopher begins from without. The mystic starts from his inner, positive, individual experience, in which he finds himself as the eternal and only being, and so on. But nothing of this is communicable except the assertions that we have to accept on his word; consequently he is unable to convince. The philosopher, on the other hand, starts from what is common to all, the objective phenomenon lying before us all, and from the facts of self-consciousness as they are to be found in everyone.13
Despite this limiting of the province of philosophy, Schopenhauer actually opens the door for the validity of mystical knowledge if the experiences upon which it is based are themselves facts of self-consciousness. That, as yet, such experiences have been the province of but a small number of individuals does not necessarily invalidate these experiences as exclusionary. Bergson suggests that they are potentially available to everyone. "If a word of a great mystic, or some one of his imitators, finds an echo in one or another of us, may it not be that there is a mystic dormant within us, merely waiting for an occasion to awake?"

Bergson goes on to argue for the verifiability of mystical experience by claiming that just as Livingston marked his voyages into unknown Africa for future traders, so have the mystics set forth guidelines for other seekers to follow.

When Schopenhauer says that: "philosophy is nothing but the correct and universal understanding of experience itself, the true interpretation of its meaning and content." does he not help to shore up Bergson's case for the propriety of including mystical experiences as subject matter for philosophical analysis?

Mystical influences on Bergson

Of the major influences in the evolution of Bergson's understanding of mysticism, namely: Plotinus, William James,
Henri Delacroix, Emile Durkheim, and Evelyn Underhill, only Plotinus, Delacroix and Underhill appear to have had a major impact on him. And of these three, Underhill was by far the most important.

Concerning the primary historical sources of mystical experience, Bergson was apparently only intimately familiar with Plotinus on whom he taught a course at the Collège de France. This situation, coupled with the fact that Bergson never claimed personal mystical experience, nor, as I shall demonstrate, does he exhibit familiarity with important aspects of the phenomenon, must be taken into account in any assessment of his philosophy of religion. Since, I shall argue, Bergson’s contribution is apparently not the result of the same direct personal experience as the mystics he cites, the bulk of his knowledge about mysticism seems to be, for better or worse, culled from other sources who he respected and to whom he deferred. Bergson relied heavily on these sources as well as on the spiritual resonances of his own intuitive understanding of the phenomenon.

We can trace one of Bergson’s earliest exposures to the question of mysticism to William James. Bergson was clearly intrigued by the treatment of mysticism in James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902); and, as early as 1903, Bergson expressed an interest in the phenomenon in a letter to James. Both men felt that an "echo" or resonances
of mystical experience within the non-mystic could attest to the validity of these reports.

Henri Delacroix

Bergson maintained a lively interest in mysticism and in 1909 he reviewed the writings of Henri Delacroix (*Etudes d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme*, 1908) on the subject. Delacroix became a major influence on Bergson and was acknowledged as such, along with Plotinus and Underhill, in the *Two Sources*. Delacroix agreed with Bergson that intuition and intellectualism represent a two-fold tendency of the mind but went on to claim that this dualistic tendency is resolved in Christian mysticism.

...at the same time mysticism is a revenge of intuition against discursive knowledge. The tendency to think by one stroke the totality of things, to condense the essence of them in a total and instantaneous knowledge, to attain thus to being itself in its depths and in its spontaneity by a direct apprehension, excluding differences and distinctions, consequently a stranger to reason, is as old as rational knowledge...Intellectualism, almost always and everywhere, has had as antagonist an intuitionism disdainful of relations and struck by the absolute. It is from this tendency that philosophical mysticism is formed, adversary of complement of rational metaphysics, the mysticism which has for its object intellectual intuition and which affirms the existence above reason of a faculty privileged to attain the absolute which is above things. Christian mysticism...unites this double current.16

It is important to note that Delacroix denied Christian mysticism to be of a supernatural origin. He believed that
it was merely a type of genius which did not exceed the powers of nature. Bergson was never to stray far from this conclusion.

PLOTINUS

Bergson viewed Plotinus as the natural conclusion of the Greek intellectual vision. Plotinus showed Bergson what mysticism was; and Bergson responded by envisioning what it could be—if it were amenable to his metaphysic of change.

As regards Plotinus, there is no doubt about the answer. It was granted to him to look upon the promised land, but not to set foot upon its soil. He went as far as ecstasy, a state in which the soul feels itself, or thinks it feels itself, in the presence of God, being irradiated with His light; he did not get beyond this last stage, he did not reach the point where, as contemplation is engulfed in action, the human will becomes one with the divine will. He thought he had reached the summit: in his eyes, to go further would have meant to go downhill. This is what he expressed in language of rare beauty, yet which is not the language of thoroughgoing mysticism. "Action," he said, "is a weakening of contemplation." Therein he remains faithful to Greek intellectualism, he even sums it up in a striking formula; and at any rate he did contrive to impregnate it with mysticism. In short, mysticism, in the absolute sense in which we have agreed to take the word, was never attained by Greek thought.

Bergson grants Plotinus the validity of his mystical encounter with God; yet he took it upon himself to rate Plotinus against certain heralded mystics of the Catholic Church. Bergson labeled them "perfect" because they are...
"complete" i.e. they feel it to be their mystical office to express the result of their mystical encounter as "action", "creation", and "love". Jacques Maritain, a Catholic philosopher himself, takes issue with Bergson's emphasis on action over contemplation. "...it is at least ambiguous to write as did Bergon that the final state for contemplation is to spoil itself in action and in an irresistible urge which casts the soul into the most vast undertakings." Besides, might not the contemplative mystic, by his dignity, reverence, and devotional practice, serve a purpose comparable in value to one who proselytizes—if only as a role model for spiritual practice? It seems that the possibility that historical circumstances, as well as the personal context of the individual mystic may, at times, dictate a purely contemplative life style apparently did not occur to Bergson.

Evelyn Underhill

It is well known that Evelyn Underhill was influenced by the vitalistic philosophers, especially Bergson, to whom she made numerous references in The Mystic Way (1913). It is just as certain that Bergson drew a great deal from her as well. Chapter Two of Underhill's classic introduction to the subject, Mysticism, is entitled Mysticism and Vitalism. In it she prefigures the essence of the spiritual rationale Bergson was to employ some twenty two years later.
The mystics, one and all, have answered this question in the same sense, and proved in their own experience that the premises of "Activism" are true. This application of the vitalistic idea to the transcendental world, does in fact fit the observed facts of mysticism far more closely even than it fits the observed facts of man's ordinary mental life.\(^\text{161}\)

She goes on to temper her endorsement somewhat: "The full spiritual consciousness of the true mystic is developed not in one, but in two apparently opposite but really complementary directions."\(^\text{162}\) As the great Dutch mystic Ruysbroeck pointed out, "God according to the Persons is Eternal Work, but according to the Essence and Its perpetual stillness He is Eternal Rest."\(^\text{163}\) Underhill, clearly, and with support from the very mystics Bergson draws upon for inspiration, affirms an ultimate spiritual dualism. She further claims that the genius of a great mystic does not lie so much in his "action", "creation", and "love" as Bergson insists, but rather in the fact that he or she lives astride two disparate stages of reality—"The sense world and the world of spiritual life." Underhill accepts the paradox of Being and Becoming as irresolvable, but claims that the mystic achieves in mystical experience what the limited powers of thought cannot. "He solves it [the paradox] in terms of life: by a change or growth of consciousness which eludes the perceptive powers of other men."\(^\text{164}\) Bergson, of
course, could not tolerate such a dualism and resolved the paradoxical situation in favor of Becoming by denying the ultimate reality of Being.

In a note to the twelfth edition of *Mysticism*, written some eighteen years after its initial publication, Underhill put further distance between herself and Bergson.

The ideas of Bergson and Eucken no longer occupy the intellectual foreground.... But the position which is here defended— that of a limited dualism, 'Two-step philosophy', is the only type of metaphysic adequate to the facts of mystical experience—remains in my own mind as true as before.  

Finally, regarding what were in Underhill's opinion, the limitations of non-Christian mysticism, one can discern a profound and abiding influence on Bergson. The following passage from Underhill is one, the sense of which, Bergson seems to have appropriated virtually intact:

The tendency of Indian mysticism to regard the Unitive Life wholly in its passive aspect, as a total self-annihilation, a disappearance into the substance of the Godhead, results, I believe, from such a distortion of truth. The Oriental mystic 'presses on to lose his life upon the heights'; but he does not come back and bring to his fellow-men the life-giving news that he has transcended mortality in the interests of the race. The temperamental bias of Western mystics towards activity has saved them as a rule from such one-sided achievement as this; and hence it is in them that the Unitive Life, with its 'dual character of activity and rest,' has assumed its richest and noblest forms. 
Bergson's Understanding Of Mysticism

Bergson defined the goal of mysticism as an identification with and a partaking of the spiritual essence of the élan vital:

In our eyes, the ultimate end of mysticism is the establishment of a contact, consequently of a partial coincidence, with the creative effort which life itself manifests. This effort is of God, if it is not God himself. The great mystic is to be conceived as an individual being, capable of transcending the limitations imposed on the species by its material nature, thus continuing and extending the divine action. Such is our definition.25

Bergson believed that mystical experience is, in effect, a partaking of the purest form of the love which creates and sustains the universe. Accordingly, the mystic's claim for such experience is validated by the testimony of his subsequent activity, infecting humanity with the spirit of self-transforming love. Furthermore, if enough of these individuals arose to engender this love in others, the debilitating, binding strictures of closed societies would fall away, resulting in the natural evolution of the open society. But Bergson points out that such an eventuality is not to be expected soon.

In defining mysticism by its relation to the vital impetus, we have implicitly admitted that true mysticism is rare...Let us confine ourselves for the moment to noting that it lies...at a point which the spiritual current, in its passage through matter, probably desired to reach but could not.26
There are, of course, many difficult problems to resolve en route to the open society, not the least of which is how a planet of several billions of people, most of whom are locked into a spiritually impoverished struggle for existence, would be amenable to, or even capable of, such profound transformations. Bergson addressed this issue, in part, by arguing for the necessary implementation of technology to free mankind from the spiritually stultifying drudgery of subsistence living. He suggested that the demands upon man to sustain himself by the sweat of his brow condemn him to expend the greater part of his energies endeavoring to ensure his survival. As a result, if real spiritual progress is to be achieved, it is necessary for there to be "...a profound change in the material conditions imposed on humanity." This will make it possible to free man's consciousness from the demands of nature and direct it inward with the concentration necessary to effect the desired spiritual transformation.

Bergson saw the open society as the inevitable extension of the evolutionary, upward spiral of the spiritual élán of love. This action Bergson strongly suggests to be the activity, indeed the essence of God Himself. It is final only in the sense that the ultimate identification of the aspirational person lies within the élán vital. We have seen in Chapter One that such progress for humanity is not a
function of the herd mentality characteristic of closed societies. Rather, it erupts sporadically, rarely in certain gifted individuals, e.g. saints, sages, and mystics.

There is a genius of the will as there is a genius of the mind, and genius defies all anticipation. Through those geniuses of the will, the impetus of life, traversing matter, wrests from it, for the future of the species, promises such as were out of the question when the species was being constituted. Hence in passing from social solidarity to the brotherhood of man, we break with one particular nature, but not with all nature.\textsuperscript{219}

Thus, it falls to these aspirational individuals to effect, with the power of their example and influence, the open society wherein mankind exists both as an aggregate of aspirational individuals and a community of Spirit. This, the culmination of Bergson's philosophy of religion is, in true Bergsonian fashion, both a polarity of individual and community, as well as a paradox of the open society, since individual mystics, as species unto themselves, also form a fully developed community.

Bergson asserts that, just as the mystic partakes of God's love, which embraces His handiwork, so does the mystic express love toward humanity. This love is of a much purer nature than the love of family or community. It tolerates no restrictive barriers as do these social units. Neither is it nourished and reinforced by biological instinct or external threats. Mysticism, then, aims at shaking mankind free from
its halt as a cyclical eddy in the evolution of the spirit and transforming it into a purer, more spiritually creative representation of the very source of life.

Bergson defined the ultimate end of mysticism as the contact and "partial coincidence" with the élan vital. He went on to say that "This effort is of God, if it is not God Himself". For Bergson the mystic is an individual who is able to transcend the material strictures which limit the human species as a whole. Consequently, he lives at the cutting edge of the élan vital, continuing and extending its divine action. As a result of his understanding of metaphysical reality as creative novelty, Bergson is precluded from assigning or envisioning any ultimate goal for man or spirit. What he does however, is define the goal of mysticism as: "The identification of the human will with the divine will." Thus, as a result of his being in harmony with the élan of love, man fulfills his human potential by cresting upon this wave of spiritual élan.

Bergson relied heavily on Christianity to demonstrate the prefiguring of the open society. "Humanity had to wait till Christianity for the idea of universal brotherhood, with its implication of equality of rights and the sanctity of the person, to become operative." Be that as it may, regarding the ultimate fulfilment of the Christian promise, Bergson maintains reservations.
Now, a mystic society, embracing all humanity and moving, animated by a common will, towards the continually renewed creation of a more complete humanity is no more possible of realization in the future than was the existence in the past of human societies functioning automatically and similar to animal societies. Pure aspiration is an ideal limit, just like mystic souls who draw and will continue to draw civilized societies in their wake. The remembrance of what they have been, of what they have done, is enshrined in the memory of it in touch with image, which abides ever living within him, of a particular person who shared in that mystic state and radiated around him some of its light.

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Although it is a natural extension of the application of the phenomenological bracketing of the world he tacitly recognized as a necessary component of the intuitive method, Bergson failed to acknowledge the tremendous importance the mystics placed upon Unknowing. In his advocacy of this methodology, the anonymous author of the classic mystical treatise The Cloud of Unknowing describes the separation of God and mystic as just such a cloud and advises beating upon it with "a sharp dart of longing love". He stresses the necessity of preparatory isolation by insisting that the contemplative place a "cloud of forgetting" between himself and all creatures, their works and conditions.

Unknowing is widely acknowledged as an essential precursor to mystical union and among its adherents are: Plotinus, Psuedo Dionysius, and most prominently, Meister Eckhart. Eckhart's description of the path to union spells
out a hierarchy of epistemological value which is not only deeper and more authoritative than Bergson's but appears to take the intuitive methodology Bergson used to discover durée to its conclusion in peak mystical experience.

Meister Eckhart

Whereas for Bergson, creative knowledge comes in the form of new ideas proceeding from an emotional base, for Eckhart, mystical experience is itself the highest form of knowledge. His articulation of Unknowing is consistent with Bergson's intuitive methodology, although, as we shall see, on a more sophisticated spiritual level.

As a philosopher as well as a cleric, Meister Eckhart was well aware of the Neoplatonists and is likely to have been influenced by Plotinus' consideration of the One and the flight of the alone to the Alone. We know he is indebted to Dionysius the Areopagite who stressed the hierarchical structure of manifest reality and put forth the seminal consideration of the method of Unknowing. Unknowing was Eckhart's path to union; the means by which one could peel away the outer layers of consciousness to reveal the ground of the soul.
These three dimensions represent three kinds of knowledge. The first is sensual; the eye sees things at a distance. The second is intellectual and is much higher in rank. The third represents [the function of] that aristocratic agent of the soul, which ranks so high that it communes with God, face to face, as He is. This agent has nothing in common with anything else. It is unconscious of yesterday, or the day before, and of tomorrow and the day after, for in eternity there is no yesterday, nor any tomorrow, but only now.

While Bergson seemed to tacitly recognize the necessity for the mystic's method of Unknowing by virtue of his bracketing of phenomenal consciousness in the intuitive methodology, he appeared to pay little attention to what that process might entail. In Eckhart we have a spokesman who was not only a cleric of the highest academic credentials but one who was an active, fully committed preacher as well. In fact it was the sincerity and audacity of his sermons which resulted in his being indicted for heresy in 1325. On the surface, Eckhart would seem to be an ideal representative of what Bergson believed the complete mystic should be; yet Eckhart argued forcefully for the deliberate separation of phenomenal and spiritual realities as a fact of spiritual life and nowhere attempts a resolution of both realities in the Bergsonian manner.

The soul has two eyes--one looking inwards and the other outwards. It is the inner eye of the soul that looks into essence and takes being directly from God. That is its true function. The soul's outward eye is directed toward creatures and perceives their external forms but when a person turns inwards and knows God in terms of his own awareness of him, in the roots of his being, he is then freed from all creation and is secure in the castle of truth.
The first problem of the mystic way—that of how to disengage one's consciousness from its bonding with phenomenal reality is so formidable that the desire for the quest never even arises in most people. For those who do manage to begin the journey, Eckhart advises against staging an impassioned struggle with one's instinctual nature. Instead, he advocates the way of DISINTEREST, by means of which a person can begin to disengage from the world.

Then I ask: What is the prayer of the disinterested heart? I answer by saying that a disinterested man, pure in heart, has no prayer, for to pray is to want something from God, something added that one desires or something that God is to take away. The disinterested person, however, wants nothing and neither has he anything of which he would be rid. Therefore he has no prayer or he prays only to be uniform with God. 37

While the foregoing is Eckhart's advice for beginning one's spiritual journey, to plumb the depths of mystical consciousness requires traveling through a great deal of inner territory; in fact, every bit of the interior self right up to the Divine Spark which Eckhart recognized as the heart of the soul. 29a This journey ranges inward from the flightiest imagery musings, through the emotional matrix and the contrition belt, all the way to the inner foundations. Despite the attractiveness of the goal there is, however, a darker side to this powerful experience. The confrontation of consciousness with its inner depths is well described by Underhill.
True and complete self-knowledge, indeed, is the privilege of the strongest alone. Few can bear to contemplate themselves face to face, for the vision is strange, terrible, and brings awe and contrition in its wake.39

The third dimension which Eckhart recognizes involves a quantum leap from the inner foundation to the Divine Spark. The old baggage of the self is jettisoned and union is effected in the Godhead. This is, of course, the greatest mystery and yet Eckhart would not stop here but with unparalleled audacity desires to probe further.

Therefore I say that to the extent a person can deny himself and turn away from created things, he will find his unity and blessing in that little Spark in the soul, which neither space nor time touches. The Spark is averse to creatures, and favorable only to pure God as He is in Himself. It is not satisfied with the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit, nor with all three Persons together, as long as their several properties are preserved. To tell the truth, this light is not satisfied with the unity of this fruitful conception of the Divine Nature, but I shall go further and say what must sound strange--though I am really speaking the truth--that this light is not satisfied by the simple, still, motionless essence of the Divine Being that neither gives nor takes. It is more interested in knowing where this essence came from. It wants to penetrate the simple core, the still desert, into which no distinction ever crept--neither the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. It wants to get into the secret, to which no man is privy, where it is satisfied by a light whose unity is greater than its own. This core is a simple stillness, which is unmoved itself but by whose immobility all things are moved and all receive life, that is to say, all people who live by reason and have their center within themselves.40
The foregoing, and others like it which claim to offer an authentic recounting of the mystical encounter, treat of two articles of religious faith which Bergson fails to discuss. These are the Trinity and the Godhead. The Trinity, which Bergson never mentions, has always been an integral part of Christian mysticism. St. Theresa makes what may be the clearest statement concerning this mystery:

By some mysterious manifestation of the truth, the three Persons of the most Blessed Trinity reveal themselves, preceded by an illumination which shines on the spirit like a most dazzling cloud of light. The three Persons are distinct form one another; a sublime knowledge is infused into the soul imbuing it with a certainty of the truth that the Three are of one substance, power, and knowledge, and are one God.\(^{41}\)

Although Bergson held mysticism to be a genuine cross-cultural phenomenon he was clearly biased toward Christian mysticism, which, he felt, exemplified the mystic as representing the vanguard of God's love. Bergson faults Indian mysticism, perhaps the most articulate and philosophically adept account of religious experience, with being "contaminated" with abstract, philosophical thought.

There is a radical distinction, in this case, between the mystical and the dialectical; they only come together at long intervals. Elsewhere, on the contrary, they have been constantly intermingled, in appearance helping each other, perhaps in actual fact mutually preventing each other from attaining full maturity. This is what appears to have happened in Hindu thought...Both a philosophy and a religion, it has varied with time and place.\(^{42}\)
Bergson extended similar criticism to Buddhism.

Everything in Buddhism which can be put into words can doubtless be considered as a philosophy...we shall not hesitate to see mysticism in the Buddhist faith. But we shall understand why it is not complete mysticism. This would be action, creation, love.\textsuperscript{43}

Since Bergson believed that both of these religions are characterized by a spirit of renunciation they do not meet one of his most basic criteria. They fail to embrace life. In Bergson's opinion, it was only as a result of Western civilization's gift of industrialization that the "burning, active mysticism" of Hindu mystics Ramakrishna and Vivekananda could come to fruition. Prior to that, inevitable famines in India resulted in a wide-spread attitude of pessimistic helplessness. Bergson remarks that: "...it was pessimism which prevented India from carrying her mysticism to its full conclusion, since complete mysticism is action."\textsuperscript{44}

Bergson believed that the element of active difference between the great contemplative mystics of the East and active mystics of Christianity is just that Judaic passion for justice first displayed in the Hebrew Prophets and later in the message of Christ. Thus, it may be that the basic difference between Christian mysticism and that of Buddhism and Hinduism is more the emulation of Christ's evangelical mission than the proposition that true union is later verified in action. According to Bergson, the mystic's
The greatest task is "...to effect a radical transformation of humanity by setting an example. The object could be attained only if there existed in the end what should theoretically have existed in the beginning, a divine humanity."176

Although he does not consider it the primary source of spiritual transformation, Bergson does not deny orthodox religion a vital role in the dissemination of the mystic message.

Therefore everyone will appreciate that mysticism may assert itself, original and ineffable, now and then, in a pre-existing religion which is formulated in terms of intelligence, whereas it is difficult to obtain acceptance for the idea of a religion which exists only through mysticism, and which is a mere extract of it—an extract capable of being formulated by the intellect and therefore grasped by all.177

According to Bergson, religion serves as an aid to mysticism by preparing humanity, by means of its mystically inspired teachings, for the reception of the unifying power of God's love. In Bergson's eyes, mysticism and religion are "mutually cause and effect". The mystic supports religion by recognizing his primary mission to be that of an intensifier of religious faith.177 While for its part, religion offers a tradition and spiritual context within which the mystic can draw support and sustenance.
Bergson appears to take little cognizance of the tremendous impact profound religious experience has on the very mystics he cites. For instance, in the course of arguing for action as a major criterion for judging the validity of mystical experience Bergson concludes: "...they [the mystics] prove to be great men of action, to the surprise of those for whom mysticism is nothing but visions, and raptures and ecstasies." Bergson goes on to downplay these phenomena:

And they [the mystics] generally regarded their own visions, when they had any, as of secondary importance, as wayside incidents; they had to go beyond them, leaving raptures and ecstasies far behind, to reach the goal, which was identification of the human with the divine will. In general the mystics welcome these experiences as the culmination of contemplative practice leading to a direct contact with God. For is it not the union with God which is the highest aspect of mysticism and not, as Bergson suspected, a mere identification of the mystic's will with God's? Nevertheless, it should be remembered that raptures and ecstasies are themselves only vehicles of transport. St. John of the Cross warns against abuse of these phenomena:

Drawn by vanity and arrogance they will allow themselves to be seen in exterior acts of apparent holiness, such as raptures and other exhibitions. They become audacious with God and lose holy fear which is the key to and guardian of all the virtues.
I should like to suggest that Bergson’s account of peak mystical experiences is not consistent with the reports of most mystics. Speaking of the soul at such times he says:

It does not directly perceive the force that moves it, but it feels an indefinable presence, or divines it through a symbolic vision. Then comes a boundless joy, an all-absorbing ecstasy or an enthralling rapture; God is there, and the soul is in God. Mystery is no more... For it [an imperceptible anxiety] shows that the soul of the great mystic does not stop at ecstasy, as at the end of a journey. The ecstasy is indeed rest, if you like, but as though at a station... But though the soul becomes, in thought and feeling, absorbed in God, something of it remains outside; that something is the will... Its life, then, is not yet divine.

In the accounts of the mystics regarding their dealings with God in mystical experience is it ever the case that "mystery is no more"? Bergson goes on to assert that the mystic's individual will, while it remains in an attitude of "agitation in repose", causes him to fall short of complete mysticism. Consequently, since the ecstasy has died out, the mystic must undergo the desolation of what St. John of the Cross called: "the dark night of the soul". Salvation, when it comes, is in the form of the soul's serving as God's instrument.
Thy mystic soul yearns to become this instrument. It throws off anything in its substance that is not pure enough, not flexible and strong enough, to be turned to some use by God. Already it had sensed the presence of God, it had thought it beheld God in a symbolic vision, it had even been united to Him in its ecstasy; but none of this rapture was lasting, because it was merely contemplation; action threw the soul back upon itself and thus divorced it from God. Now it is God who is acting through the soul, in the soul; the union is total, therefore final. 

Bergson claims that ecstasy and rapture are: "merely contemplation". In fact, contemplation as the attempt to bridge the separation of mystic and God, implies distance to be overcome whereas ecstasy and rapture, by definition, affirm the presence of God.

Rudolf Otto

Perhaps the most articulate spokesman regarding the profound character of the experiential relationship between the mystic and God in peak experiences is Rudolf Otto. Where Bergson glosses over the character and even the significance of this momentous encounter, Otto brings it out into the open, describing the encounter in such clarity of detail as to rival the descriptions of the mystics themselves. Perhaps the main importance of Otto for our purposes is that he refocuses Bergson's emphasis from the mystics themselves to God—where in fact, they never ceased to place it themselves.
A key differentiating factor in the separation of genuine religious mysticism and nature mysticism (a form of momentary ego loss) would seem to be the encounter with holiness. As Otto describes it holiness can be understood as a transcendental spiritual reality such that there may not be any natural occurrence of it in the phenomenal world. As a result, the presence of holiness in religious experience attests to its genuineness. Holiness is also in part responsible for the contrition which often pervades the consciousness of mystical persons prior to union. This can be understood as a result of the proximity of He who forms and represents the ultimate moral standard.

In his development of the "Holy" as a fundamental category Otto distinguishes between a priori cognitions and innate cognitions. The former being those everyone could have, while the latter are those everyone does have. The holy as a cognitive a priori does not occur spontaneously, "...but rather is 'awakened' through the instrumentality of other more highly endowed natures". Persons thus favored have not the capacity to produce the cognitions in question but rather possess the faculty of receptivity, complemented by a principle of judgement and acknowledgement.

Otto posits a hierachical development or unfolding of this manifestation. The first stage lists only the
spiritual predisposition in the sense of receptiveness. In this he is in accord with Bergson and William James. The second stage is the prophet—a man in whom the Spirit reveals itself as the power to hear the voice within as well as the power of divination. Lastly, as remote from the prophet is he is from the common man is he who is most completely the object of divination—the Son. Somewhere in between the second and third stages is, of course, the mystic. Why Otto did not include the mystics as a stage in their own right is not known. Perhaps because he may have slightly deprecated the phenomenon in his definition: "...mysticism is the stressing to a very high degree; indeed the overstretching of the non-rational elements in religion; and it is only intelligible when so understood."^4

Otto explains that The Holy combines within itself rational as well as non-rational components and yet remains a purely a priori category. The rational ideas of absoluteness, completion, necessity, substantiality, and the good as objective values are not to be thought of as evolving from sense perception but rather from an original and underivable capacity of the mind implanted in what Otto calls "the pure reason".

The non-rational elements emanate from something deeper than pure reason—that to which mysticism has labeled the ground of the soul. This is the dwelling place of what Otto
calls "the numinous" which issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses. Although it comes into being in and amid the sensory data and empirical material of the natural world and is, to some extent, dependent upon them, it does not arise out of them, but only by their means. According to Otto: "The proof that in the numinous we have to deal with purely a priori cognitive elements is to be reached by introspection and in a critical examination of reason such that Kant institutes." The manifestation of the "numinous" involves experiences, beliefs and feelings qualitatively different from those supplied by sense perception. The facts of "numinous" consciousness point to a hidden substantive force from which religious ideas and feelings are formed. This is pure reason in the profoundest sense; yet it must be distinguished from both the pure theoretical and the pure practical reason of Kant as something even more profound. Otto states: "Now this is the criterion of all a priori knowledge, namely that, so soon as an assertion has been clearly expressed and understood, knowledge of its truth comes into mind with the certitude of first-hand insight." Otto goes on to cite supporting anthropological evidence such as incomplete and defective examples of moralizing the numina in primitive tribes as well as their immediate susceptibility to such ideas when exposed to them.
These, he maintains, uphold the contention of a priori ideas being universally and necessarily latent in the human spirit.

The term "numinous" was coined by Otto to fill a need caused in part by the dilution of spiritual force inherent in the modern usage of the word 'holy'. According to Otto, holy is now taken to mean "completely good". While the word "holy" has traditionally included a moral aspect, it contains a more original element as well. Otto argues that this element can stand alone as it once did, minus its "rational" aspect. Otto goes on to describe this element as the real, innermost core of all religions. It is the pre-eminent living force in the Semitic religions. In Hebrew...quadosh, in Greek...ayios and in Latin...sacer. Whereas all three have the connotation of goodness, the essential distilled element is the "holy" in its original form. To fill the need for a discrete rendering of the original, essential meaning Otto developed the term "numinous" from the Latin word numen. The numinous state of mind, which is always found wherever the category is applied, is perfectly sui generis and irreducible. While it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined.

There is only one way to help another to an understanding of it. He must be guided and led on by a consideration and discussion of the matter through the ways of his own mind, until he reaches the point at which 'the numinous' in him perforce begins to stir, to start into life and into consciousness."
This deeply felt religious experience is the inevitable response to contact with the "numinous". It is far more profound and pervasive than the "feeling of dependence" articulated by Schleiermacher. Otto calls this experience "creature-feeling" since it is the emotion experienced by a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by his own insignificance in contrast to that which is supreme. Due to the power and unique character of "creature-feeling" it cannot be expressed verbally. Indeed, it can only be suggested indirectly through the tone and content of one's feeling response to it. It must be directly experienced within the self to be properly understood.

The object to which the numinous consciousness is directed Otto calls not God, but "mysterium tremendum". By his choice of this term Otto injects a measure of reverence for the source of mystical experience which seems lacking in Bergson who does not allow for the element of mystery with a God who is nothing but the essence of love. Otto goes on to "unpack" the term by explaining that while conceptually "mysterium" denotes merely what is hidden and esoteric (beyond conception or understanding) what is meant is intensely and absolutely positive. This pure positivity can be expressed in feelings which help to clarify the experience for us.
The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane', non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. It has its crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful and glorious. It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of -- whom or what? In the presence of that which is a mystery inexpressible and above all creatures.

The first crude, primitive forms in which the "mysterium tremendum" develop are those of "numinous dread" or awe.

This is the mark which really characterizes the religion of primitive man. It is a "daemonic dread"--a crudely naive and primordial emotional disturbance. The next manner of the response to the holy encounter is that of the "absolute overflowingness" of majesty. This is the concomitant feeling of one's submergence, of being but "dust and ashes". It is a nothingness which forms the numinous raw material for the feeling of humility. The third element in the experience is that of the "urgency" or "energy" of the numinous object. It is vividly perceptible in the divine "wrath". Far more spiritual and profound than mere anger, divine wrath is called by Otto the "ideogram" (higher concept) of a unique emotional moment in religious experience. It expresses a
singular daunting and awe inspiring character which stands on its own, distinct from God's goodness, gentleness, and love. The "energy" of this phenomenon clothes itself in symbolic expressions such as: vitality, passion, will, force, excitement and activity. These features are typical and recur again and again from the daemonic up to the level of the "living" God. In mysticism this element of "energy is a very live and vigorous factor" and, according to Otto, is seen in a "-consuming fire" of love. There is therefore, a perceptible kinship of love with the divine wrath since it is the same energy, only differently directed. 'Love', says Otto, quoting an unnamed mystic, 'is nothing other than quenched wrath'.

There is, in the concept "tremendum", something not necessarily inherent in "mysterium" which is expressed by the term "wholly other". This aspect of the experience is beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible and the familiar. Otto employs the term "stupor" to describe the blank wonder and astonishment that strikes one dumb, in absolute amazement, before the "mysterium tremendum". Concerning the intelligibility of this phenomenon, Otto says:

The truly 'mysterious' object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently "wholly other", whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we recoil in wonder that strikes us chill and numb."
Otto claims that in mysticism the "wholly other" is contrasted with Being itself and actually described as "that which is nothing". This means not only that nothing can be predicated of it but that it is absolutely and intrinsically other than, and opposite to, everything that is and can be thought. This is, in Otto's opinion, the "sunyata" of the Buddhist mystics; although, because of his theistic bias, one would be hard pressed to find any references to the sort of stupor Otto ascribes to the experience of the "numinous" in Buddhist literature. Perhaps, in an attempt to assert the universality of his theory, Otto has over-extended its application.

The qualitative content of the numinous experience, in addition to the element of "awefulness", contains another aspect in which it shows itself as uniquely attractive and "fascinating". These two qualities at once attract and, in a sense, repel. While the "numinous" appears as an object of dread to a trembling creature cowed and cast down, at the same time he is allured with a potent charm. Otto describes the experience as being "captivated and transported with a strange ravishment".

According to Otto, the ideas and concepts most applicable to the non-rational element of "fascination" are love, mercy, pity and comfort. While these are all natural elements of common psychical life, only here are they thought of as
absolute and complete. The moment of fascination is already alive in the moment of religious solemnity; at the time of private devotion when the mind is exalted to the holy. Such an experience can pass into blissful excitement, into rapture and an exaltation often verging on the bizarre and abnormal; e.g. the conversion experience of Saint Paul. In the words of Jacob Boehme: "But I can neither write nor tell of what sort of Exaltation the triumphing in the Spirit is. It can be compared with nought, but that when in the midst of death life is born, and it is like the resurrection of the dead." 6

As is the case with Bergson, Otto assigns an important, complementary role to intellection in religious experience. He claims that rational elements, following a priori principles, merge with the non-rational in the historical evolution of religions and effect a means of "schematization". The "tremendum" is schematized by means of the rational ideas of justice, moral will, and the exclusion of what is opposed to morality. In this manner it becomes the holy "wrath of God". The "fascinans", schematized by means of the ideas of goodness, mercy and love, becomes all that we mean by Grace, which unites with the holy wrath in a single "harmony of contrasts" tinged with mysticism. The "mysterium" is schematized by the absoluteness of all rational attributes applied to the Deity. God’s rational
attributes are distinguished from man's by being not relative but absolute.

Otto's use of the intuitive, non-rational aspects of the self run parallel to Bergson's. Otto felt that by means of the healthy and vital living activity of its non-rational elements religion is guarded from sinking into fanaticism or "mere mysticality". Thus, the harmonious conjunction of both rational and non-rational elements affords a criterion to measure the relative rank of religions.

We can ascribe to Otto a pioneering effort in laying the groundwork for the study of the experiential aspect of the philosophy of religion. He avails himself of both the rational and non-rational elements of this knowledge in an attempt to elucidate the holy encounter. Otto is not only scrupulous in defining his terms, but where necessary, is not reluctant to suggest new ones. The character of the holy encounter has, of course, been described elsewhere, e.g. in the mystics, both philosophical (Meister Eckhart) and devotional (St. John of the Cross). Martin Buber describes it as one of "holy insecurity". Be that as it may, there is at least now a point of contact between the articulation of man's profoundest in-depth experiences and the discipline of philosophical analysis.
Martin Buber

Martin Buber, probably the single most influential spokesman for the Jewish tradition in the Twentieth Century, presents in exquisite detail an important aspect of spiritual experience which Bergson fails to acknowledge—man's continuing relationship to God. In Bergson's writing this relationship is basically an all or nothing situation.

Either, as is the case with the vast majority of mankind, persons are locked into a spiritually stultifying struggle for existence, compounded by the oppressive demands of closed societies and bereft of aspirational consciousness. Or they are, in rare instances, gifted with a personal spiritual transformation such that he or she functions as an active manifestation of God's love. Buber, on the other hand, has a great deal to say regarding the on-going relationship between the spiritual person and God. Firmly anchored in orthodox Judaism, Buber was far more conversant with its strengths and subtleties than was Bergson. A careful reading of the work of Buber reveals a much tighter and more harmonious relationship between the highest principles of the Judaic tradition and aspirational principles than Bergson surmised. Had Bergson been familiar with Buber he would likely have had a much higher regard for the intellectual and spiritual
caliber of his own heritage. Buber, however was very aware of Bergson.

Bergson's point of departure is the fact of the effort crêteur que manifeste la vie. This effort, he says, 'is of God (est de Dieu), if not God Himself.' The second part of the sentence nullifies the first. An effort, i.e., a process, or the preliminary forms of a process, cannot be named God, without making the concept of God utterly meaningless. Further, and most especially, the crucial religious experiences of man do not take place in a sphere in which creative energy operates without contradiction, but in a sphere in which evil and good, despair and hope, the power of destruction and the power of rebirth, dwell side by side. The divine force which man actually encounters in life does not hover above the demonic, but penetrates it. To confine God to a producing function is to remove Him from the world in which we live—a world filled with burning contradiction, and with yearning for salvation.

Buber goes on to chastise Bergson for subscribing to the popular Christian misconception of Judaism wherein the newer religion is, in effect, a release from the yoke of the older one. Buber maintains that Judaism is indeed a religion in which love is paramount. Regarding justice and love in Judaism he says: "Of the two, however, love is the higher, the transcending principle." In Buber's estimation the core of Judaism is fundamentally consistent with Bergson's idea of what a dynamic religion should be.
The Hasidic teaching is the consumation of Judaism. And this is its message to all: You yourself must begin. Existence will remain meaningless for you if you yourself do not penetrate into it with active love and if you do not in this way discover its meaning for yourself. Everything is waiting to be hallowed by you...Bergson speaks of an 'active mysticism'. Where is this to be found, if not here? Nowhere else is man's essential doing so closely bound up with the mystery of being.

In his best known work I and Thou (1958) Buber employs staccato-like poetry to describe man and his world in living dialogue; for he believes that all real living is meeting. Man's primary words of relation are I-Thou and I-It. "The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being." Buber emphasizes that ultimately there is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary words. The two primary words differ as regards the quality of the relationship. He concedes that man cannot live without It. However, he thinks that he who lives with It alone is not a man. Thou meets him through grace and here the primary word can be spoken only with the whole being.

The fundamental character of the I-Thou relation is entitled "holy insecurity". The essence of "holy insecurity" is the fear of God which is manifest in the life lived before the Face of God. That man is commanded to love God as well as fear Him presents an apparent contradiction. Buber
explains that only through the fear of God does man enter so deeply into the love of God that he cannot again be cast out of it.

"Fear of God", accordingly, never means to the Jews that they ought to be afraid of God, but that, trembling, they ought to be aware of His incomprehensibility. The fear God is the creaturely knowledge of the darkness to which none of our spiritual powers can reach, and out of which God reveals Himself. Therefore, "the fear of God is rightly called "the beginning of knowledge" (Ps. 111:10) It is the dark gate through which man must pass if he is to enter into the love of God. He who wishes to avoid passing through this gate, he who begins to provide himself with a comprehensible God, contracted thus and not otherwise runs the risk of having to despair of God in view of the actualities of history and life, or of falling into inner falsehood. Only through the fear of God does man enter so deep into the love of God that he cannot again be cast out of it.

The Hebrew word for the first five books in the Bible is Torah which, for Buber, means instruction not law. He disapproves of the narrowly pious man--that caricature of the spirit of Judaism who, in his desire for dogmatic security, sells out his opportunity to live the life of a truly religious man--the life of "holy insecurity". Buber's description of the Jewish soul as elliptically turning round two centers may best describe what I-Thou is about.
One center of the Jewish soul is the primeval experience that God is wholly raised above man, that He is beyond the grasp of man, and yet that He is present in an immediate relationship with these human beings who are absolutely incommensurable with Him, and that He faces them. To know both these things at the same time, so that they cannot be separated, constitutes the living core of every believing Jewish soul.\(^9\)

In reading the above, one is struck by a key difference in the nature of man's relationship to God in Buber as opposed to Bergson. Buber seems quite content to live in a spiritual state of existential tension exhibiting some of what Otto called the "fascinans" and dread concurrently. This is, of course, predicated upon a certain discreteness in the man/God relation which Bergson is unwilling to tolerate. As Bergson says at the conclusion of the Two Sources, Man must decide first whether he wants to go on living or not and then whether he wants to fulfill "...the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods."\(^7\)

PROBLEMS WITH BERGSON'S UNDERSTANDING OF MYSTICISM

Despite the bold originality of Bergson's methods and vision, I must, nonetheless, harbor some serious reservations regarding his final and most ambitious attempt to chart the course of man's spiritual development.

1. Bergson takes the mystery out of the mystical experience. In reducing such experiences to pragmatic comprehensibility
Bergson does away with many of the elements which, in Otto serve to mark mysticism as one of the profoundest and most interesting phenomena.

2. Bergson asumes all mystics, regardless of personal circumstances and historical context, must conform to the criterion of social action to validate their designation as "complete" and "perfect" mystics. This is not necessarily the case, either in practice or in theory.

3. Bergson fails to mention potential difficulties with any proliferation of the powerful force of Unknowing. If Unknowing is a necessary precursor to intuitive and illuminative spiritual discovery then we are apt to have a somewhat disjointed society as persons at the preliminary, world-denying stages of aspirational development will likely be out of touch, if not actually at odds, with the individuals in society who are not so disposed. This would seem to be an insoluble difficulty since, in each generation, newly born individuals will require the same transformational redirection toward aspirational growth. Will the process ever end? Unfortunately, Bergson does not address the question of problems inherent in the need for perpetual aspirational transformation in discrete generations. If this is to be the case, how then can the open society ever become
a reality? Furthermore, since it is achieved by a long and arduous process usually encompassing many years and much dedicated perserverence, mysticism has not proven to be a phenomenon which can be readily transmitted to large numbers of people. Also, it has proven to be rather transitory the farther away it gets from its original manifestation. As Underhill points out in regard to St. Paul: "The energising Spirit of Life cannot be communicated in a sermon. Hence the greater number of Paul's converts quickly degenerated into mere believers, once the stimulus of his great personality was withdrawn."71

4. Bergson does not recognize the element of holiness in the encounter of man and God. As Otto so completely describes it, Holiness is the hallmark of mystical experience and serves to authenticate the phenomenon. John Kelley (Bergson's Mysticism, 1954) points out that Bergson's mysticism "...tends more to the work with humanity than to a union, properly speaking, with a transcendent God...in the divinization of man the role of God is secondary to the consideration of the activity of man in mystical experience."72 As Bergson himself says:

We represent religion, then, as the crystallization, brought about by a scientific process of cooling, of what mysticism had poured, while hot, into the soul of man. Through religion all men get a little of what a few privileged souls possessed in full.73
5. There is the implication in Bergson’s conception of God as the purely spiritual principle of love, that He somehow lacks intelligence and thus is not concerned or is perhaps even incapable of directing history to a particular purpose. Actually, a good deal of prophecy as well as Deuteronomy relates specifically to divine purpose and action in history. Bergson’s comfortable, yet narrow conception of God is very much at odds with the very Judaeo-Christian tradition Bergson draws from to substantiate his position.

Bergson’s mysticism is not theocentric as it is in the lives of the mystics he draws upon. Although he does not claim to know God with the certainty of personal mystical experience Bergson assumes to know the very essence of God in toto—as the comforting and non-threatening cosmic principle of Love. Such presumption is clearly at variance with the "dread" of Otto, the "holy fear" of St. John of the Cross, and the "holy insecurity" of Buber.

6. Bergson fails to clearly define the roles and relationships of aspirational persons and God. He never mentions faith as the bonding element in such a partnership. Was Bergson unaware of the central importance of faith in the Judaeo-Christian tradition he so greatly respected? Yet, is it not faith which enables one to maintain an intimate and profound connection between the
human and the divine in the novel circumstances which Bergson sees as the essence of reality?
NOTES


2. Refer to Chapter One p. 41 for a discussion of the role of intellect.


8. Ibid, p. 186-7


17. *The Two Sources*, p. 210

Meister Eckhart was born into a family of the German nobility in 1260. An adept student, he became a Dominican friar at Cologne. Shortly thereafter, because of his high scholastic attainment, he was sent to the Saint Jacques University in Paris. In addition to his studies, he spent part of his time lecturing on the philosophy of Aristotle, Moses Maimonides, and St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1303 Eckhart was ordered back to Cologne to assume high administrative duties in his order. He returned to Paris to teach in 1311 and it was probably at this time that he began his greatest work, the Opus Tripartitum. It is the systematic rendering of the author's theological and philosophical teachings. In later years at Cologne and Strasbourg Eckhart preached often to laymen as well as to nuns and friars.

Eckhart was brought to trial in 1326, but died sometime between 1327 and 1328 before the matter could be resolved.

20. Ibid, p. 35.
23. Ibid, p. 43.
27. Ibid, p. 225.
28. Ibid, p. 49.
32. Ibid, p. 75.
34. Meister Eckhart was born into a family of the German nobility in 1260. An adept student, he became a Dominican friar at Cologne. Shortly thereafter, because of his high scholastic attainment, he was sent to the Saint Jacques University in Paris. In addition to his studies, he spent part of his time lecturing on the philosophy of Aristotle, Moses Maimonides, and St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1303 Eckhart was ordered back to Cologne to assume high administrative duties in his order. He returned to Paris to teach in 1311 and it was probably at this time that he began his greatest work, the Opus Tripartitum. It is the systematic rendering of the author's theological and philosophical teachings. In later years at Cologne and Strasbourg Eckhart preached often to laymen as well as to nuns and friars.

35. Eckhart was brought to trial in 1326, but died sometime between 1327 and 1329 before the matter could be resolved.
37. Ibid, p. 89.


43. Ibid, 214.

44. Ibid, p. 215.


46. Ibid, p. 228.

47. Ibid, p. 228.


49. Ibid, p. 38.


52. Ibid, p. 220.


55. Ibid. p. 137.

56. Ibid, p. 12.

57. Ibid, p. 28.


60. Ibid, p. 28.


62. Bergson's relationship to his Jewish roots was a curious one. He flirted with conversion to Catholicism toward the end of his life, but preferred to remain loosely within the fold of the Jewish people to express his solidarity with the victims of Nazi oppression.

64. Ibid, p. 102.


69. Ibid, p. 286.

70. *The Two Sources*, p. 306.


73. *The Two Sources*, p. 229.

74. For an exposition of faith sympathetic to Otto's concept of holiness see Paul Tillich's *Dynamics Of Faith*, (New York, 1957). For a discussion of faith as it is manifested in Judaism as differentiated from Christianity see Martin Buber's *Two Types Of Faith*, (New York, 1961).
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The dissertation began with an overview of Bergson's purposes, methodology and the context within which his work was originally presented. A skeletal exposition of the main tenets of Bergson's philosophy was offered in order to establish a proper foundation from which to display the main topics to be discussed: Community, Religion, The Emotions, and Mysticism. It was noted that what Bergson offers is not a philosophical system per se, but rather a method--one which is experiential and requires the conscious participation of persons wishing to understand it properly.

Bergson argued that Becoming is superior to Being--indeed that cognizance of the primacy of change is the proper response to Kant's assertion of the ultimate unknowability of the thing-in-itself. Bergson's "change" does away with the need to posit "substance" as a metaphysical reality. Accordingly, all matter and immobility is at bottom a "state" of supportive energy.

Some of the pivotal influences on Bergson were discussed to show his indebtedness to his predecessors as well as mark the boundaries of his own contributions. Among the early influence listed were: Maine de Biran, Ravaisson, Schopenhauer and Spencer. It was Bergson's reaction to the
mechanistic, evolutionary theory of Spencer which was one of the two primary factors (the other being a refutation of Zeno's paradoxes of motion) in launching his own philosophy of the primacy of change.

The three basic elements of Bergson's metaphysic were discussed: durée, intuition, and the élan vital. Durée, in effect, the port of entry to Bergson's philosophy, is time in its "true", inner dimension, coinciding with heterogeneous states of consciousness. Moments of pure durée are ever fresh and creative, merging what was past into the interpenetrative process of creation so that no moment can ever be recreated or exhibit exactly the same qualities as any other. As a result, the intuitive consciousness of durée proves the reality of human freedom for Bergson.

Bergson took vigorous exception to Kant's positing of space as coequal with time. Bergson argued that it is the encroachment of space into the pure field of time as durée which fosters a discrete, intellectual simulation of the flow of reality. This represents, for Bergson, the hubris of a statically disposed intellect over the participatory knowledge of intuition. Bergson held that our philosophical difficulties in the area of metaphysics result mainly from the fact that the intellect, whose field of operation is the realm of discrete entities, is the mode of consciousness best suited for social, indeed physical life. Nevertheless, our
success in this phenomenal dimension has, unfortunately, been purchased with powers of consciousness which could otherwise have been turned inward toward an even greater reality. The activity of consciousness whose task it is to bring this about is intuition. Intuition, however, may be even more difficult to define than durée since it is not a method of the discursive intellect, whose province is definition, but rather an identification with the foundation of consciousness as "process". While it is the case that the exigencies of survival in the world have necessarily given rise to the intellectual mode of consciousness, the search for profound metaphysical truths cannot succeed with intellect alone. Intuition is required. Be that as it may, intuition requires the aid of the intellect for conceptualization and communication.

The élan vital, one of Bergson's most important concepts, was presented initially, in Creative Evolution, as the vitalistic life force. As such, the élan vital is the biological counterpart of durée in the world. Bergson rejects categorically both mechanism and finalism as in any way descriptive of the élan vital. On the contrary, the élan vital is a driving force of creative novelty constantly expressing fresh possibilities. Matter, is in effect, an obstacle to the free expression of the élan vital. Matter represents an evolutionary detour frozen into static form.
Indeed, the history of evolution is, in a sense, merely the overcoming of inert matter by the relentless creative energy of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital}. Although the highest expression of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital} thus far is the consciousness of man, nevertheless, this is itself only a temporary pause.

The emotions are an integral part of Bergson's argument for the necessary emergence of the open society as a concrete, global community. As such they represent the means to bring about, within individuals, the transformational change necessary to prepare them to become part of the open society. But the emotions do even more than this according to Bergson. In addition to being involved in the essential dynamics of virtually all creativity, they play a vital role in the evolution of morality since certain key emotions are held to crystallize into ethical doctrines. Thus, they help generate the aspirational morality conducive to the formation of the open society. This non-judgmental, loving morality offers itself to the world as an alternative to the morality of individual constraint imposed by closed societies.

In consideration of the emotions \textit{per se} I turned to Solomon for an analysis of them and their interaction with the self as a maleable entity. This was done in the hope of demonstrating the plausibility of Bergson's view of the potential of individuals to effect real change within their
own persons since Solomon argues that the emotions are essentially rational in character and serve to construct the reality (inner and outer) of each individual person.

Schopenhauer, who favors a clear and unmitigated separation of the intellect and the emotions, presents an alternative perspective and bids us examine the question of whether we are, or ought to be, "knowing" or "willing" beings. He affirms a powerful and intimate connection between the emotions and the will. Consequently, the personal self which is Bergson's raw material for transformational change is effectively bypassed since the emotions merely express the will's satisfaction or frustration. As a result, the self is seen to be under the delusion that it is an autonomous entity, distinct from the will. In other words, our consciousness leads us to believe that we are essentially thinking beings, but the intimate, intuitive realization of ourselves as will proves otherwise.

In his consideration of the role of the emotions as "magical transformations of the world" Sartre attacks their philosophical utility. He believes that they are a degradation of consciousness in their attempt to inject a measure of personal control into situations of relative powerlessness. Sartre's perceptive analysis of the role of the "Other" in defining the self led us to a consideration of pride as something other than an ordinary emotion. Following
this line of reasoning the work of both Hume and Solomon was cited to support the contention that pride is actually an intra-personal force which, along with the will, form the dynamic core of man's emotional matrix.

The nature of the self was examined, not as a static entity, as is so often presumed, but rather as expressing, in conjunction with the emotions, a certain maleability. The transiency of certain "positive" emotions was discussed as illustrative of an understanding of the emotions as marking a release from the bondage and alienation of the self as an ego boundary. Conversely, it was held that "negative" emotions are such as a result of their part in the constriction and alienation of the self as ego. The attempt to overcome this problem I believe to be a powerful determinant of human behavior. This dynamic, if correct is something that a Bergsonian, blanket endorsement of the emotions must take into account since the proliferation of "negative" self-constricting emotions such as resentment, jealousy and rage make any communal effort a fragile undertaking. In addition, the dynamic of pride, if indeed it is an ineradicable force, is likely to remain a "virus" within an open society.

As important as the emotions are as a general topic in Bergson's concept of community they almost pale by comparison to love. While Bergson does refer to love as an emotion, he
defines it as having such broad, transformative powers that one is forced to consider it as something more than just an emotion. Love is charged with being both the means of profound, individual transformations as well as the cohesive force which is to effect and bind together the open society.

Bergson contrasts the pragmatic love of family and country, endemic to the closed society, with the love necessary to unite all mankind into a global community. In the former case feelings of love retain an exclusionary element by means of which the community can draw sustenance for its own cohesion. As a result, hatred is not excluded from the closed society. The love of all mankind, on the other hand, is pure and unalloyed. Bergson claims that this form of love—spiritual in character, comes from God, if indeed it is not God Himself.

In an attempt to put forth a more precise analysis of Bergson's concept of love it was displayed against a backdrop of its more traditional definitions as Eros and Agape. Diverse and capable thinkers such as Voegelin, Aristotle, Tillich and Kierkegaard provided us with well-rounded, persuasive arguments for the primacy of either definition; while D'Arcy attempted a synthesis of the two. It was concluded that, of all the works cited in this regard, Bergson would most probably have endorsed D'Arcy's definition of love. D'Arcy's version is at once "process-like" in its
manner of employing Eros as man's version of spiritual love, while retaining the special universal character of God's expression of love as Agape.

As a philosopher of religion and community Bergson's genius lay more in creative suggestion than in explication. Consequently, we cannot be sure of exactly what he meant by love. Nevertheless, if we are to be consistent with his experiential approach to philosophy, we will not demand static, intellectual certainty, but instead, as Bergson suggested, attempt to experience for ourselves what love is. If pressed to exercise a reasoned judgment as to the nature of love in Bergson's work, I would opt for considering it more of a cosmic force than an orthodox emotion--this based largely upon Bergson's telling departure from a biological interpretation of reality in Creative Evolution to a spiritual one in The Two Sources.

* * *

Regarding the condition of man in society we have seen that, for Bergson, man belongs as much to society as to himself. "There is no humanity without society."

Furthermore, Bergson argues that there is a fundamental, instinctual drive which aims to keep it that way. This powerful determinant of behavior is effected smoothly in the case of the insect whose social organization is best typified by the term "order". However, in the case of man we note
that he is distinguished by the addition of the term "progress" as well.

Moral obligation, for Bergson, is not the pressure upon an individual to do "the right thing", but rather the instinctual pressure to conform to nature's demands for group solidarity. Thus, as a result of their inherent individual freedom, human beings tend to exist in a continual state of tension as the biological force of nature relentlessly impels each person to honor his "moral obligation" to the group, while at the same time the fundamental metaphysical reality of novel change seeks expression in individual enterprise. Bergson argues for the power of moral obligation as a "social instinct" by tracing the perception of its individual genesis to some of our earliest childhood memories. At that time the force of moral obligation was continually being pressed upon us by parents and teachers. It was they, who, in their role as moral educators, performed the role of proxies for the instinctual demands of nature. Bergson claims that the power of our social obligations is such as to merit the appellation "virtual instinct". Furthermore, in any particular expression of this influence, the pressure to conform is actually the aggregate of all such influences acting in consort, i.e., they support one another synergistically. This important phenomenon Bergson labels the "totality of obligation". The power of the "totality of obligation" is
such that these obligations do not even require consistency and coherence in their expressed rules to be effective.

According to Bergson, the strength of human freedom, consists, not in rational deliberation among alternative choices, but rather as an intra-personal identification, first with durée and, subsequently, with the élan vital. Nevertheless, our freedom tends to act as a socially divisive force, pulling man away from his instinctual duty to conform to the cohesive dictates of a closed society. As a rejoinder to this threat, "static" religion, primarily through the "myth making function", seeks to "sustain and reinforce the claims of society". This "static" religion is, for Bergson, entirely pragmatic, serving primarily to preserve and tighten the group bond. Religion also serves as a defensive reaction against the power of death and helps integrate the individual into a multi-generational societal context.

War and the possible annihilation of human life appears to have been Bergson's greatest personal concern and adds a sense of urgency to his desire to actualize the open society. The basic problem here results from the fact that societies derive much of their internal cohesion from the perception of threats from other nations. Consequently, a state of deadly tension among closed societies is perpetuated as they derive sustenance from this dangerous situation. Bergson also argues for the existence of a "war instinct"
manifested early in life in the war games of children. The existential origin of war, however, lies in the desire for possession, since it is easier for a group to take tools ready-made from an enemy than to make them, and societies often demand additional territory to support a burgeoning population.

Since morality was, in Bergson's view, an integral part of the nature of a society and indeed determined its very character, Bergson employed various concepts of justice to articulate differences in the moralities of the two types of societies. Justice, in closed societies, developed originally as a means for the regulation of exchange and barter. Later it evolved into a means of criminal punishment to defuse escalating cycles of violent reprisals. A further change in the character of justice occurred when it came to guarantee the rights of individual persons. This form of justice did not evolve from the earlier forms just mentioned, but can be traced to a "creative emotion" which flowed through the Prophets of Ancient Israel. In time this "aspirational" form of justice became refined and expanded into universal applicability in the Christian message.

As opposed to the "instinctual", "reactive" morality supportive of closed societies "open" morality, which is acquired by diligence and personal commitment, exists as a personal affirmation of universal love by transformed
individuals. It, unlike its static counterpart, is not amenable to formulation and is the immediate precursor of the open society. Nevertheless, the new morality is pragmatic enough to merge with older forms enroute to its goal of transforming a divided humanity into a global, spiritual community. It should be noted that the open society will not come into being as the unfolding of any plan but rather as the existential reality of aspirational persons. The open society asserts its claim as the evolutionary heir apparent to the closed societies by undercutting their foundations i.e., claiming as its justification the superiority of the spiritual over the biological. But it is a slow and arduous process. As the focus of man’s life remains overwhelmingly biological the spiritual revolution projected by Bergson can succeed only by a gradual loosening of the bonds of nature manifested in reactive societies.

While we wait for the possible appearance of the open society, whatever may be its form (or forms—since it is, by definition, incompatible with finality) we note that insights garnered from aspirational persons are continually being incorporated into society as we know it. Bergson believed that the best example of such an intermediate form of society is the American democracy, characterized by individual freedom and aspirational insight, wherein the rights of individual citizens go hand in hand with their social duties.
As an important theory of community, Royce's understanding of the phenomenon, as fueled and sustained by loyalty, was examined and found to harbor a strong anti-individual sentiment. While loyalty was noted to be the essence of morality for Royce, he did not expect it to flourish within a democratic context. Royce's vision of the Beloved Community was seen to bear a greater resemblance to St. Augustine's non-temporal, Pauline version than it does to Bergson's open society.

Bergson understood the tremendous conforming power wielded by closed societies to be the major threat to the evolution of the open society. As a result, the means necessary to overcome this barrier had to be powerful indeed, more so than that of object-oriented love or the idealistic projections of well-meaning philosophers. Bergson believed that he found the answer in mystical love. Thus, mysticism extends and completes Bergson's philosophy of creative change, encompassing as it does, the highest levels of man's spiritual achievement. According to Bergson, mystical love is necessary to effect the transformation of individual human beings from static cogs in closed societies to their emergence as aspirational persons--each a veritable species in his own right, representing the highest expression of the \textit{\'{e}lan vital}. 
In order to establish mysticism as a philosophically valid form of knowledge Bergson had to argue for its place as the culmination of intuition. But such knowledge was not held to be the province of philosophers and mystics alone. Bergson, probably influenced by William James, argued for the ability of even lay persons to partake of mystical knowledge if only by means of an echo or resonance of the phenomenon within their own consciousness.

Since there is an established tradition of incorporating the insights and experiences of mystical philosophers into the philosophical enterprise, a number of philosophers were cited in support of Bergson's position, among them: Anaximander, Parmenides and Plato. The work of Eric Voegelin was called upon to mark and explain the bifurcation of epistemological methodology which took place with Aristotle's "thinning out" of the richness of transcendental experience into the promotion of thought for its own sake. The consequence for philosophy, according to Voegelin, was that concepts were torn from their experiential context and treated as if they were themselves data of experience. Philosophical activity became "derailed" as intellection supplanted spiritual experience as the primary source of metaphysical knowledge. In response to this situation, Bergson's whole epistemological thrust was an attempt to reestablish the primacy of such experience.
It was deemed important to note the mystical influences on Bergson since they determined, to a large extent, his understanding of the phenomenon. In this regard, the influence of Plotinus, Delacroix, James Durkheim and Underhill was mentioned. Of these, the latter was by far the most significant. It was noted that the influence here was bi-directional as Underhill acknowledged a great debt to Bergson's early, vitalistic writing. From Underhill Bergson apparently got his emphasis on "action" as the distinguishing characteristic of "complete" and "perfect" mysticism. He also shared Underhill's view that the mystics of the Christian tradition best exemplified this trait.

Bergson defined the goal of mysticism as the identification of the mystic's will with the spiritual essence of the élan vital, now recognized as love. Despite the ability of this spiritual love to effect the changes necessary for the evolution of the open society, Bergson argued that it is important that there be a profound improvement in the material conditions of life which subject the majority of mankind to expend the greater part of its energies to ensure survival. Once this problem is overcome Bergson envisioned a small number of active, fully developed mystics who, by the sheer force of their love and commitment, will gradually form the open society.
In order to verify Bergson's understanding of in-depth mystical experiences, an analysis of the contributions of Meister Eckhart and Rudolf Otto was offered. It was argued that the method of unknowing and the profound inner experiences reported by Eckhart take the intuitive method to its spiritual conclusion and describe an encounter with God which goes far beyond Bergson's mere indentification of the mystic's will with God's. Since Bergson does not treat of the nature of the encounter between man and God other than to describe it as an identification of wills, Rudolf Otto's analysis of holiness was included in an attempt to shed some light on the nature of man's encounter with a transcendent and holy God.

Because Bergson's understanding of the mystic's relationship to God is evidently an all or nothing identification it is clearly at variance with Martin Buber's treatment of the on-going relationship between man and God as one of faith within a context of what he termed "holy insecurity". Buber was seen to point out that Judaism is, despite Bergson's opinion that it is harsh and judgmental, actually consistent with Bergson's idea of what a dynamic, loving religion should be.

Finally, a critique of several key problems with Bergson's understanding of mysticism was offered. These included: 1. Bergson's lack of emphasis of the element of mystery in mystical experience, 2. Bergson's insistence that
mystics must conform to his criterion of social action to validate their designation as "complete" and "perfect". 3. Bergson's lack of emphasis on the phenomenon of unknowing as an important means to achieve mystical union and what this means, both within a contemporary society, and across the generations, 4. Bergson's failure to recognize the widely accepted concepts of faith and holiness in the very mystics he cites, 5. Bergson making of God little more than the spiritual principle of love thus implying that God somehow lacks intelligence and is not concerned with or is even incapable of directing history to a particular purpose.

* * *

In appealing almost solely to the great Christian mystics Bergson has, I believe, put his project at risk. Had he been content to champion love alone as both the means of personal, transformational change and the cohesive element of the open society, he would not have had to account for aspects of mysticism which are at variance with his interpretation. According to Bergson, mystical experience was merely a matter of the concrete expression of God's love via a mystical identification of wills. In this activity the mystic serves as little more than a conduit for the expression of this love. As such, in Bergson's mysticism, there is no room for the bonding power of faith and no need for the validating of holiness in mystical experience.
The above notwithstanding, I do not want to suggest that Bergson's vision cannot work, merely that, in attempting to employ the great Christian mystics as his aspirational agents of change, Bergson was forced to ignore major aspects of their relationship to a transcendent God, who, according to their own orthodoxy, is shrouded in mystery and holiness—and is a good deal more than the personification of love. The testimony of the mystics, as shown in Chapter Four, does not substantiate Bergson's interpretation of mysticism as a simple phenomenon of the loving identification of the mystic with God.

In sum, I don't believe it was necessary for Bergson to pin his hopes exclusively on mystical love. Love as a spiritual principle would perhaps have been enough. By assigning a more "religious" character to the evolution of the open society Bergson might have charged the mystics with a particular task which they may not be disposed by nature or inclination to fulfill. And what is more, by conceiving God as the essence of spiritual love, Bergson simply does not allow for the possibility of an intelligent creator God bringing about the open society by design.

Of course all of this does not deny the greatness of Bergson as an original philosopher. His contributions to modern philosophy, although subtle in the modern mind (known largely for his influence in the philosophy of Process),
remain as a positive affirmation of human spiritual potential. Furthermore, Bergson’s articulation of modern closed societies at loggerheads with a context of deadly tension awaits, even demands, resolution. Certainly Bergson, in advance of his time, identified a very serious problem. Perhaps the only practical means to defuse the situation is, as he suggested, to undercut the power of the divisive, reactively sustained communities of today by means of the global, aspirational community of the future. Whether it is, as Bergson strongly believed, the function of mysticism to fulfill this mission is open to question. Nevertheless, Bergson must be credited with bringing this problem to our attention and we demand too much of this great thinker if we expect him to fully articulate the solution as well as the problem.

END
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