

III. Theory of Perception.

Henri Bergson's philosophical work, as summarized from the provided chapter, delves into the relativity of perception and the transformative journey from common experience to profound action. Bergson distinguishes between fact and construction, proposing a series where each term can be seen as fact to the following terms and constructed in relation to preceding ones, aiming for a "contact with pure immediacy." This effort signifies a critical journey from complexity to simplicity in understanding experience.

In discussing the theory of perception, Bergson emphasizes the live communion between subject and object in perception, highlighting it as the epitome of knowledge. He critiques the Kantian perspective that transcendent vision is necessary for understanding beyond language, suggesting instead that a direct vision grounded in common experience and intellectual sympathy can achieve true knowledge. According to Bergson, philosophy aims to expand perceptive power to grasp reality's full depth, an endeavor paralleled by artists who detach common sense from utilitarian prejudices to access intuition of reality.

The chapter further explores the distinction in perception, identifying pure perception as a fundamental but abstract aspect of experience that offers a potential starting point for understanding reality. It is argued that knowledge does not commence with isolated sensations but is a product of complex analysis and synthesis. Bergson identifies the practical utility behind natural perception, where perception serves action and speech rather than disinterested knowledge.

Through critical exploration, Bergson posits that ordinary perception is shaped by practical interests and is often infused with memories that align with our actions in the present. He concludes that common perception's utilitarian nature leads to a selective emphasis on certain impressions, especially those of touch, which are most practical

for interaction with reality. This selective emphasis parcels matter into discrete bodies, illustrating the artificiality of our perceptual process. Bergson's work suggests that a deeper immersion into reality, beyond the symbols and theoretical forms that obscure our direct experience, is essential for genuine understanding and interaction with the world around us.

