

# VI. The Problem of Evolution: Life and Matter.

The chapter from "A New Philosophy: Henri Bergson" delves into the essentials of perception, the intricacies of consciousness, and the evolutionary philosophy that Bergson proposed. It begins by challenging the traditional notion that perception is housed within the subject, arguing instead for the immediacy of perception as existing within both the subject and object, thereby dismissing the fundamental relativity theses as a mere "trick of speech."

Subsequent sections tackle the problem of evolution, starting from the premise that psychological freedom, or liberty, essentially begins with the very first instances of life. Bergson posits that sensation itself is the beginning of liberty, leading to the need for a comprehensive framework to make sense of our own duration and evolution, suggesting that biology might soon take precedence over mathematics as the guiding science. This notion stems from the observation that ancient knowledge focused on static moments of reality, whereas modern science, with its emphasis on infinitesimal analysis and biological research, embraces a doctrine of evolution.

However, Bergson critiques Spencer's evolution concept for lacking genuine duration and reducing evolution to mechanical processes, devoid of creativity and reduced to materialistic interpretations. He proposes instead a reintegration of "real duration" and creative evolution into our understanding, arguing that life embodies a creative activity beyond mere mechanical interactions, as evidenced by the development of an embryo representing a microcosm of biological evolution.

The chapter culminates in positioning life not just as a process but as genuine creation, evidenced by the progressive and ascendant history of life forms that exhibit initiative,

choice, and creative impulse. This creative liberty observed in life contradicts a fatalistic view and aligns with Bergson's wider philosophical doctrine that emphasizes liberty, choice, and creativity as fundamental aspects of life and evolution.

Thus, Bergson's philosophy challenges traditional materialistic and deterministic views by advocating for a dynamic, creative, and evolving understanding of life, underpinning his concept of "Creative Evolution" as a synthesis of immediate experience, the liberty of life, and the continuous, creative unfolding of evolution itself.



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