

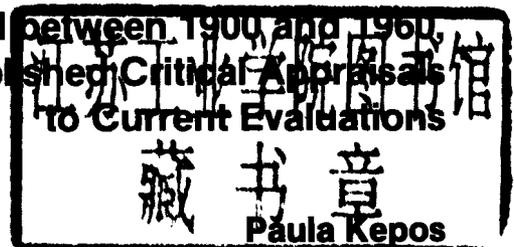
Twentieth-Century
Literary Criticism

TCLC 32

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Excerpts from Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers**

**Who Died between 1900 and 1960,
from the First Published Critical Appraisals
to Current Evaluations**



**Paula Kepos
Dennis Poupard
Editors**

**Marie Lazzari
Thomas Ligotti
Joann Prosygniuk
Associate Editors**



STAFF

Paula Kepos, Dennis Poupard, *Editors*

Marie Lazzari, Thomas Ligotti, Joann Prosyniuk, *Associate Editors*

Keith E. Schooley, Laurie A. Sherman, *Senior Assistant Editors*

Sandra Liddell, Timothy Veaser, *Assistant Editors*

Thomas J. Votteler, *Contributing Editor*

Susan Miller Harig, Melissa Reiff Hug, Debra A. Wells, *Contributing Assistant Editors*

Jeanne A. Gough, *Permissions & Production Manager*

Linda M. Pugliese, *Production Supervisor*

Christine A. Galbraith, David G. Oblender, Suzanne Powers, Linda M. Ross,

Lee Ann Welsh, *Editorial Assistants*

Maureen A. Puhl, *Senior Manuscript Assistant*

Donna Craft, Jennifer E. Gale, *Manuscript Assistants*

Victoria B. Cariappa, *Research Supervisor*

Maureen R. Richards, *Research Coordinator*

Mary D. Wise, *Senior Research Assistant*

Rogene M. Fisher, Kevin B. Hillstrom, Karen D. Kaus, Eric Priehs,

Filomena Sgambati, *Research Assistants*

Janice M. Mach, *Text Permissions Supervisor*

Kathy Grell, Mabel E. Gurney, Josephine M. Keene, *Permissions Coordinators*

Kimberly F. Smilay, *Senior Permissions Assistant*

H. Diane Cooper, *Permissions Assistant*

Melissa A. Brantley, Denise M. Singleton, Sharon D. Valentine,

Lisa M. Lantz, *Permissions Clerks*

Patricia A. Seefelt, *Picture Permissions Supervisor*

Margaret A. Chamberlain, *Picture Permissions Coordinator*

Pamela A. Hayes, Lillian Quickley, *Permissions Clerks*

Mary Beth Trimper, *Production Manager*

Laura McKay, *External Production Associate*

Arthur Chartow, *Art Director*

Linda A. Davis, *External Production Assistant*

Laura Bryant, *Production Supervisor*

Louise Gagné, *Internal Production Associate*

Shelly Andrews, Sharana Wier, *Internal Production Assistants*

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws. The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

Gale Research Inc. will vigorously defend all of its rights in this publication.

Copyright © 1989 by Gale Research Inc.

835 Penobscot Building

Detroit, MI 48226-4094

All rights reserved including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.



Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 76-46132

ISBN 0-8103-2414-8

ISSN 0276-8178

Printed in the United States of America.

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series

When you need to review criticism of literary works, these are the Gale series to use:

If the author's death date is:

You should turn to:

After Dec. 31, 1959
(or author is still living)

CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM

for example: Jorge Luis Borges, Anthony Burgess,
William Faulkner, Mary Gordon,
Ernest Hemingway, Iris Murdoch

1900 through 1959

TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM

for example: Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald,
Henry James, Mark Twain, Virginia Woolf

1800 through 1899

NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE CRITICISM

for example: Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nathaniel Hawthorne,
George Sand, William Wordsworth

1400 through 1799

***LITERATURE CRITICISM FROM 1400 TO 1800
(excluding Shakespeare)***

for example: Anne Bradstreet, Daniel Defoe,
Alexander Pope, François Rabelais,
Jonathan Swift, Phillis Wheatley

SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM

Shakespeare's plays and poetry

Antiquity through 1399

CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE CRITICISM

for example: Dante, Homer, Plato, Sophocles, Vergil,
the Beowulf Poet

Gale also publishes related criticism series:

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE REVIEW

This series covers authors of all eras who have written for
the preschool through high school audience.

SHORT STORY CRITICISM

This series covers the major short fiction writers of all nationalities
and periods of literary history.

POETRY CRITICISM

This series covers poets of all nationalities, movements, and periods of
literary history.

Preface

It is impossible to overvalue the importance of literature in the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual evolution of humanity. Literature is that which both lifts us out of everyday life and helps us to better understand it. Through the fictive lives of such characters as Anna Karenina, Jay Gatsby, or Leopold Bloom, our perceptions of the human condition are enlarged, and we are enriched.

Literary criticism can also give us insight into the human condition, as well as into the specific moral and intellectual atmosphere of an era, for the criteria by which a work of art is judged reflect contemporary philosophical and social attitudes. Literary criticism takes many forms: the traditional essay, the book or play review, even the parodic poem. Criticism can also be of several types: normative, descriptive, interpretive, textual, appreciative, generic. Collectively, the range of critical response helps us to understand a work of art, an author, an era.

Scope of the Series

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC) is designed to serve as an introduction for the student of twentieth-century literature to the authors of the period 1900 to 1960 and to the most significant commentators on these authors. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of this period are by far the most popular writers for study in high school and college literature courses. Since a vast amount of relevant critical material confronts the student, *TCLC* presents significant passages from the most important published criticism to aid students in the location and selection of commentaries on authors who died between 1900 and 1960.

The need for *TCLC* was suggested by the usefulness of the Gale series *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, which excerpts criticism on current writing. Because of the difference in time span under consideration (*CLC* considers authors who were still living after 1959), there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*. For further information about *CLC* and Gale's other criticism series, users should consult the Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series preceding the title page in this volume.

Each volume of *TCLC* is carefully compiled to include authors who represent a variety of genres and nationalities and who are currently regarded as the most important writers of this era. In addition to major authors, *TCLC* also presents criticism on lesser-known writers whose significant contributions to literary history are important to the study of twentieth-century literature.

Each author entry in *TCLC* is intended to provide an overview of major criticism on an author. Therefore, the editors include fourteen to sixteen authors in each 650-page volume (compared with approximately thirty-five authors in a *CLC* volume of similar size) so that more attention may be given to an author. Each author entry represents a historical survey of the critical response to that author's work: some early criticism is presented to indicate initial reactions, later criticism is selected to represent any rise or decline in the author's reputation, and current retrospective analyses provide students with a modern view. The length of an author entry is intended to reflect the amount of critical attention the author has received from critics writing in English, and from foreign criticism in translation. Critical articles and books that have not been translated into English are excluded. Every attempt has been made to identify and include excerpts from the seminal essays on each author's work.

An author may appear more than once in the series because of the great quantity of critical material available, or because of a resurgence of criticism generated by events such as an author's centennial or anniversary celebration, the republication or posthumous publication of an author's works, or the publication of a newly translated work. Generally, a few author entries in each volume of *TCLC* feature criticism on single works by major authors who have appeared previously in the series. Only those individual works that have been the subjects of vast amounts of criticism and are widely studied in literature classes are selected for this in-depth treatment. Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* and Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* are examples of such entries in *TCLC*, Volume 32.

Organization of the Book

An author entry consists of the following elements: author heading, biographical and critical introduction, list of principal works, excerpts of criticism (each preceded by explanatory notes and followed by a bibliographic citation), and a bibliography of additional reading.

- The *author heading* consists of the author's full name, followed by birth and death dates. The unbracketed portion of the name denotes the form under which the author most commonly wrote. If an author wrote

consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the biographical and critical introduction. Also located at the beginning of the introduction to the author entry are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets. Uncertainty as to a birth or death date is indicated by a question mark.

- The *biographical and critical introduction* contains background information designed to introduce the reader to an author and to the critical debate surrounding his or her work. References are provided to past volumes of *TCLC* and to other biographical and critical reference series published by Gale, including *Children's Literature Review*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, and *Something about the Author*.
- Most *TCLC* entries include *portraits* of the author. Many entries also contain reproductions of materials pertinent to an author's career, including manuscript pages, title pages, dust jackets, letters, and drawings, as well as photographs of important people, places, and events in an author's life.
- The *list of principal works* is chronological by date of first book publication and identifies the genre of each work. In the case of foreign authors with both foreign-language publications and English translations, the title and date of the first English-language edition are given in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- *Criticism* is arranged chronologically in each author entry to provide a perspective on changes in critical evaluation over the years. All titles of works by the author featured in the entry are printed in boldface type to enable the user to easily locate discussion of particular works. Also for purposes of easier identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it appeared. Many of the excerpts in *TCLC* also contain translated material to aid users. Unless otherwise noted, translations in brackets are by the editors; translations in parentheses or continuous with the text are by the critic. Publication information (such as publisher names and book prices) and parenthetical numerical references (such as footnotes or page and line references to specific editions of works) have been deleted at the editors' discretion to provide smoother reading of the text.
- Critical excerpts are prefaced by *explanatory notes* providing the reader with information about both the critic and the criticism that follows. Included are the critic's reputation, individual approach to literary criticism, and particular expertise in an author's works. Also noted are the relative importance of a work of criticism, the scope of the excerpt, and the growth of critical controversy or changes in critical trends regarding an author. In some cases, these notes cross-reference excerpts by critics who discuss each other's commentary.
- A complete *bibliographic citation* designed to facilitate location of the original essay or book by the interested reader follows each piece of criticism.
- The *additional bibliography* appearing at the end of each author entry suggests further reading on the author. In some cases it includes essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights.

An acknowledgments section lists the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reprint material in this volume of *TCLC*. It does not, however, list every book or periodical reprinted or consulted in the preparation of the volume.

Cumulative Indexes

Each volume of *TCLC* includes a cumulative index listing all the authors who have appeared in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*, *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism*, and *Short Story Criticism*, along with cross-references to the Gale series *Children's Literature Review*, *Authors in the News*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography*, *Something about the Author*, *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, and *Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children*. Useful for locating an author within the various series, this index is particularly valuable for those authors who are identified with a certain period but who, because of their death dates, are placed in another, or for those authors whose careers span two periods. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald is found in *TCLC*, yet a writer often associated with him, Ernest Hemingway, is found in *CLC*.

Each volume of *TCLC* also includes a cumulative nationality index, in which authors' names are arranged alphabetically under their respective nationalities.

Title Index

TCLC also includes an index listing the titles of all literary works discussed in the series since its inception. Foreign language titles that have been translated are followed by the titles of the translations—for example, *Voina i mir* (*War and Peace*). Page numbers following these translated titles refer to all pages on which any form of the titles, either foreign language or translated, appear. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while all individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks. In cases where the same title is used by different authors, the author's surname is given in parentheses after the title, for example, *Collected Poems* (Housman) and *Collected Poems* (Yeats).

Acknowledgments

No work of this scope can be accomplished without the cooperation of many people. The editors especially wish to thank the copyright holders of the excerpted criticism included in this volume, the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reprint rights, and Anthony Bogucki for assistance with copyright research. We are also grateful to the staffs of the Detroit Public Library, the Library of Congress, the University of Detroit Library, the University of Michigan Library, and the Wayne State University Library for making their resources available to us.

Suggestions Are Welcome

In response to suggestions, several features have been added to *TCLC* since the series began, including explanatory notes to excerpted criticism, a cumulative index to authors in all Gale literary criticism series, entries devoted to a single work by a major author, more extensive illustrations, and a title index listing all literary works discussed in the series since its inception.

Readers who wish to suggest authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to write the editors.

Authors to Be Featured in Forthcoming Volumes

Black Elk (Native American autobiographer)—The life story of Black Elk, published as *Black Elk Speaks*, is considered one of the most authentic accounts of the experience of the Plains Indians during the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, this book has played a crucial role in encouraging the expression of native American heritage and consciousness.

Samuel Butler (English novelist and essayist)—Butler is best known for *The Way of All Flesh*, an autobiographical novel that is both a classic account of the conflict between father and son and an indictment of Victorian society.

Theodore Dreiser (American novelist)—A prominent American exponent of literary Naturalism and one of America's foremost novelists, Dreiser was the author of works commended for their powerful characterizations and strong ideological convictions.

Ivor Gurney (English poet)—One of the most gifted English poets of the First World War, Gurney focused in his work on the experiences of the common soldier during the war.

Vyacheslav Ivanov (Russian poet and philosopher)—Ivanov was among the principal theorists and poets of Russian Symbolism, the dominant literary movement in Russia during the first decades of the twentieth century. His strong spiritual values were influential in leading the movement away from its early focus on aesthetics and toward the development of a worldview that synthesized art and religion.

Nikos Kazantzakis (Greek novelist)—Kazantzakis was the author of works embodying Nietzschean and Bergsonian philosophical ideas in vividly portrayed characters, the most famous of which was the protagonist of *Zorba the Greek*.

D. H. Lawrence (English novelist)—Controversial during his lifetime for the explicit sexuality of his works, Lawrence is today considered one of the most important novelists of the twentieth century for his innovative explorations of human psychology. *TCLC* will devote an entry to his highly esteemed novel *Women in Love*.

Thomas Mann (German novelist)—Mann is credited with reclaiming for the German novel an international stature it had not enjoyed since the time of the Romantics. *TCLC* will devote an entry to his novel *Buddenbrooks*, a masterpiece of Realism which depicts the rise and fall of a wealthy Hanseatic family.

Zsigmond Móricz (Hungarian novelist)—Móricz was the first writer to introduce the themes and techniques of literary Realism into Hungarian literature. His coarse, often sordid portrayals of village life are credited with revitalizing Hungarian literature during the first half of the twentieth century.

Marcel Proust (French novelist)—Proust's multivolume *A la recherche du temps perdu (Remembrance of Things Past)* is among literature's works of highest genius. Combining a social historian's chronicle of turn-of-the-century Paris society, a philosopher's reflections on the nature of time and consciousness, and a psychologist's insight into a tangled network of personalities, the novel is acclaimed for conveying a profound view of all human existence.

Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (Swiss novelist)—A central figure in francophone Swiss literature during the early twentieth century, Ramuz surmounted the dominance of French literary style in Swiss letters to produce works that more faithfully represented life in Switzerland.

Alfonso Reyes (Mexican essayist, poet, and fiction writer)—One of the finest Spanish-American writers of the twentieth century, Reyes has been especially praised for the humanist values expressed in his diverse and impressive body of works.

Joseph Roth (Austrian novelist)—A chronicler of the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Roth is best known for his novels *Radetzky March*, *Job*, and *Flight without End*.

Umberto Saba (Italian poet)—Saba is ranked among the most important Italian poets of the twentieth century; his major work, *Il canzoniere*, is a poetic document reflecting his often tormented life.

Italo Svevo (Italian novelist)—Svevo's novels, which characteristically demonstrate the influence of the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, earned him a reputation as one of the most original and influential authors in modern Italian literature.

Mark Twain (American novelist)—Considered the father of modern American literature, Twain combined moral and social satire, adventure, and frontier humor to create such perennially popular books as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

Paul Van Ostaijen (Belgian poet)—Influenced by the Dada and Expressionist movements, Van Ostaijen is best known for experimental poetry expressing the nihilistic sensibility of the post-World War I generation of writers and artists.

Additional Authors to Appear in Future Volumes

- Abbey, Henry 1842-1911
Abercrombie, Lascelles 1881-1938
Adamic, Louis 1898-1951
Ade, George 1866-1944
Agustini, Delmira 1886-1914
Akers, Elizabeth Chase 1832-1911
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey 1836-1907
Aliyu, Dan Sidi 1902-1920
Allen, Hervey 1889-1949
Archer, William 1856-1924
Austin, Alfred 1835-1913
Bahr, Hermann 1863-1934
Bailey, Philip James 1816-1902
Barbour, Ralph Henry 1870-1944
Benjamin, Walter 1892-1940
Bennett, James Gordon, Jr. 1841-1918
Berdyaev, Nikolai Aleksandrovich 1874-1948
Beresford, J(ohn) D(avys) 1873-1947
Binyon, Laurence 1869-1943
Bishop, John Peale 1892-1944
Blake, Lillie Devereux 1835-1913
Blum, Léon 1872-1950
Bodenheim, Maxwell 1892-1954
Bowen, Marjorie 1886-1952
Byrne, Donn 1889-1928
Caine, Hall 1853-1931
Cannan, Gilbert 1884-1955
Carswell, Catherine 1879-1946
Churchill, Winston 1871-1947
Corelli, Marie 1855-1924
Croce, Benedetto 1866-1952
Crofts, Freeman Wills 1879-1957
Cruze, James (Jens Cruz Bosen) 1884-1942
Curros, Enríquez Manuel 1851-1908
Dall, Caroline Wells (Healy) 1822-1912
Daudet, Léon 1867-1942
Delafield, E.M. (Edme Elizabeth Monica de la Pasture) 1890-1943
Deneson, Jacob 1836-1919
Douglas, (George) Norman 1868-1952
Douglas, Lloyd C(assel) 1877-1951
Dovzhenko, Alexander 1894-1956
Drinkwater, John 1882-1937
Durkheim, Emile 1858-1917
Duun, Olav 1876-1939
Eaton, Walter Prichard 1878-1957
Eggleston, Edward 1837-1902
Erskine, John 1879-1951
Fadeyev, Alexander 1901-1956
Ferland, Albert 1872-1943
Field, Rachel 1894-1924
Fogazzaro, Antonio 1842-1911
Francos, Karl Emil 1848-1904
Frank, Bruno 1886-1945
Freud, Sigmund 1853-1939
Fröding, Gustaf 1860-1911
Fuller, Henry Blake 1857-1929
Futabatei Shimei 1864-1909
Gamboa, Federico 1864-1939
Glaspell, Susan 1876-1948
Glyn, Elinor 1864-1943
Golding, Louis 1895-1958
Gould, Gerald 1885-1936
Guest, Edgar 1881-1959
Gumilyov, Nikolay 1886-1921
Gyulai, Pal 1826-1909
Hale, Edward Everett 1822-1909
Hernández, Miguel 1910-1942
Hewlett, Maurice 1861-1923
Heyward, DuBose 1885-1940
Hope, Anthony 1863-1933
Ilyas, Abu Shabaka 1903-1947
Imbs, Bravig 1904-1946
Jammes, Francis 1868-1938
Johnston, Mary 1870-1936
Jorgensen, Johannes 1866-1956
King, Grace 1851-1932
Kirby, William 1817-1906
Kline, Otis Albert 1891-1946
Kohut, Adolph 1848-1916
Kuzmin, Mikhail Alexseyevich 1875-1936
Lamm, Martin 1880-1950
Leipoldt, C. Louis 1880-1947
Lima, Jorge De 1895-1953
Locke, Alain 1886-1954
López Portillo y Rojas, José 1850-1903
Louys, Pierre 1870-1925
Lucas, E(dward) V(errall) 1868-1938
Machar, Josef Svatopluk 1864-1945
Maragall, Joan 1860-1911
Marais, Eugene 1871-1936
Masaryk, Tomas 1850-1939
Mayor, Flora Macdonald 1872-1932
McClellan, George Marion 1860-1934
Mirbeau, Octave 1850-1917
Mistral, Frédéric 1830-1914
Monro, Harold 1879-1932
Moore, Thomas Sturge 1870-1944
Morley, Christopher 1890-1957
Morley, S. Griswold 1883-1948
Murray, (George) Gilbert 1866-1957
Nansen, Peter 1861-1918
Nobre, Antonio 1867-1900
O'Dowd, Bernard 1866-1959
Ophuls, Max 1902-1957
Orczy, Baroness 1865-1947
Oskison, John M. 1874-1947
Owen, Seaman 1861-1936
Page, Thomas Nelson 1853-1922
Parrington, Vernon L. 1871-1929
Peck, George W. 1840-1916
Phillips, Ulrich B. 1877-1934
Powys, T. F. 1875-1953
Prévost, Marcel 1862-1941
Quiller-Couch, Arthur 1863-1944
Randall, James G. 1881-1953
Rappoport, Solomon 1863-1944
Read, Opie 1852-1939
Reisen (Reizen), Abraham 1875-1953
Remington, Frederic 1861-1909
Riley, James Whitcomb 1849-1916
Rinehart, Mary Roberts 1876-1958
Ring, Max 1817-1901
Rozanov, Vasily Vasilyevich 1856-1919
Saar, Ferdinand von 1833-1906
Sabatini, Rafael 1875-1950
Sakutaro, Hagiwara 1886-1942
Sanborn, Franklin Benjamin 1831-1917
Sánchez, Florencio 1875-1910
Santayana, George 1863-1952
Sardou, Victorien 1831-1908
Schickele, René 1885-1940
Seabrook, William 1886-1945
Shestov, Lev 1866-1938
Shiels, George 1886-1949
Solovyov, Vladimir 1853-1900
Sorel, Georges 1847-1922
Spector, Mordechai 1859-1922
Squire, J(ohn) C(ollings) 1884-1958
Stavenhagen, Fritz 1876-1906
Stockton, Frank R. 1834-1902
Subrahmanya Bharati, C. 1882-1921
Thoma, Ludwig 1867-1927
Tomlinson, Henry Major 1873-1958
Totovents, Vahan 1889-1937
Tuchmann, Jules 1830-1901
Turner, W(alter) J(ames) R(edfern) 1889-1946
Upward, Allen 1863-1926
Vachell, Horace Annesley 1861-1955
Van Dyke, Henry 1852-1933
Villaespesa, Francisco 1877-1936
Wallace, Lewis 1827-1905
Walsh, Ernest 1895-1926
Webster, Jean 1876-1916
Whitlock, Brand 1869-1927
Wilson, Harry Leon 1867-1939
Wolf, Emma 1865-1932
Wood, Clement 1888-1950
Wren, P(ercival) C(hristopher) 1885-1941
Yonge, Charlotte Mary 1823-1901
Yosano Akiko 1878-1942
Zecca, Ferdinand 1864-1947
Zeromski, Stefan 1864-1925

Contents

Preface vii

Henri Bergson.....	1	Martin A. Hansen.....	247
Edgar Rice Burroughs.....	54	Thomas Hardy.....	265
Giosuè Carducci.....	82	William James.....	328
Emily Carr.....	115	A. B. Paterson.....	368
Stephen Crane.....	132	Arthur Wing Pinero.....	384
James Frazer.....	191	Graciliano Ramos.....	418

Henri Bergson

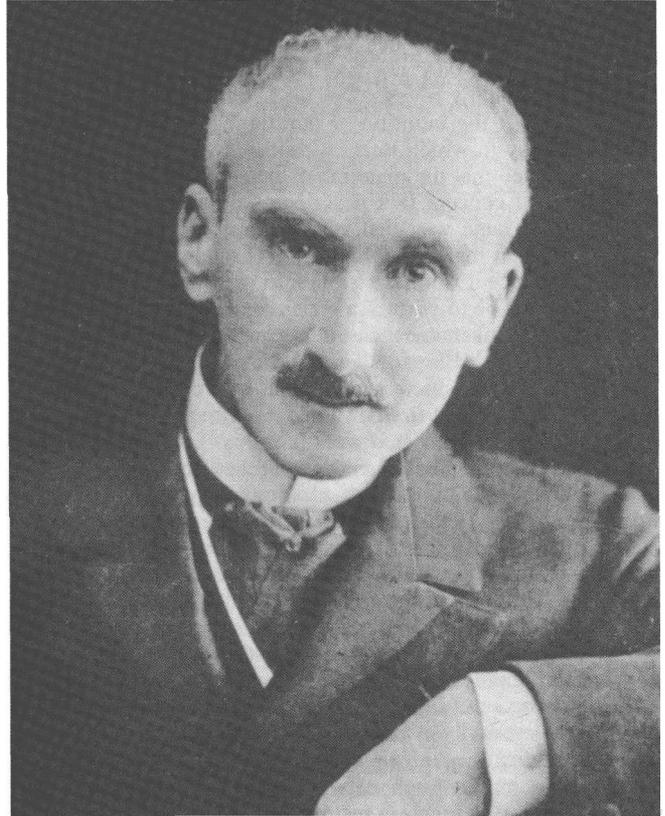
1859-1941

French philosopher.

Bergson's reputation as one of the most brilliant and influential philosophers of the twentieth century is based upon his formulation of a complex metaphysical doctrine that directly contradicted the materialist theories favored in the late nineteenth century. Believing that materialists, in regarding the universe as composed solely of the predictable actions of matter, had failed to either account for or disprove the existence of free will, Bergson proposed the existence of a purely subjective level of reality not governed by the laws that control matter. He further suggested that the materialists' error stemmed from their reliance upon pure intellect, when in fact the true nature of reality is comprehensible only by combining logical inquiry, which is the proper domain of the intellect, with a nonrational process he termed "intuition." Bergson's assertions concerning the limitations of the intellect drew harsh criticism, particularly from England, where the tradition of rationalism had been firmly entrenched since the seventeenth century, yet his affirmation of the possibility of free, undetermined human action carried wide appeal and brought him enormous popularity among those who found the materialist view inadequate.

Bergson was born in Paris, the son of a successful, cosmopolitan Polish composer. By all accounts a brilliant youth, he attended the prestigious Lycée Condorcet, excelling in his studies of English, Latin, Greek, philosophy, and mathematics; he received his secondary education at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, graduating in 1881 with a degree in philosophy. Shortly afterward, Bergson accepted a professorship at the Lycée Angers in western France, and he taught at a succession of provincial schools throughout much of the following decade. In 1888, he returned to Paris to teach at the Lycée Henri Quatre; one year later he published his doctoral thesis, entitled *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (*Time and Free Will*).

During his studies of philosophy at the Ecole Normale, Bergson had been exposed to two diametrically opposed schools of thought: the metaphysical idealism that had originated in the ancient tradition of mysticism and had been reawakened by Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), and materialism, which drew corroboration from the rapidly increasing body of scientific knowledge. Bergson was initially inclined more toward a materialist conceptualization of reality. However, as he prepared his doctoral thesis, which was originally planned as an exploration of the philosophical implications of Newtonian physics, he began to perceive what he considered grave flaws in the essentially mathematical nature of the materialist interpretation of time. After wrestling with his doubts at length, he proposed an alternate view in *Time and Free Will*, suggesting a qualitative difference between time and space. Despite Bergson's profoundly original assertions in *Time and Free Will*, the essay attracted little attention at the time of its publication, but as he continued to extrapolate his theory in subsequent volumes, most notably *Matière et mémoire* (*Matter and Memory*) and *L'évolution créatrice* (*Creative Evolution*), his reputation increased. In addition to his many French followers, who crowded by the hundreds into his lectures at the



Ecole Normale and later at the Collège de France, Bergson drew positive reactions from English philosophers T. E. Hulme, H. Wildon Carr, and Alfred North Whitehead, and from the dean of American philosophers, William James. However, his growing influence also elicited a strongly negative response from materialist thinkers, who issued a flood of studies denigrating his work. More damning still were the denunciations of eminent philosophers George Santayana, Bertrand Russell, and Wyndham Lewis. Nevertheless, he remained a highly revered figure throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century; following World War I he was asked to participate in the formation of the League of Nations, and in 1927 he was awarded a Nobel Prize in literature.

After the 1932 publication of his essay *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*), Bergson's name began to fade from the public memory, supplanted in part by the more temporal concerns of worldwide economic depression and approaching war. Forced by severe arthritis to retire from teaching, he spent the final decade of his life in virtual seclusion. Contemporaries report that Bergson became increasingly concerned with the kinds of moral questions raised in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* and considered converting from his native Judaism to Catholicism during this period, but refused to do so while his fellow Jews were suffering persecution at the hands of Adolf Hitler's

Third Reich. It is further reported that he refused the offer of special treatment extended by the Nazi occupation government and insisted upon wearing the yellow arm band used by the Nazis to identify Jews. In sympathy with Bergson's strong personal convictions, his friends and colleagues protested the Nazi occupation by refusing to stage official ceremonies to mark his death in January of 1941.

Bergson wrote: "Any summary of my views will deform them as a whole and will, by that very fact, expose them to a host of objections, if it does not take as its starting point, and if it does not continually revert to, what I consider the very center of the doctrine: the intuition of duration." In *Time and Free Will*, the essay in which Bergson initially developed this concept, he argued that the materialists had erred in viewing time as an abstract concept that describes the successive states of matter in the same way that space describes the positions of matter. Bergson maintained that time is qualitatively different from space since it is not divisible into measurable increments; to do so would be to portray a series of static moments and so would rob time of its most essential characteristics, movement and change, which Bergson described collectively as flux. The time that can be measured in increments by a clock, he asserted, is simply a convenient fiction, while real time, which he called *la durée* (usually translated as "duration"), is a purely subjective, nonmaterial phenomenon, without discrete components and without the temporal demarcations of past, present and future. Bergson was thus able to reaffirm the possibility of free action on the part of human beings, since predetermination implies a linear temporal structure not consistent with his definition of duration. Bergson further argued that because duration is an experiential phenomenon, it can never be accessed by empirical means, which employ sensory data to draw logical conclusions about the nature of reality, but must be realized through a process of intuition. According to Bergson's theory, human intellect evolved as a capacity for receiving, organizing, and interpreting only information about matter, while intuition served to assimilate such data into a vision of the ultimate nature of reality, a function restricted by the materialists to the faculty of reason.

Bergson further developed his concept of intuition in *Matter and Memory*, contending that the materialists had failed to prove an absolute unity of brain and mind despite their studies of the impact of pathological physical states upon human consciousness; he therefore concluded that the human mind is a transcendent phenomenon indicating a plane of existence independent of the physical world. Continuing his exploration of the nature of this higher reality in *Creative Evolution*, he proposed the existence of a universal opposition between matter, which is characterized by stasis, and an *élan vital*, or vital impulse, which he described as an intangible, infinitely mutable, and ultimately unpredictable universal force. Rejecting the Darwinian view of evolution as the interaction between organisms and their environments, Bergson maintained that evolution resulted from the interaction of matter and the vital impulse. Finally, in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he argued that the most desirable moral system would both acknowledge and manifest this universal drive toward the creation of life, observing that in his own experience the Christian religion had best done so.

Critical assessments of Bergson's ideas have displayed a marked polarity. At his death, he was hailed by the noted French poet Paul Valéry as the greatest philosopher of his time, while the English critic Sir Ray Lankester pronounced his writings

"worthless and unprofitable matter, causing waste of time and confusion of thought to many of those who are induced to read them." Early responses to Bergson's books were predominantly positive, and even when disagreeing with the specifics of his doctrine, critics often praised the clarity of his prose, the strength of his rhetorical powers, and, in the words of John Dewey, "the air of freedom and release" that permeated his discussions of the human condition. Analyzing the positive response to Bergson's works during the early decades of the twentieth century, a phenomenon described by one contemporary as "Bergsonitis," J. Alexander Gunn has explained that "men were growing impatient of a science claiming so much and yet admittedly unable to explain the really vital factors of existence, of which the free action of men is one of the most important." Yet it was precisely Bergson's insistence upon the reality of human free will that led George Santayana to denounce his writings as "occasional and partial, the work of an astute apologist, a party man, driven to desperate speculation by a timid attachment to prejudice." Negative appraisals of Bergson's work have also focused on his contentions regarding the limitations of the intellect, which many critics, most notably Bertrand Russell, have dismissed as mere semantic confusion.

Nevertheless, several recent commentators have discussed Bergson's thought as prophetic in view of modern discoveries in the fields of quantum physics and relativity theory, which because of their quasi-occult nature are not susceptible to the ordinary methods of empiricism. Moreover, despite his influence on such major figures as William James and Alfred North Whitehead, contemporary critics agree that Bergson's greatest impact upon twentieth-century thought has been felt not in the area of philosophy but in literature, where his concept of duration was translated into the influential stream-of-consciousness narrative technique by such authors as Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce. Finally, many commentators contend that, in reaffirming the essential uncertainty of scientific endeavor, Bergson provided a tonic to the overly strict materialist interpretation of reality and thus established one of the central tenets of modern thought.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (essay) 1889
 [*Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, 1910]
Matière et mémoire (essay) 1896
 [*Matter and Memory*, 1911]
Le rire (essay) 1900
 [*Laughter*, 1911]
Introduction à la métaphysique (essay) 1903
 [*The Introduction to a New Philosophy*, 1912; also translated as *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1912]
L'évolution créatrice (essay) 1907
 [*Creative Evolution*, 1911]
L'énergie spirituelle (essays) 1919
 [*Mind-Energy*, 1920]
Durée et simultanéité (essays) 1922
 [*Duration and Simultaneity*, 1965]
Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion (essay) 1932
 [*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 1935]
La pensée et la mouvante (essays) 1934
Oeuvres (essays) 1959

WILLIAM JAMES (lecture date 1909)

[One of the most influential figures in modern Western thought, James was an American philosopher and the founder of the doctrine known as Pragmatism. In opposition to the tenets of scientific materialism and philosophic idealism, which had prevailed in Western philosophy throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, James attempted to comprehend and describe human life as it is actually experienced, rather than formulating abstract models of reality far removed from the passion and pain of life. Despite formidable resistance to James's ideas during his lifetime, his works have become recognized as landmarks in the development of modern thought, and the English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead has called him "one of the greatest philosophic minds of all time." In the following excerpt, James explicates Bergson's central doctrines and praises his verbal facility.]

I have to confess that Bergson's originality is so profuse that many of his ideas baffle me entirely. I doubt whether any one understands him all over, so to speak; and I am sure that he would himself be the first to see that this must be, and to confess that things which he himself has not yet thought out clearly, had yet to be mentioned and have a tentative place assigned them in his philosophy. Many of us are profusely original, in that no man can understand us—violently peculiar ways of looking at things are no great rarity. The rarity is when great peculiarity of vision is allied with great lucidity and unusual command of all the classic expository apparatus. Bergson's resources in the way of erudition are remarkable, and in the way of expression they are simply phenomenal. This is why in France, where *l'art de bien dire* ["the art of speaking well"] counts for so much and is so sure of appreciation, he has immediately taken so eminent a place in public esteem. Old-fashioned professors, whom his ideas quite fail to satisfy, nevertheless speak of his talent almost with bated breath, while the youngsters flock to him as to a master.

If anything can make hard things easy to follow, it is a style like Bergson's. A "straightforward" style, an American reviewer lately called it; failing to see that such straightforwardness means a flexibility of verbal resource that follows the thought without a crease or wrinkle, as elastic silk underclothing follows the movements of one's body. The lucidity of Bergson's way of putting things is what all readers are first struck by. It seduces you and bribes you in advance to become his disciple. It is a miracle, and he a real magician. (pp. 226-27)

The ruling tradition in philosophy has always been the platonic and aristotelian belief that fixity is a nobler and worthier thing than change. Reality must be one and unalterable. Concepts, being themselves fixities, agree best with this fixed nature of truth, so that for any knowledge of ours to be quite true it must be knowledge by universal concepts rather than by particular experiences, for these notoriously are mutable and corruptible. This is the tradition known as rationalism in philosophy. . . . In spite of sceptics and empiricists, in spite of Protagoras, Hume, and James Mill, rationalism has never been seriously questioned, for its sharpest critics have always had a tender place in their hearts for it, and have obeyed some of its mandates. They have not been consistent; they have played fast and loose with the enemy; and Bergson alone has been radical. (pp. 237-38)

Thought deals . . . solely with surfaces. It can name the thickness of reality, but it cannot fathom it, and its insufficiency here is essential and permanent, not temporary.

The only way in which to apprehend reality's thickness is either to experience it directly by being a part of reality one's self,

or to evoke it in imagination by sympathetically divining some one else's inner life. But what we thus immediately experience or concretely divine is very limited in duration, whereas abstractly we are able to conceive eternities. Could we feel a million years concretely as we now feel a passing minute, we should have very little employment for our conceptual faculty. We should know the whole period fully at every moment of its passage, whereas we must now construct it laboriously by means of concepts which we project. Direct acquaintance and conceptual knowledge are thus complementary of each other; each remedies the other's defects. If what we care most about be the synoptic treatment of phenomena, the vision of the far and the gathering of the scattered like, we must follow the conceptual method. But if, as metaphysicians, we are more curious about the inner nature of reality or about what really makes it go, we must turn our backs upon our winged concepts altogether, and bury ourselves in the thickness of those passing moments over the surface of which they fly, and on particular points of which they occasionally rest and perch.

Professor Bergson thus inverts the traditional platonic doctrine absolutely. Instead of intellectual knowledge being the pro-founder, he calls it the more superficial. Instead of being the only adequate knowledge, it is grossly inadequate, and its only superiority is the practical one of enabling us to make short cuts through experience and thereby to save time. The one thing it cannot do is to reveal the nature of things—which last remark, if not clear already, will become clearer as I proceed. Dive back into the flux itself, then, Bergson tells us, if you wish to *know* reality, that flux which Platonism, in its strange belief that only the immutable is excellent, has always spurned; turn your face toward sensation, that fleshbound thing which rationalism has always loaded with abuse.—This, you see, is exactly the opposite remedy from that of looking forward into the absolute, which our idealistic contemporaries prescribe. It violates our mental habits, being a kind of passive and receptive listening quite contrary to that effort to react noisily and verbally on everything, which is our usual intellectual pose.

What, then, are the peculiar features in the perceptual flux which the conceptual translation so fatally leaves out?

The essence of life is its continuously changing character; but our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed, and the only mode of making them coincide with life is by arbitrarily supposing positions of arrest therein. With such arrests our concepts may be made congruent. But these concepts are not *parts* of reality, not real positions taken by it, but *suppositions* rather, notes taken by ourselves, and you can no more dip up the substance of reality with them than you can dip up water with a net, however finely meshed.

When we conceptualize, we cut out and fix, and exclude everything but what we have fixed. A concept means a *that-and-no-other*. Conceptually, time excludes space; motion and rest exclude each other; approach excludes contact; presence excludes absence, unity excludes plurality; independence excludes relativity; "mine" excludes "yours"; this connexion excludes that connexion—and so on indefinitely; whereas in the real concrete sensible flux of life experiences compenetrate each other so that it is not easy to know just what is excluded and what not. Past and future, for example, conceptually separated by the cut to which we give the name of present, and defined as being the opposite sides of that cut, are to some extent, however brief, co-present with each other throughout experience. The literally present moment is a purely verbal supposition, not a position; the only present ever realized con-

cretely being the "passing moment" in which the dying rearward of time and its dawning future forever mix their lights. Say "now" and it *was* even while you say it. (pp. 250-54)

We are so inveterately wedded to the conceptual decomposition of life that I know that this will seem to you like putting muddiest confusion in place of clearest thought, and relapsing into a molluscoid state of mind. Yet I ask you whether the absolute superiority of our higher thought is so very clear, if all that it can find is impossibility in tasks which sense-experience so easily performs.

What makes you call real life confusion is that it presents, as if they were dissolved in one another, a lot of differentials which conception breaks life's flow by keeping apart. But *are* not differentials actually dissolved in one another? Hasn't every bit of experience its quality, its duration, its extension, its intensity, its urgency, its clearness, and many aspects besides, no one of which can exist in the isolation in which our verbalized logic keeps it? They exist only *durcheinander* ["in confusion"]. Reality always is, in M. Bergson's phrase, an endosmosis or conflux of the same with the different: they penetrate and telescope. For conceptual logic, the same is nothing but the same, and all same with a third thing are the same with each other. Not so in concrete experience. Two spots on our skin, each of which feels the same as a third spot when touched along with it, are felt as different from each other. Two tones, neither distinguishable from a third tone, are perfectly distinct from each other. The whole process of life is due to life's violation of our logical axioms. Take its continuity as an example. Terms like A and C appear to be connected by intermediaries, by B for example. Intellectualism calls this absurd, for "B-connected-with-A" is, "as such," a different term from "B-connected-with-C." But real life laughs at logic's veto. Imagine a heavy log which takes two men to carry it. First A and B take it. Then C takes hold and A drops off; then D takes hold and B drops off, so that C and D now bear it; and so on. The log meanwhile never drops, and keeps its sameness throughout the journey. Even so it is with all our experiences. Their changes are not complete annihilations followed by complete creations of something absolutely novel. There is partial decay and partial growth, and all the while a nucleus of relative constancy from which what decays drops off, and which takes into itself whatever is grafted on, until at length something wholly different has taken its place. In such a process we are as sure, in spite of intellectualist logic with its "as suches," that it *is* the same nucleus which is able now to make connexion with what goes and again with what comes, as we are sure that the same point can lie on diverse lines that intersect there. Without being one throughout, such a universe is continuous. Its members interdigitate with their next neighbors in manifold directions, and there are no clean cuts between them anywhere.

The great clash of intellectualist logic with sensible experience is where the experience is that of influence exerted. Intellectualism denies . . . that finite things can act on one another, for all things, once translated into concepts, remain shut up to themselves. To act on anything means to get into it somehow; but that would mean to get out of one's self and be one's other, which is self-contradictory, etc. Meanwhile each of us actually *is* his own other to that extent, livingly knowing how to perform the trick which logic tells us can't be done. My thoughts animate and actuate this very body which you see and hear, and thereby influence your thoughts. The dynamic current somehow does get from me to you, however numerous the inter-

mediary conductors may have to be. Distinctions may be insulators in logic as much as they like, but in life distinct things can and do commune together every moment.

The conflict of the two ways of knowing is best summed up in the intellectualist doctrine that "the same cannot exist in many relations." This follows of course from the concepts of the two relations being so distinct that "what-is-in-the-one" means "as such" something distinct from what "what-is-in-the-other" means. It is like Mill's ironical saying, that we should not think of Newton as both an Englishman and a mathematician, because an Englishman as such is not a mathematician and a mathematician as such is not an Englishman. But the real Newton was somehow both things at once; and throughout the whole finite universe each real thing proves to be many differentials without undergoing the necessity of breaking into disconnected editions of itself.

These few indications will perhaps suffice to put you at the bergsonian point of view. The immediate experience of life solves the problems which so baffle our conceptual intelligence: How can what is manifold be one? how can things get out of themselves? how be their own others? how be both distinct and connected? how can they act on one another? how be for others and yet for themselves? how be absent and present at once? The intellect asks these questions much as we might ask how anything can both separate and unite things, or how sounds can grow more alike by continuing to grow more different. If you already know space sensibly, you can answer the former question by pointing to any interval in it, long or short; if you know the musical scale, you can answer the latter by sounding an octave; but then you must first have the sensible knowledge of these realities. Similarly Bergson answers the intellectualist conundrums by pointing back to our various finite sensational experiences and saying, "Lo, even thus; even so are these other problems solved livingly."

When you have broken the reality into concepts you never can reconstruct it in its wholeness. Out of no amount of discreteness can you manufacture the concrete. But place yourself at a bound, or *d'emblée*, as M. Bergson says, inside of the living, moving, active thickness of the real, and all the abstractions and distinctions are given into your hand: you can now make the intellectualist substitutions to your heart's content. Install yourself in phenomenal movement, for example, and velocity, succession, dates, positions, and innumerable other things are given you in the bargain. But with only an abstract succession of dates and positions you can never patch up movement itself. It slips through their intervals and is lost.

So it is with every concrete thing, however complicated. Our intellectual handling of it is a retrospective patchwork, a post-mortem dissection, and can follow any order we find most expedient. We can make the thing seem self-contradictory whenever we wish to. But place yourself at the point of view of the thing's interior *doing*, and all these back-looking and conflicting conceptions lie harmoniously in your hand. Get at the expanding centre of a human character, the *élan vital* of a man, as Bergson calls it, by living sympathy, and at a stroke you see how it makes those who see it from without interpret it in such diverse ways. It is something that breaks into both honesty and dishonesty, courage and cowardice, stupidity and insight, at the touch of varying circumstances, and you feel exactly why and how it does this, and never seek to identify it stably with any of these single abstractions. Only your intellectualist does that,—and you now also feel why *he* must do it to the end. (pp. 256-62)

What really *exists* is not things made but things in the making. Once made, they are dead, and an infinite number of alternative conceptual decompositions can be used in defining them. But put yourself in the making by a stroke of intuitive sympathy with the thing and, the whole range of possible decompositions coming at once into your possession, you are no longer troubled with the question which of them is the more absolutely true. Reality falls in passing into conceptual analysis; it mounts in living its own undivided life—it buds and bourgeons, changes and creates. Once adopt the movement of this life in any given instance and you know what Bergson calls the *devenir réel* ["real becoming"] by which the thing evolves and grows. Philosophy should seek this kind of living understanding of the movement of reality, not follow science in vainly patching together fragments of its dead results. (pp. 263-64)

You may say, and doubtless some of you now are saying inwardly, that [Bergson's] remanding us to sensation in this wise is only a regress, a return to that ultra-crude empiricism which your own idealists since Green have buried ten times over. I confess that it is indeed a return to empiricism, but I think that the return in such accomplished shape only proves the latter's immortal truth. What won't stay buried must have some genuine life. *Am anfang war die tat*; fact is a first; to which all our conceptual handling comes as an inadequate second, never its full equivalent. When I read recent transcendentalist literature—I must partly except my colleague Royce!—I get nothing but a sort of marking of time, champing of jaws, pawing of the ground, and resettling into the same attitude, like a weary horse in a stall with an empty manger. It is but turning over the same few threadbare categories, bringing the same objections, and urging the same answers and solutions, with never a new fact or a new horizon coming into sight. But open Bergson, and new horizons loom on every page you read. It is like the breath of the morning and the song of birds. It tells of reality itself, instead of merely reiterating what dusty-minded professors have written about what other previous professors have thought. Nothing in Bergson is shop-worn or at second hand.

That he gives us no closed-in system will of course be fatal to him in intellectualist eyes. He only evokes and invites; but he first annuls the intellectualist veto, so that we now join step with reality with a philosophical conscience never quite set free before. As a French disciple of his well expresses it: "Bergson claims of us first of all a certain inner catastrophe, and not every one is capable of such a logical revolution. But those who have once found themselves flexible enough for the execution of such a psychological change of front, discover somehow that they can never return again to their ancient attitude of mind. They are now Bergsonians . . . and possess the principal thoughts of the master all at once. They have understood in the fashion in which one loves, they have caught the whole melody and can thereafter admire at their leisure the originality, the fecundity, and the imaginative genius with which its author develops, transposes, and varies in a thousand ways by the orchestration of his style and dialectic, the original theme." (pp. 264-66)

William James, "Bergson and His Critique of Intellectualism," in his *A Pluralistic Universe*: Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909, pp. 225-73.

WALTER B. PITKIN (essay date 1910)

[Pitkin was a distinguished American psychologist and journalist. In the following excerpt, he suggests that William James's inter-

pretation of Bergson in *A Pluralistic Universe* (see excerpt dated 1909) is based on an essential misunderstanding of the French philosopher's ideas.]

If there is one task more thankless and unprofitable than criticizing critics, it is reporting reporters. Yet even this seems warranted by its benefits in the case of Professor James and his recent accounts of M. Bergson. Professor James is the unchallenged veteran leader of American psychology and philosophy; M. Bergson the rising marshal of French thinkers. Each man's marching orders are taken in deadly earnest at home and abroad. So, if both speak as in agreement while differing profoundly, the unhappy rank and file, which is trained to take words at their mouth value, will be confused. That this danger is neither remote nor imaginary, can scarcely be doubted by any one who takes pains to compare James's anti-intellectualism with Bergson's, and James's report of Bergson with Bergson's report on himself. Behind one or two important common convictions, which are chiefly on questions of method, a mass of far-reaching, irreconcilable doctrines lies half-concealed. For the sake of clarity and with no approval or criticism of either philosopher's opinions, I should like to point out a few divergent tendencies and sharp oppositions which, I believe, must constitute a perpetual injunction against every attempt to identify or even to harness up the radical empiricism of Cambridge with Parisian intuitionism. "Abridgments like this of other men's opinions are very unsatisfactory. They always work injustice," says Professor James at the close of his sketch of Bergsonism in *A Pluralistic Universe*. This is twice true of the following remarks, which are largely an abridgment of an abridgment; but their injustice weighs lightly over against their fairness.

Professor James can find much in Bergson's pages echoing his own sentiments. Like him, Bergson opposes every static view of reality, stands out for genuine freedom and continuous creation in a flowing world. Both thinkers insist that man must look inward, dive into the stream of consciousness, for the richest truths. As destructive critics of static absolutism, both stand shoulder to shoulder. But at these broader tendencies of speculation and of method agreement stops. Bergson goes the way of the older cosmologists, James stays with the subjectively inclined psychologists. Bergson repudiates psychophysics and nearly all experiment and hypothesis going with it, while James often unconsciously, as in his *Principles of Psychology*, embraces Fechner and all he stands for. Bergson peers through his "mental stream" and spies something underneath; but James forever lingers in the flood, saying: "though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing." Bergson declares that the *élan vital* and its antagonistic countercurrent are each in its pure form unknowable, inasmuch as all cognition is nothing but a kind of collision between these two streams and a mixing of them: James long ago assured us that his radical empiricism "must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced." Where Bergson thinks of life as transcending experience, James thinks only of experience as transcending conceptual thinking. Were I to attempt an all-around account of their systems, I should certainly turn everything in them about this fundamental difference in the point of view. Hence, for Bergson, the last inwardness of every experience is quite beyond the most searching intuition; it is, however, not in the least "absolutely dumb and evanescent, the merely ideal limit

of our minds," as that reality "independent" of human thinking appears to James. It is twofold, a tremendous creative activity and an enormously stubborn, by no means "evanescent," matter. Such antitheses might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but let them pass; it is more profitable to limit ourselves to a contrast of our two philosophers' theories of the concept. For it is Bergson's critique of intellectualism, as founded on his interpretation of conceptual experience, that wins the space of a whole chapter for him in James's *A Pluralistic Universe*. And yet it is precisely on this topic that Professor James makes me suspect that he has called upon an opponent to do a friend's service. If I read both writers correctly, Professor James has sympathetically chalked up against Bergson many a costly item which the Frenchman has never entered on his books—and never will. Before accepting this statement, you should peruse the citations in their original context I shall make; the obligation is peculiarly strong because both men freely indulge in all the tropes known to the literary artist, and still more because, in many points, their theories differ no more than but just as much as an infinitesimal segment of a curve does from an infinitesimal segment of a straight line.

James thinks to find in Bergson's theory of concepts confirmation of his own view that "the completer our definitions of ether-waves, atoms, Gods, or souls become, the less instead of the more intelligible do they appear to us. . . . Ether and molecules may be like coordinates and averages, only so many crutches by the help of which we practically perform the operation of getting about among our sensible experiences." But this kind of pragmatic psychology seems to me absolutely incompatible with everything Bergson is driving at. Far from pronouncing "matter," "energy," and like concepts mere "extraordinarily successful hypotheses" whose sole claim to our preferences is their superior utility for human purposes, the French intuitionist firmly holds to the objective reality of matter. On the very first page of his introduction to *L'évolution créatrice* I read: . . . notre intelligence, au sens étroit du mot, est destinée à assurer l'insertion parfaite de notre corps dans son milieu, à se représenter les rapports des choses extérieures entre elles, enfin à penser la matière ["our intellect in the narrow sense of the word, is intended to assure complete integration of our body into its environment by representing to itself the relations of exterior objects to one another, in short, to think matter"].

To think matter! Hardly a Cambridge performance, this! The external things are "out there," they are tough, thick, obstinate—quite loath to evanesce or to be the mere ideal limits of thought. And in a later chapter, "De la Signification de la Vie," Bergson says that science commits no sensible error in cutting up the universe into relatively independent systems, for "la matière s'étend dans l'espace sans y être absolument étendue" ["matter extends in space without being extended absolutely there"]. What does this mean? That the physicist's interpretation of nature carries us further from the latter as he works out his concepts more fully? Not at all. Science is always approaching an adequate description of matter, but such a description is unattainable only as 2 is the unattainable sum of the series $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \dots$ (pp. 225-27)

Summarizing Bergson's treatment of Zeno's paradoxes and mathematical-geometrical concepts of time and space, Professor James reports the intuitionist as teaching that, "instead of being interpreters of reality, concepts negate the inwardness of reality altogether." Note, please, the two words I have italicized ["concepts" and "altogether"]. Not Zeno's con-

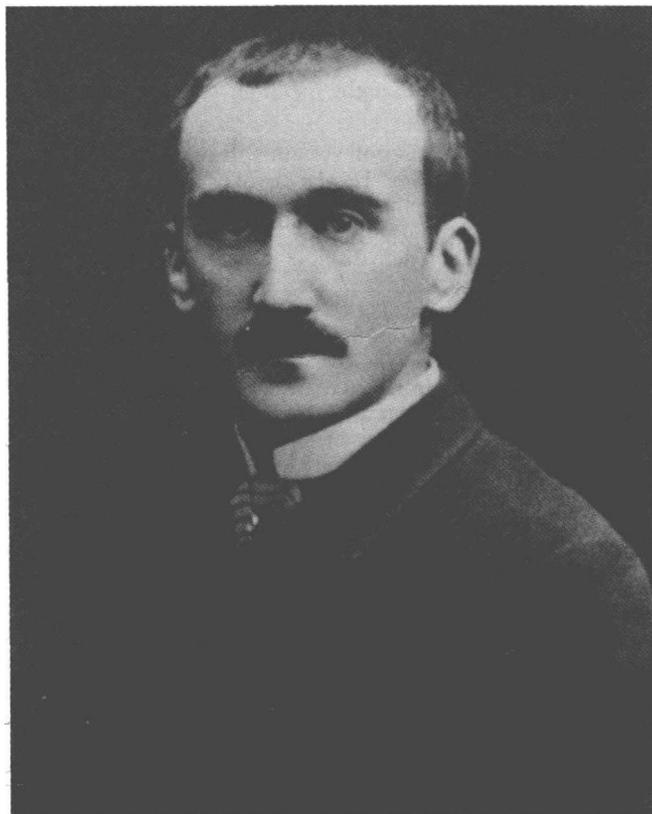
cepts, not yours nor mine, but concepts *as such* are guilty. And they are not simply defective or incomplete; they are *altogether* mendacious in what concerns the interpenetrating densities of cosmic action. I defy anybody to grub so much as a grain of this ore out of Bergson's mine! Here is another fragment even less amenable to Professor James's reading:

L'entendement est chez lui dans le domaine de la matière inerte. Sur cette matière s'exerce essentiellement l'action humaine, et l'action, . . . ne saurait se mouvoir dans l'irréel. Ainsi, *pourvu que l'on ne considère de la physique que sa forme générale, et non pas le détail de sa réalisation, on peut dire qu'elle touche l'absolu.*

["Understanding is at home in the domain of inert matter. Human action exercises itself fundamentally upon this matter, and action . . . does not know how to proceed in the unreal. Hence, *provided one considers only the general form of the physical, and not the particulars of its realization, one can say that it touches the absolute.*"]

Lo! The horrid absolute rears its head even in Bergson! And it is the dead, chopped-out concept, the "form" of physical knowledge, which actually fingers the monster. The concept is not invented at each man's own sweet will, by breaking up the flux with the same freedom; we do not "create the subjects of our true as well as of our false propositions," as James thinks.

Atoms and ether and potential energy and all the other things of physical nature are all perfectly real objects or forces in a perfectly real space. They are, indeed, so exceedingly real, so chock full of existence, that, when we encounter them in the



A youthful portrait.