

Craig Lundy, “Bergson, History and Ontology” in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*”, eds. John Mullarkey and Charlotte de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 17-31.

Introduction

Since the revival of Bergson studies, a key aspect of his work has remained largely dormant amongst scholars: his philosophy of history. In this paper I will address this under-explored area of investigation by making some suggestions as to what Bergsonian philosophy might have to offer our understanding of history. This task will be guided throughout by a concern for the ontological nature of history. Although Bergson’s thoughts on history are often considered to be restricted to his *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, I will demonstrate how Bergson develops and deploys an ontology of history and historical ontology in his prior texts that arguably plays a significant role within his broader thinking. In so doing, Bergsonian philosophy will be shown to advance strategies for escaping the traditional and dominant conceptions of history as representational, casual-linear and teleological – strategies that are subsequently expanded upon and modified by Bergsonian thinkers such as Charles Péguy, Arnold Toynbee and Gilles Deleuze.

Bergson and History?

Before embarking upon an exploration of Bergson and history, it must be noted that at present there is no consensus on whether it is feasible, let alone of value, to extract a philosophy of history from Bergson’s thought or make use of his concepts for understanding the nature of history. A Bergsonian philosophy of time of course, but as for a Bergsonian philosophy of history, there is some scepticism within the Bergsonian community as to whether it exists or even could. As one eminent Bergsonian puts it, the suggestion that ‘the resources of the ontological past [...] are open to the historian’ is ‘highly provocative’ and ‘needs to be adequately demonstrated and argued for’.¹ For someone such as myself with an interest in the nature of history, this statement is rather perplexing. While it is true that Bergson never explicitly set out a fully formed philosophy of history under that title, the relevance of issues such as time, free will, memory and evolution to the field of history and its theorisation is both evident and long standing. To demonstrate, using the least obvious example on this list, philosophers of science and history would agree that particular notions of history are of great importance to evolutionary theories. Indeed, it is not uncommon for commentators on complexity theory to single out the *historical* character of Darwinian (and neo-Darwinian) evolutionary theory for criticism.² For [end of p. 17] such individuals, an exploration of the philosophy of history inherent in and advanced by Bergson’s alternative account of evolution would therefore be of some value, or at the very least be an investigation whose pursuit does not require a great deal of justification.

The issues of relevance I listed above are of course the principle problems to which Bergson devoted his first three books. If there is an historical book in Bergson's oeuvre, however, it is more common to nominate his final work, the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, for nowhere else in Bergson's writings will you find a fuller expression of his philosophy with respect to the events and people in history. Although this observation is true, it is also somewhat constrictive as to what counts as a philosophy of history and what might be of interest to one. If one's interest is in the nature of history, and more specifically its ontology, then it would be remiss to limit one's purview to the *Two Sources*, given that Bergson's ontological armoury is well and truly formulated by that stage.

Charles Péguy would certainly agree. As an attendee of Bergson's Collège de France lectures, Péguy was a keen student and advocate of Bergson's philosophy. He was also attuned to the significance of Bergson's ideas for influencing our understanding of history. In a number of essays, including most notably *Clio* (the essay, titled after the muse of history, that will inspire Deleuze's theory of the event), Péguy explicitly employs several Bergsonian notions, such as duration and the cone of memory, for the purposes of advancing a theory of history that was in direct contrast to the dominant model of his day, best exemplified by historians such as Ernest Lavisse, Charles Seignobos and Charles-Victor Langlois. As Camille Creighton has further pointed out, Péguy's Bergsonian thoughts on history date back to a 1901 essay titled *Proceedings of Congress*, which recounts a fictional meeting of four characters that debate the complexities of historiography and memory. While it might be argued that Péguy fails to set out in these [end of p. 18] essays a completely developed Bergsonian philosophy of history, it is difficult to disagree that he at least saw the promise in pursuing one. As Creighton puts it: 'At first glance, Bergson's philosophy [of the *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* and *Matter and Memory*] has nothing to do with historiography. [...] However, his ideas about time and memory are estimated by Péguy to be of so much importance that in his eyes they are essential for anyone who wants to reflect on the conditions of the possibility of writing history'.³

Nor was Péguy the only thinker of history who saw the potential for a Bergsonian philosophy of history. In an exceptionally erudite study, Christian Kerslake reveals how the once-revered English historian Arnold Toynbee was significantly influenced by Bergson's philosophy. As Kerslake notes, Toynbee's Bergsonism was no small matter, but in fact the inspiration for his monumental history of civilisations: 'it was Bergsonian philosophy that provided Toynbee with his primary justification for a turn to a global, synoptic view of human history, where the rise and fall of *civilizations* became a further level of differentiation in the ongoing cosmological and evolutionary differentiations that constitute Bergson's *élan vital*'.⁴

If there was sufficient cause for Péguy and Toynbee to mine Bergsonian thought for insights into the nature and recording of history, it would be due to not only the clear relevance of issues such as time, memory and evolution to history, but also because Bergson himself occasionally refers to history when describing his central concepts. I will discuss some of these examples below, and in so doing call into question the belief

that ‘questions of history and of historical memory and duration are to a large extent significantly absent from Bergson’s oeuvre’.⁵ But for the moment I would simply point out the following: while it is possible that Bergson’s references to history when describing his key concepts are of no relevance to the philosophy of history, surely it is this claim that requires adequate demonstration and not the contrary. It is also, to a certain extent, a moot point, for the prospect that the resources of Bergson’s philosophy are closed to thinkers of history most definitely did not stop philosophers and historians such as Péguy and Toynbee from acting as if they were fair game. The debate over whether Bergson himself explicitly advanced a coherent and fully formed philosophy of history is therefore somewhat irrelevant, if one’s interest is to explore the usefulness of Bergsonian philosophy for aiding our understanding of the nature of history.

And yet it must be acknowledged that virtually nothing has been written in this area (in a direct and sustained manner) since the revival of Bergson studies in the English-speaking world. This fact was indeed [end of p. 19] revealed by the editors at *Radical Philosophy* to be part of their motivation for publishing an essay by Max Horkheimer on Bergson.⁶ In my view, it is not entirely necessary to turn to critical theory in order to engage in a discussion of Bergson’s philosophy and history; surely we owe it to Bergson to first make a genuine effort at extracting and/or developing a Bergsonian philosophy of history on its own terms *before* we criticise it (or its lack) from the perspective of critical theory, historical-materialism, hermeneutics or other. In this spirit, the remainder of this paper will make some preliminary remarks on what a Bergsonian philosophy of history might look like, and in so doing demonstrate both the possibility and promise of pursuing one.

Virtual History

What does the philosophy of Bergson have to contribute to our understanding of history, by which I more specifically mean, the ontological nature of history? For the past several decades, it is arguably Bergson’s concepts of the actual and the virtual that have garnered the greatest amount of attention, especially for those interested in ontology. This is largely due to a contemporary fascination with all-things-virtual, and in particular the concept of the virtual as it is found in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. Within the Deleuzian inspired literature on the virtual, as John Mullarkey has noted, there has been a tendency to characterise the virtual and its affiliated terms (such as difference and the molecular) as ‘good’, while the actual and its affiliated terms (such as identity and molarity) are somehow ‘bad’.⁷ Two more terms could be added to this list: history and becoming. As Deleuze remarks in an interview with Antonio Negri:

What history grasps in an event is the way it’s actualised in particular circumstances; the event’s becoming is beyond the scope of history. History isn’t experimental, it’s just the set of more or less negative preconditions that make it possible to experiment with something beyond history.⁸

Such references to history and becoming in Deleuze's work affirm both his ambivalence towards history and his casting of history on the side of the actual. History, to elaborate, is the factual record of what actually happened in the past; it chronologically strings together actualities that represent (capture) a virtual and productive force of becoming (creation). The 'stuff' of history, furthermore, is that which has been 'actualised' – becomings, Ideas or Events that have 'fallen into history'.⁹ On the levels of both method and metaphysics, therefore, history is one with the actual.¹⁰ Mullarkey's provocative response to this virtualist tendency is to give the 'actualist' approach of Bergson its proper dues. But whilst I share much sympathy with this agenda, the suggestion that **[end of p. 20]** I would like to make in this paper is rather more limited: could it not be that history is or can be virtual?

To test this out, let us first delve a little further into what Deleuze means by the virtual when he affiliates it with becoming in contrast to history. The virtual, as it is commonly recited by Deleuzians, is distinct from the Aristotelian conception of the possible, for it is no less real than the actual.¹¹ The virtual therefore pertains to a different kind of reality. As Deleuze would describe it in his pre-Guattari work, this kind of reality is intensive and incorporeal, as opposed to extensive states-of-affairs and corporeal bodies. Put differently, this reality is the reality of becoming as opposed to being.

A useful illustration of this dualistic set-up can be taken from *The Logic of Sense*. Deleuze begins this text by considering a Platonic dualism. This dualism is not that of Model and copy, Idea and matter/body or intelligible and sensible. It is rather the distinction between copies and simulacra. If 'being' is the matter of copies, those limited and measured expressions of an Idea, then 'pure becoming' is the matter of the simulacra, that which 'eludes the action of the Idea' and 'contests *both* model *and* copy at once'.¹² What both model and copy share are their susceptibility to measurement – it is in part by measuring the resemblance between them that the latter is determined to be a more or less good copy of the former. A pure becoming, however, evades such measurement by referring to an ongoing movement that is irreducible to specific extensive qualities/quantities: "[H]otter" never stops where it is but is always going a point further, and the same applies to "colder", whereas definite quality is something that has stopped going on and is fixed'.¹³ That becoming refuses to conform to the dictates of being is unsurprising. But what is particularly intriguing in this discussion is that such becomings, according to Deleuze, flee their fixation in opposite directions at the same time. Deleuze draws inspiration for this theory from the literary work of Lewis Carroll, and in particular the story of *Alice in Wonderland*. As Deleuze notes in the case of Alice, she becomes larger and smaller at the same time, becoming larger than she was and smaller than she will be:

This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristics is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and pull in both directions at once: Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa.¹⁴

We thus arrive at the following dualism. On the one hand there is the living present. This living present 'is the temporal extension which [end of p. 21] accompanies the act, expresses and measures the action of the agent and the passion of the patient'.¹⁵ This present, in other words, pertains to corporeal bodies and their states of affairs. Insofar as such bodies can be collected into a unity, there is in turn a cosmic present, called Chronos, which 'embraces the entire universe'.¹⁶ For Chronos, 'only bodies exist in space, and only the present exists in time'.¹⁷ But simultaneous with this reading of time is another – Aion – which corresponds to the incorporeal nature of events rather than the substantive corporeality of bodies: the infinitive verb rather than the adjective. As such, this alternative time always eludes the present, constantly splitting it into the already past and eternally yet to come.

This temporal dualism of Aion and Chronos, it must be acknowledged, is primarily derived from Deleuze's reading of the Stoics and owes little to Deleuze's Bergsonism. In fact, *The Logic of Sense* makes scant mention of the virtual. Looking ahead, however, Deleuze will more overtly amalgamate his reading of the actual/virtual dualism with the philosophical schema from *The Logic of Sense*. In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze will reprise (with Guattari) the distinction between the event and states of affairs. But as we find here, the event is not only immaterial and incorporeal, it is also virtual: 'From virtuals we descend to actual states of affairs, and from states of affairs we ascend to virtuals'.¹⁸ As with the Aionic becoming of Alice, there will always be a part of the event that 'eludes its own actualization in everything that happens', and as such 'exists between two instants'.¹⁹ But for Deleuze, this between or 'meanwhile' is a 'dead time' where nothing takes place: 'an infinite awaiting that is already infinitely past, awaiting and reserve'.²⁰

Deleuze's promotion of a virtual 'dead time' hardly strikes as Bergsonian – Bergson may not have been a traditional vitalist, but it would be difficult to deny that he conceptualises time as something eminently vital. We should therefore not be surprised to find that even though Deleuze's analysis implicitly relies upon Bergson's notions of the virtual and heterogeneous multiplicity, Deleuze nevertheless criticises Bergson in this very same passage for maintaining that there is always time between two instants.²¹ Noting this divergence, however, indicates to us an alternative way of approaching the ontological status of history. Let us then return to Bergson, to see what his own use of the actual/virtual schema has to tell us about history.

When Bergson first developed his actual/virtual dualism, he specifically used it to distinguish between a past that no longer exists as the present but nevertheless continues to coexist with it in some capacity: [end of p. 22]

Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states. For this purpose it need not be entirely absorbed in the passing sensation or idea; for then, on the contrary, it would no longer *endure*. Nor need it forget its former states: it is enough that, in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but

forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another.²²

Although this passage is principally about duration (an issue which I will get on to in a moment), what demands our attention here is the manner in which Bergson draws a distinction between a present/actual state and a past/virtual state, both of which together combine to form a coexisting organic whole. The word ‘virtual’, it must be admitted, does not appear in this passage, but by *Matter and Memory* its implication will be confirmed. As Bergson will say in this text:

Essentially virtual, [the past] cannot be known as something past unless we follow and adopt the movement by which it expands into a present image, thus emerging from obscurity into the light of day. In vain do we seek its trace in anything actual and already realized: we might as well look for darkness beneath the light.²³

Thus for Bergson the past is essentially virtual. Accordingly, the virtual does not exactly correspond to simultaneous becomings (Aion) in contrast to actual successive history (Chronos), as a Deleuzian reading might suggest. On the contrary, the movement from the virtual to the actual might be thought of as the movement of history itself, vis-à-vis the present actuality towards it is surging. When so put, history is not in conflict with the virtual or restricted to the realm of actuality. For insofar as the virtual past plays an indispensable role in determining the nature of the present and reality, history is a part of the process by which reality is produced, rather than an effect of it.

In response to my above analysis, it may be objected that I have conflated history with the past. There are of course differences between the two, and I would by no means wish to suggest that they are synonymous (despite their numerous affinities). But in lieu of setting out (let alone resolving) the differences and similarities between history and the past, it is perhaps adequate to note for the time being that Bergson himself occasionally refers to them in tandem:

What are we, in fact, what is our *character*, if not the condensation of the history that we have lived from our birth – nay, even before our birth, since we bring with us prenatal dispositions? Doubtless we think only a small part of our past, but it is with our entire past, including the original **[end of p. 23]** bent of our soul, that we desire, will and act. Our past, then, as a whole, is made manifest to us in its impulse; it is felt in the form of tendency, although a small part of it only is known in the form of idea.²⁴

As we can see from this discussion and others like them,²⁵ our past is, in a certain respect, our history – the history of where we have been. ‘History’, broadly speaking, is of course a notion that incorporates much more than just the temporal category of the past, but the relevant point here is that when Bergson speaks about the past in such passages, what he has in mind is clearly compatible with the term history, or at least a certain understanding of that term. This is arguably to be expected, given that Bergson is at pains in all of his studies to demonstrate how the past is something lived, as opposed to a mere temporal category, and something that *survives* in the present.²⁶ It would also explain why several

of Bergson's temporal illustrations do not simply refer to abstract relations between the past, present and future, but instead appeal to historical examples, by which I mean examples that describe the relation between our contemporary reality and its history.²⁷

Nevertheless, one may still insist that whilst the past for Bergson is virtual, history proper is the *actual* record and/or manifestation of this productive process. To ascertain the accuracy of this interpretation, and consequently the legitimacy of conceptualising history as virtual and vital, it will therefore be necessary to consider more than just those passages that Bergson refers to the virtual, given their relative scarcity within his writings.²⁸ Let us then consider a far more frequent and fundamental notion of Bergsonian ontology: duration. As I will show, Bergson's description and development of this notion also explicitly refers to history, in turn indicating why thinkers of history such as Péguy and Toynbee might have been so interested in Bergson's philosophy.

Durational History

Bergson's description of an unfolding melody is one of his earliest, and perhaps most compelling, illustrations of duration. As each successive note in a melody is sounded, the listener hears much more than just that individual note. What they hear is an entire progression, which is to say that the character of each emerging note in a melody is contoured in part by its interconnections ('mutual penetration') with previous notes and the whole it is a part of – namely, the trajectory of the melodic progression. In this manner, two notes that might be identical in actuality will be different in reality due to their differing relations to **[end of p. 24]** a virtual progression. When a new note emerges in a melody, it does not so much 'replace' the previous note as form a continuity with it. This continuity is duration. Although it is common to represent ('symbolise') this continuity as a set of discrete moments lined up in a row (a chronological timeline), Bergson points out that in reality we do not experience time as discrete instants, but rather as an interpenetrating succession, what he refers to as 'a continuous or qualitative multiplicity'. Duration for Bergson is thus a heterogeneous multiplicity that must continuously change in kind if time is to be allowed to pass – to endure.²⁹

In his *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, this notion of duration will be employed by Bergson to solve Zeno's paradox. As we find there, Achilles will never be able to overtake the tortoise in a footrace unless the duration of Achilles and the duration of his slower rival are respected as singular heterogeneities or continuous (as opposed to discrete) multiplicities.³⁰ Moving forward, however, Bergson will make use of this very same idea to describe the evolution of life. As he will assert in *Creative Evolution*, the evolution of life forms 'a single indivisible history'.³¹ This invocation of the word 'history' is telling, for the history that he is talking about is not some chronological spatialisation of a durational movement. Rather, the indivisible trajectory that Bergson is referring to is history itself. As such, history does not come after the durational movement of evolution, for it *is* duration, or perhaps more exactly, a part of it.

Bergson's reference to history in this manner is no mere one-off. Nor does it only occur at inconsequential moments. In fact, we can find this use of history in one of the most beloved passages of Bergson's entire oeuvre:

Though our reasoning on isolated systems may imply that their history, past, present, and future, might be instantaneously unfurled like a fan, this history, in point of fact, unfolds itself gradually, as if it occupied a duration like our own. If I want to mix a glass of sugar and water, I must, willy nilly, wait until the sugar melts. This little fact is big with meaning. For here the time I have to wait is not that mathematical time which would apply equally well to the entire history of the material world, even if that history were spread out instantaneously in space. It coincides with my impatience, that is to say, with a certain portion of my own duration, which I cannot protract or contract as I like. It is no longer something *thought*, it is something *lived*.³²

As we can see here, history *need not* be thought of as an isolated system, where past, present and future are spread out instantaneously in space, for Bergson offers us another way of thinking about history, in which [end of p. 25] 'this history, in point of fact, unfolds itself gradually, as if it occupied a duration like our own'.

It is *this* kind history that thinkers such as Toynbee, Péguy and myself are so keen to explore. In articulating his various civilisations, Toynbee's histories attempt to elicit the singular duration of each civilisation (and their relation to the *élan vital*). These civilisations are naturally in contact/confluence with one another, and significantly so, like Achilles and the tortoise. But they can each nonetheless be said to exude their own *métier* or singular combination of reality – what Deleuze and Guattari might call a cross-section of chaos or plane or immanence.³³ As for Péguy, when he insists upon the need to place oneself within the depths of an historical event, it is precisely for the purposes of 'intuiting' the durational rhythm of that historical event.³⁴ As I previously remarked, these examples of Bergsonian history are by no means the only possible applications, and it is debatable as to how accurate or fully developed they are. Their existence, however, points to the possibility of extracting an alternative conception of history that is closely associated with the notion of duration and its affiliated terms.

From an historical theory point of view, it is hardly surprising that one might turn to Bergson when seeking a form of history that escapes the confines of determinism and representationalism. This is because Bergson's philosophy affords us with one of the most prominent critiques of historicism in the history of Western philosophy. In his critique of evolutionary theory, Bergson takes to task two varieties of historicism: radical mechanism and radical finalism. In radical mechanism, reality is subjected to an a priori systematisation that is casual-linear and fixed. The essence of mechanical explanation is therefore 'to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that *all is given*'.³⁵ Radical finalism, on the other hand, is teleological, insofar as its movement is guided by a predetermined endpoint. In Bergson's words:

This doctrine of teleology, in its extreme form, as we find it is Leibniz for example, implies that things and beings merely realize a programme previously arranged. But if there is nothing unforeseen, no invention or creation in the universe, time is useless again. As in the mechanistic hypothesis, here again it is

supposed that *all is given*. Finalism thus understood is only inverted mechanism. It springs from the same postulate, with this sole difference, that in the movement of our finite intellects along successive things, whose successiveness is reduced to a mere appearance, it holds in front of us the light with which it claims to guide us, instead of putting it behind.³⁶

As it happens, it is precisely this kind of teleological historicism that Deleuze and Guattari will accuse Hegel and Heidegger of.³⁷ The alterna- **[end of p. 26]** tive to this historicism, they will go on to argue, is found in the notion of ‘becoming’ and the multiplicity of fusion (of which duration is said to be the pre-eminent example³⁸). But as we have seen, this heterogeneous multiplicity need not be opposed to history. On the contrary, history might instead be durational, and duration part historical.

Such an association of history with the concept of duration is certainly contestable, especially if one takes the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* as their starting point. Indeed, it could even be claimed that Bergson’s duration is in fact *ahistorical*.³⁹ To do so, however, requires a disregard for the references to history that I have detailed and the broader philosophy of history operating through Bergson’s work. It furthermore implies a convenient but somewhat questionable portrayal of Bergson’s texts prior to the *Two Sources* as being works of speculative metaphysics detached from contemporary reality.⁴⁰ As a result, if one wishes to ‘historicise Bergson’s *duree*’, one arguably need not go beyond Bergson, but simply return to his formative texts. There one will find a form of history that is not wedded to the act of spatial representation, but is rather an integral element in the continual emergence of duration.

Conclusion

In his renowned essay on ‘The Possible and the Real’, Bergson conjectures that the possible does not predate the real, but on the contrary is retrospectively cast by the real into the past. As he puts it: ‘Backwards over the course of time, a constant remodelling of the past by the present, of the cause by the effect, is being carried out’.⁴¹ When history is characterised as the act of representing something in the past from the perspective of the present, it is naturally fitting to affiliate it with this form of the possible. In such cases, history tells us what *was* possible. It may also explain or justify what is, and as a result serve the purposes of the present. Ultimately, however, this form of history could be said to coincide with the power of capture and manipulation (*pouvoir*), as opposed to productivity and creativity (*puissance*). Following, it is little wonder that this form of history is condemned by Deleuze as constrictive and contrasted with what he would call becoming.

As I have demonstrated in this paper, this is not all that history can be or become in the philosophy of Bergson. For as we know from Deleuze, aside from this conception of the possible, an entirely different category of reality can be extracted from Bergson’s thought – the virtual. And far from being opposed to history, the virtual fundamentally involves history. Indeed, as the present emerges, what is **[end of p. 27]** ‘made manifest to us in its impulse’ and ‘felt in the form of tendency’ is nothing other than the

‘condensation of our history’ – or more specifically, our *virtual* history.⁴² Genuine movement and creativity, furthermore, both rely upon this continuity that history forms with present: as the arc of duration is drawn from the virtual past to the actual present, what it forms is ‘a single indivisible history’⁴³ – a history that ‘unfolds itself gradually’.⁴⁴

Of course, much more remains to be said on the main features of Bergson’s philosophy of history and its great relevance to Art History, in particular its bearing on creativity. In this essay I have touched on two concepts – the virtual and duration – that might be productively explored within the context of history and ontology. However, as the work of Péguy and Toynbee demonstrates, other Bergsonian notions such as intuition and the *élan vital* would almost certainly form a part of the broader picture. To the extent that philosophers of history share a desire with contemporary Bergsonians to better understand the process of creativity, the relation of the present to what has come before, and to combat conventional theories of determinism and teleology, it would seem apparent to me that there is much to be gained from further pursuing this line of thought, for the benefit of both Bergsonian and historical scholarship.

Endnotes

¹ Keith Ansell Pearson, ‘Review of Jay Lampert’s *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*’, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2007.03.06.

² As an example, see Brian Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity* (Phoenix, 1994), pp. 78-83, 104-5, 128-134 and 141.

³ Camille Creighton, ‘History, Memory of Humanity’. Bergson’s Influence on the Conception of History and Memory in Charles Péguy’, *The Workshop Centre for Historical Research* [online] 07, 2011, online since March 15, 2011, accessed September 24, 2012. URL: <http://arch.revues.org/3593>, §9.

⁴ Christian Kerslake, ‘Becoming against History: Toynbee, Deleuze and Vitalist Historiography’, in *Parrhesia*, No. 4, 2008, p. 19.

⁵ Ansell Pearson, ‘Review of Jay Lampert’s *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*’. In supporting this assertion, Ansell Pearson notes that *Matter and Memory* ‘is primarily a contribution to the philosophy of mind’. Again, this is most certainly true. But it is strange that Ansell Pearson would take this as evidence that the text has nothing to say about the nature of history. For example, Ansell Pearson would presumably be [**end of p. 28**] willing to admit that the text has a great deal to contribute to the philosophy of time, yet the philosophy of time is not synonymous with the philosophy of mind. I do not mean to suggest that *Matter and Memory* has as much to say about history as it does mind or time, I merely wish to point out that Ansell Pearson does not offer any convincing reasons as to why *Matter and Memory* would be *closed* to the historian or philosopher of history.

⁶ See the editors note at the beginning of Max Horkheimer, ‘On Bergson’s Metaphysics of Time’, in *Radical Philosophy*, No. 131, May/June 2005, p. 9.

⁷ See John Mullarkey, 'Forget the virtual: Bergson, actualism, and the refraction of reality', in *Continental Philosophy Review*, No. 37, 2004, pp. 470-472.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1974-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 170.

⁹ For a leading proponent of this Deleuzian theory, see Jay Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of History* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006).

¹⁰ It should be noted that I have argued at length how it is possible to extract an alternative philosophy of history from Deleuze's work beyond this image of history as one with the actual. For this full analysis see Craig Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone Press, 1994), pp. 208 and 211.

¹² Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 1990), p. 2

¹³ Plato, 'Philebus', in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, trans. R. Hackforth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), §24d.

¹⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 4 and 162.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 160.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156 and 158.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158. As Deleuze and Guattari go on to say: 'In every event there are many heterogeneous, always simultaneous components, since each of them is a meanwhile, all within the meanwhile that makes them communicate through zones of indiscernibility, of undecidability: they are variations, modulations, intermezzi, singularities of a new infinite order. Each component of the event is *actualised or effectuated* in an instant, and the event in the time that passes between these instants; but nothing happens within *the virtuality* that has only meanwhiles as components and an event [end of p. 29] as composite becoming. Nothing happens there, but everything becomes, so that the event has the privilege of beginning again when time is past'.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

²² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001), p. 100.

²³ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004), p. 173.

²⁴ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1998), p. 5.

²⁵ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2007), pp. 127-8.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 125-9 and 151.

²⁷ See, for instance, Bergson's discussion of Romanticism and earlier classical writers on p. 12 of *The Creative Mind*.

²⁸ Bergson, it should be noted, rarely refers to the term 'virtual' and does not promote it as one of his major concepts.

²⁹ See Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, pp. 100-105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

³¹ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 37.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, pp. 42-3.

³⁴ For more on this see Lundy, *History and Becoming*, pp. 25-7.

³⁵ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 39.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, pp. 94-5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³⁹ Claire Blencowe, 'Destroying Duration: The Critical Situation of Bergsonism in Benjamin's Analysis of Modern Experience', *Theory Culture Society* Vol. 25, No. 139, 2008, p. 140.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.* In her attempt to 'destroy duration', Blencowe relies heavily upon a reading of duration drawn from the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, with minimal consideration of this concept as it appears in Bergson's previous texts. In addition, and closely related to this, Blencowe draws a distinction between the *Two Sources* and Bergson's earlier 'metaphysical' works, based on her reading of Walter Benjamin. As she says: 'What Benjamin calls into question is not so much Bergson's metaphysics as his application of them to human experience. Indeed, Benjamin's critique can best be understood as a response to the sociobiological *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*' (p. 152). To suggest, however, that Bergson's philosophy prior to the *Two Sources* has nothing to say about 'human experience' or the 'sociobiological' is highly dubious. What are Bergson's first two books if not investigations into human experience? And what is *Creative Evolution* if not a development of duration beyond the psychological context into the sociobiological realm of life, construed in all its diversity? Granted, the *Two Sources* is a distinct text that more [end of p. 30] fully discusses the socio-historical. But this does not itself make Bergson's prior philosophy ahistorical or devoid of concern for human experience or the sociobiological.

⁴¹ Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, pp. 84-5.

⁴² Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. [**end of p. 31**]