

Interpretation and Critique of Bergson's Philosophy by Dimitri Uznadze

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Text and Context

Original philosophical ideas of Henri Bergson (1859–1941), a prominent French representative of the philosophy of life, became known to Georgian culture in the first decades of the 20th century. In 1914, the *National Artistry*, Alexandre Janelidze's (1888–1975) work, was published in Kutaisi, which, predominantly, leans on Bergson's philosophical perspective. Janelidze recognizes the universal nature of development and mutability and rejects the possibility of replication in the process of development. To reinforce his point of view, Janelidze refers to the Bergsonian concept of time, which argues that each act in life development is a qualitative novelty. In 1923, "The Soul and the Idea", a piece by Konstantine Kapaneli (1889–1952), was printed in *Aspirozi*, the newspaper published in Batumi; Kapaneli, using individual ideas of Nietzsche and Bergson, tried to develop an original philosophical notion. And in 1920, Tbilisi University published Dimitri Uznadze's monograph, *Henri Bergson*, which represents the first attempt in Georgian academic circles to reconstruct and interpret Bergson's philosophy.

The fact that the works of the French scholar became the focus of the interest for the Georgian scientific society during his lifetime is a remarkable event for Georgian culture. Importantly, since the early Middle Ages, by adopting ancient and Oriental Christian (Byzantine) schools of thought, a certain tradition required for philosophical reflection has been formed and a subsequent terminological apparatus has been created in Georgian culture. Georgian thinkers could familiarize themselves with and master Greek philosophical texts in the original language. To provide proof of this claim, mentioning Ioane Petritsi should be sufficient; this Georgian philosopher active at the crossroads of the XI-XII centuries translated into Georgian the work of the Neoplatonist thinker Proclus, *Introduction to Theology*, and equipped it with extensive comments. Unfortunately, later, the rise of Georgian culture had to face significant threats. Historical upheavals and the centuries-long struggle of the Georgian people for physical survival against foreign conquerors resulted in the destruction of traditional cultural and religious centers, which,

naturally, had a negative impact on Georgian philosophy. In the modern era, despite the efforts of Georgian thinkers, it was not possible to thoroughly fill the ensuing gaps in Georgian philosophical thought or to fully become included in the context of European philosophy. It was only at the time of founding the first Georgian university (in 1918) that it became possible to develop a professional school of philosophy in the country. This undertaking was led by the first generation of Georgian philosophers educated in Europe's top universities: Shalva Nutsubidze (1888–1969), Sergi Danelia (1887–1963), Mose Gogiberidze (1897–1949), Konstantine Kapaneli (1889–1952), Konstantine Bakradze (1898–1970). Dimitri Uznadze, the first Georgian researcher of Bergson's philosophy, is a notable representative of this very constellation. Later, he became famous among international scientific circles as the author of an original general-psychological theory known as the psychology of set. However, this important discovery in the field of psychology was preceded by Uznadze's equally productive and compelling investigation into philosophy.

Dimitri Uznadze learned philosophy and psychology at Leipzig University under the supervision of the renowned scientist Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920). Uznadze's first work on individual aspects of Leibniz's philosophy was awarded the prize from Leipzig University's scientific board. In 1909, Uznadze successfully defended his doctoral thesis, "Vladimir Solovyov: His Theory of Cognition and Metaphysics." The same year, this work was published in the form of a book in Germany.

After returning to Georgia, Uznadze founded the department of psychology and a research laboratory at Tbilisi University. At the same time, he was publishing his works on various philosophical topics (such as "Individuality and Its Genesis," "What Is a Theory of Cognition," "Essence of Life," "Philosophy of War," "Organic Worldview," etc.). *Henri Bergson* is Dimitri Uznadze's last philosophical work. As noted above, this analysis should be regarded as a noteworthy event, given that after a centuries-long mandatory isolation, Georgian philosophical thought returned to European philosophical territory, mastering and analyzing the same topics that contemporary European philosophy was concerned with. This was the last work of a purely philosophical nature published by Uznadze. In 1921, Georgia was occupied by Bolshevik Russia, with Marxism becoming the state ideology in the country. Uznadze viewed Marxism as a solely economic theory and the possibility of its philosophical interpretation seemed unconvincing to him (Tevzadze, 2003, p. 148). This, likely, can explain the fact why, since this period, Uznadze's scientific and research interests were entirely confined to the field of psychology.

Uznadze's monograph on Bergson is interesting not only because it exemplifies an important moment in the history of the reception of modern Western philosophy by Georgian philosophical thought and the involvement of Georgian scholars in the

common philosophical process; it is equally interesting because of the potential that Uznadze's reconstruction of Bergson held. Due to historical contingencies (from political calamities to language barriers) the interpretations proposed by the Georgian thinker at the beginning of the previous century had remained beyond the 20th century mainstream discussions developed around Bergson's philosophy; nevertheless, exploring what this interpretation had to offer to the aforementioned discussion is, at least, a subject of historical interest. If we earnestly consider Gilles Deleuze's (1925–1995) ideas about going back to Bergson and acknowledging his relevance to modern philosophy (Deleuze, 1991, pp. 115–118), then the significance of such an analysis might even surpass that of mere historical interest.

Clearly, choosing Bergson's philosophical theory as a topic of research by Uznadze was not determined merely by the international recognition of this French thinker or by the unusually great curiosity around his individual ideas across the world (interestingly, it was around the same period when a German representative of the philosophy of life, Friedrich Nietzsche, enjoyed immense popularity in Europe, but Uznadze, virtually, does not mention this thinker in his works). The Georgian scholar's interest in Bergson should have stemmed from a deeper, inner philosophical intuition. Guram Tevzadze (1932–2018), a well-known Georgian scholar of the history of philosophy, argues that intuitionism, as a separate philosophical movement, was of special interest to Uznadze (Tevzadze, 2002, p. 51). Therefore, Uznadze studied intuition as a cognitive skill that exists beyond (or beside) the mind, which is able to perform a qualitative leap in the process of investigating the object of research. Shota Nadirashvili (1926–2011), one of the interpreter of Uznadze's theory of set and an editor of his works, wrote: “[Uznadze's] critical opinions against Bergson's intuitionism served as a foundation for his ideas on the set psychology” (Nadirashvili, 2014, p. 6). We think that a researcher can provide evidence for the aforementioned claim only through a comparative analysis of these two theories. We argue that Uznadze's interest in Bergson's philosophy was largely determined by the anti-positivist sentiments characteristic of both authors and the desire to develop an organic philosophical theory as opposed to a mechanistic viewpoint. Apparently, Uznadze, like Henri Bergson and Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900), thinks that philosophy should regain its authority in metaphysics, since without such a generalizable theory philosophy becomes deprived of its specificity and cannot meet the expectations that the society holds for it. Both the French philosopher and his Georgian researcher think that the findings obtained in the field of modern natural sciences and historical knowledge create new possibilities to achieve this goal. It is not by accident that the new data acquired through the research into mental life and their interpretations necessary for a metaphysical theory held a special interest for Bergson. Uznadze, as a researcher deeply intrigued by the questions of psychology,

was particularly fascinated by these attempts of Bergson to offer a novel interpretation of individual acts of non-material life.

In the preface to his monograph, Uznadze calls Bergson a particularly remarkable figure in modern philosophy, writing: “He is original not only in the systematic course of his philosophical thinking, but he is also original in the critical assessment of the existing philosophical ideas” (Uznadze, 1986, p. 5). Uznadze then adds that in Bergson’s works, which are filled with the author’s animated temperament and charming manner of narration, society felt a refreshingly new breeze of philosophy. This is why his theory became a focus of attention for a larger society. However, in Uznadze’s view, the vast volume of literature dealing with the thorough investigation of Bergson’s individual ideas is still lacking the research that would present Bergson’s philosophical system as a coherent whole. “I am deeply convinced that it is difficult, impossible even, to properly understand a philosophical system if its main artery is not fully revealed and the entire construction is not systematically drawn out”, says Uznadze (*ibid*), seeking to accomplish the aforementioned task in relation to Bergson’s ideas through his own monograph.

Thus, the goal of the Georgian scholar is longer-term rather than merely introducing the main ideas of the French philosopher to Georgian society. Uznadze’s aim is to reconstruct Bergson’s philosophical views as a single system using the method characteristic of the Bergson’s philosophy itself. Uznadze deems that a critical analysis of intellectual abilities and providing a new platform for intuitive experience can serve as such ground for Bergson’s philosophy. In Uznadze’s view, if Bergson himself had tried to systematically arrange his philosophical reasoning in a single book, he would have done it in accordance with the following thematic scheme: 1. Defining the method of cognition as a result of a critical analysis of traditional forms of cognition. 2. Understanding what and how intelligence and intuition establish in relation to the realms of experience (consciousness, substance, life). 3. The possibility of performing a metaphysical synthesis of the knowledge obtained in all three areas through intuitive understanding. 4. Establishing the genesis of each of these areas of experience. 5. Achieving a gnoseological synthesis as an ultimate result (Uznadze, 1986, p. 6). This is the order in which Uznadze attempts to systematize Bergson’s philosophical ideas. The main body of his work is devoted to the demonstration of the arguments developed by Bergson regarding these very questions, while Uznadze’s own views on Bergson’s arguments are presented in the final part of the work in the form of a separate critical note. We find it helpful to preface our analysis of Uznadze’s critical views on Bergson’s ideas with a summary of the reconstruction of Bergson’s philosophical system provided by Uznadze himself in the first chapters of his work.

Uznadze's Systematization of Bergson's Philosophy

Uznadze starts the systematization of Bergson's philosophical ideas by analyzing his perspective on the relationship between philosophy and specific sciences. At that time, as a result of the influence of the positivist worldview, the question was viewed as follows: it was regarded that particular realms of reality were studied by a particular science (for example, physics or chemistry studied the principles of non-living nature, while living phenomena were studied by biology and psychology) and that philosophy had nothing to do with the direct investigation of an empirical reality. Studying the boundaries, components, and laws of scientific cognition was considered the function of philosophy. Thus, philosophy's task was to solve the problems related to the theory of cognition rather than conduct immediate research into objective reality. According to Bergson, this approach is inaccurate and involves an inner conflict. For every science, the study of its research object includes implicit metaphysical postulates as well as those related to the theory of cognition; so, it follows that philosophy is forced to clarify only the issues that are accepted in advance and unknowingly by the science (Uznadze, 1986, p. 22). Additionally, in Bergson's view, extending the unconditional authority of science to the entire realm of reality is based on yet another uncritically accepted assumption, namely the one that regards the wholeness of experience and the unity of cognition as undeniable facts. In fact, science's claim to being the sole establisher of the truth often fails in the process of studying certain realms of reality. This is particularly apparent when studying the phenomenon of life (Uznadze, 1986, p. 23). Bergson assumes that philosophy's authority has been restricted, but science itself has proved to be powerless in the process of studying the whole of reality. The premises of science turned out to be not absolute but rather relative in nature. Science is a product of intelligence. Intelligence is conceptual thinking; a concept originates from mental representations, while the representations are based on experience. Therefore, to understand the true nature of intelligence, it is crucial to understand the essence of experience, representations, and general ideas (concepts).

The widespread opinion that surrounding reality can become the subject of human cognition only insofar as it can produce experience by exerting influence on humans seems less convincing to Bergson and requires clarification. Bergson tries to explain how the physiological process caused by external stimuli in organisms can be transformed into a psychological phenomenon. It is a universally held belief that the human brain is the only organ of cognition. However, Bergson argues that from the simplest forms of living matter to the complex physiological processes of the human organism, everything suggests otherwise: the brain is not so directly related to cognition. Both the spine and brain prepare to perform the movement appropriate to the received impressions, but these impressions are not experienced in either of them

(Uznadze, 1986, p. 26). Bergson views experience as a universal process that exists in the world; whatever place or object in the world we decide to choose, we will witness the assembled influence of reality as a whole. Experience, as a universal phenomenon, implies that each phenomenon has an unconscious experience of the entire reality. Since this experience is universal and unconscious, we should recognize that it is a fact that does not require any explanation, according to Bergson (Uznadze, 1986, p. 27).

In the process of becoming human experience, this universal phenomenon acquires a conscious character. An individual turns only a part of reality's diversity into an object of experience. Human experience is a phenomenon of a conscious nature, which selects a local fragment of reality as its object. It follows that the non-organic world is an object of passive influence from the entire reality; the matter unconsciously obeys this influence, while living organisms confront the world's influence with their actions and use its workings to meet their vital needs. When the brain of a living organism is more developed, its response to the world's influence is more versatile, unrestricted, and independent. Experience and changes occurring in the brain are compatible, but there is no causal link between them. The brain is merely an organ of movement, and it is impossible for experience to be produced in it. If compatibility between experience and the brain can still be discerned, it is because both of them originated from a common cause (Uznadze, 1986, p. 30). The more versatile a living organism's ability to influence, the more conscious and complete its experience is. Humans make an external object a focus of their response depending on the interest it holds for them. Thus, experience corresponds to the part of an object that is interesting for our practical needs. To Bergson, representation also belongs to the phenomena of experience. The contents of a representation cannot include the whole diversity of reality but rather only a certain component of our experience that holds a particular practical interest for us (Uznadze, 1986, p. 31). This is how Uznadze sums up Bergson's ideas on the genesis of conscious experience and representation.

Uznadze also discusses Bergson's perspective on the genesis of general ideas. Human cognition is performed through general ideas. Therefore, the issue of the genesis of ideas is important to Bergson from the standpoints of both psychology and gnoseology. He reviews two major theories influential at that time about the origin of ideas – nominalism and conceptualism – and considers both unsatisfactory. Both theories are based on the fact of experiencing a specific object. According to nominalism, a general idea is produced through the grouping of similar objects, and conceptualism argues that this is achieved through the analysis of objects' features. Consequently, according to conceptualism, abstraction is the required precondition for generalization, while nominalism regards generalization as the precondition for abstraction. Bergson claims that both theories are caught in a vicious circle, since

abstraction indeed requires generalization as its prerequisite, but generalization itself is not possible without abstraction (Uznadze, 1986, p. 32).

Uznadze presents the Bergsonian solution to this problem as follows: in Bergson's view, the starting point of both theories – that the genesis of general ideas begins with experiencing individual objects – is the main mistake responsible for the impasse. The truth is that experience never arises with individual objects. Experience has a practical genesis and is only interested in those objects of reality that are related to a need. It is not concerned with the individuality of objects, but rather with what is common in them and what is valuable from a practical point of view. The immediate content of experience is made up of this commonality. Direct experience of such commonality does not at all require abstraction, because everything else remains beyond experience. "This very sameness of the response to sparsely disparate influences is the seed that human consciousness develops into general ideas", Uznadze cites Bergson's words from his *Matter and Memory* (Bergson, 1991, p. 160). Thus, according to Uznadze, Bergson's explanation of the origins of general ideas assumes that an object of the initial experience is general itself rather than an individual object with its uniqueness and singularity. Additionally, since the genesis of general ideas is practical, this implies significant consequences for their cognitive value.

It turns out that every component characteristic of intellectual cognition is determined by the practical nature of intelligence. Intelligence serves the purpose of fulfilling a practical interest of a human as a producing subject. From this, it necessarily follows that intelligence is only concerned with immovable, endlessly breakable, material objects; intelligence then reshapes them and uses them for production purposes. This is why intelligence and science (being the product of intelligence) do not have the ability to cognize entire reality *per se*, but rather only non-organic nature (Uznadze, 1986, p. 36).

Thus, according to Bergson, the fact that intelligence is determined by practical interest makes it impossible for it to truly cognize reality. The mind can only understand individual aspects of reality but – by no means – reality as a whole. The mind would have been able to fully perceive the evolution of life only if it had been a disinterested perceiver of reality and had been able to disconnect from the realm of practical interests. Intelligence, as an agent of practical duties, lacks the power necessary to create a theory. The mind is interested in robust causal links and replicable relationships. The mind's conceptual apparatus can only be useful in describing immobile and static forms. Therefore, the world beyond matter is completely inaccessible to the mind – that is, life, which is a realm of constant creative production and ceaseless evolutionary development (Uznadze, 1986, p. 37).

There are two types of motions in the world – mechanical movement and creative evolution. The first type of motion is limited to the realm of material reality, while the other is of a universal nature, and every phenomenon of reality, particularly the organic world, succumbs to its influence with varying intensity. The mind is powerless when it comes to fathoming the real essence of motion. The mind cannot capture motion because it describes motion – the uninterrupted process occurring in the world – as a mechanical unity of individual immovable parts. The sum of immobility is completely unhelpful for expressing motion as a process. Even Zeno of Elea had observed that the sum of immobility does not make up motion (Uznadze, 1986, p. 95). Bergson shares this point of view and believes that, similar to the succession of static shots in cinematography, the mind can only pretend to express motion (Uznadze, 1986, p. 137). Creative evolution, as uninterrupted motion, is a type of totality that does not break down into individual moments. The evolution of life is not only dissemination in space, but also development and expansion in time. Breaking down the unified process of creative evolution into separate moments would be equivalent to its destruction, which is absolutely unthinkable.

Bergson claims that the evolutionary process is characterized by duration (*durée*) or “timeliness” if you will. Therefore, the essential form of creative evolution is time and not space. Intelligence tries to comprehend time using schemes appropriate for describing spatial relationships, which is a mistake and precludes the mind from understanding ceaseless creativity of non-material life and the freedom of will. “Timeliness”, as a creative change, is a type of continuity no individual moment of which can be replicated. Bergson argues that anybody who has ever tried to explain the sensory world through quantitative changes has made a big mistake. An even bigger mistake is made by the mind when explaining human actions and free will. According to Bergson, determinist and indeterminist theories designed to explain the freedom of will are equally unacceptable, as they try to understand freedom by assuming the homogeneity or heterogeneity of possibilities. In both theories, the probability of performing or not performing an act of freedom is presupposed as an undeniable fact. It follows that both theories regard freedom as something definite, whereas the conceptual apparatus developed by the mind cannot, by any means, provide any kind of convincing definition and description of the act of free will (Uznadze, 1986, p. 73).

In Uznadze’s view, it would be a mistake to believe that Bergson’s critique of the forms of intellectual cognition and his claim about the limited nature of mind aim at justifying agnosticism or skepticism in the field of cognition. Bergson, according to Uznadze, rejects both the absolutization of the mind and skepticism all the while testing the waters with the intuition model of understanding reality as a new means to expand knowledge to perfection. The mind is not the sole tool of cognition. The

goal of restricting the mind's abilities is to pave the way for a new, different skill. This skill is intuition.

This is how Uznadze understands the essence of Bergsonian intuition: As already noted, establishing constant principles of matter happens with the help of the mind, and it becomes possible to give the kind of shape to individual objects of material reality that will create maximally favorable conditions for fulfilling vital interests. Life itself is, primarily, driven by the desire for self-cognition and understanding its own creative aspirations. The mind can be of little service here. Life's inclinations have another ability for this: intuition. Unlike intelligence, intuition turns its gaze toward itself, that is, toward life. Intuition, as the self-comprehension of life, is empathy, which aims at compensating for the limitation characteristic of life – the limitation caused by the inability to naturally understand life.

Intuition shows that, unlike matter, life is an aspiration to free creation. Thus, it is described as duration (*durée*). The form of the existence of matter can be considered as the coexistence of its elements in the space. The phases of physical time, similar to the points of space, are given together and simultaneously. There is a necessary relationship between the states of a material object in the sense that, with one state, all the remaining states are present. This can be called the causal determinism of physical events (Uznadze, 1986, p. 63). These traits of space are uncritically applied to the physical level too. This is an incorrect understanding of the time phenomenon, developed under the influence of space. According to Bergson, if time is understood in this manner, it is impossible to create anything truly new.

The universal form of the existence of life is time as an eternal creative change and transformation. In the process of non-material life, different conditions act together and complement each other; each moment of the soul, powered by memory, contains the past, and, driven by the realization of endless possibilities, it contains the future.

“If there is no external location for the acts of our psychic life; if the life of our consciousness is uninterrupted dynamic and solid progression, which knows nothing of the existence of conflicting, completed acts, then, of course, it would be impossible to say that one act depends on another or is independent. The freedom of will, in that sense, is the freedom of birthing psychic events and nothing more. It is a fact to the same extent as the process of psychic life itself is a fact.”

Those are Uznadze's (1986, p. 93–94) words derived from Bergson's ideas. Every motion of the soul is an uninterrupted retention and continuation of the past in the present. This, according to Bergson, does not apply to human consciousness alone but to life at large. The time of life, unlike the physical time, is a continuity of the

present, future, and past and, in that sense, it is irreversible. Dimitri Uznadze translated this phenomenon described by Bergson as “duration.”

Intuition is the only way to expand the cognition of the intrinsic reality. It is only through intuition that life can grasp its essence and goals. But when it comes to describing the performance of the intuitive process and its consequences, the conceptual apparatus created by the mind has very little to offer. For this reason, a positive definition of intuition seems like a hopeless attempt. The tool of intellectual reasoning is powerless to describe intuition. Because of that, when discussing this phenomenon, Uznadze, like Bergson, tries to utilize literary and metaphorical analogies to shed a light on the phenomenon. Intuition is an occurrence similar to a sudden blaze of a lamp ready to be extinguished, brightening the environment darkened by a thick murk with its glowing light.

Although intuition does not have its own mechanism of expression, Bergson still tries to elaborate on certain positive elements about it. It turns out that humans, as intelligent beings, seek to adapt to the environment by creating tools, while animals have an inherent instinct to adapt to the environment. Intelligence is conscious, while instinct is not. Consciousness implies the possibility of choice, while instinct has nothing to do with choice. Intelligence is a natural non-understanding of life, but instinct also fails at this, as it is predominantly focused on the external. To perform the act of self-comprehension of life, instinct should rise to the level of intuition. “Instinct which would have been deprived of practical interest, which would have been conscious in relation to itself, which would have been capable of thinking about its object and endlessly expanding it – such instinct would have guided us into the heart of life itself” (Bergson, 1944, p. 194). Intuition is an act of compassion with life. Unlike instinct, intuition is a form of inner sympathy. While intelligence provides us with relative knowledge of certain parts of reality, intuition grasps the absolute and illuminates it. This is why intelligence finds it hard to understand intuition, while the latter can comprehend the former. Intelligence produces science, as knowledge reinforced by logical constructions concerning certain fragments of reality, implying the description of causal relationships within itself. Intuition, on the other hand, being able to grasp reality in its organic wholeness, acts as a creative force behind a metaphysical theory. It is intuition that should pave the way for philosophy toward metaphysics as a common theory of the entire reality. The subject of metaphysics is life, which is not possible to understand through the conceptual apparatus of intelligence. Therefore, individual flashes of intuition have far more to give to philosophy than the entire legacy of intelligence (Uznadze, 1986, p. 42).

Bergson’s anti-intellectualism does not suggest the complete rejection of the role and importance of intelligence in a complex and multifaceted construct of the knowledge

system. Dimitri Uznadze is well aware of this, and when conveying Bergson's gnoseological ideas, he always tries to highlight those explicit or covert moments related to the importance of intelligence that appear in the French thinker's theory. Apparently, Uznadze understands Bergson's theory of cognition as a call for seeking out new ways necessary for overcoming the limitations characteristic of intellectual cognition, rather than as an attempt at developing a gnoseological theory that ultimately dismisses the role and significance of the mind.

Uznadze's Evaluation of Bergson's Gnoseology

Uznadze recognizes the fairness of Bergsonism's reformatory approach in the field of gnoseology. He writes:

“If previously no one doubted the conviction regarding the cognitive powers of intelligence, if the problematic issue was only the question of properly using intelligence, Bergson started out his critique in order to highlight and assess those fundamental postulates from which the cognitive process of the work of intelligence itself follows. This way, his critique expanded to an even deeper and more far-reaching platform. Therefore, it would not be a mistake if we said that Bergson's philosophical efforts create a new stage in the history of philosophical-scientific thought” (Uznadze, 1986, p. 184).

This situation does not prevent the Georgian scholar to exposing the individual errors and confusions that appear in the process of this undertaking. Uznadze's evaluation of Bergson's theory of cognition can be summarized as follows:

1. While Kant, drawing on the analysis of the foundations of mathematical knowledge, rejected the possibility of a metaphysical cognition, Bergson, building upon the interpretations of the new insights gained from the hard science, attempted to give new life to metaphysics. “It is undeniable that if philosophy is to follow Bergson's path, the realm of its research would not limit itself merely to the theory of cognition, and metaphysics would regain its respect and authority. And it is necessary for philosophy to follow Bergson's path” (Uznadze, 1986, p. 186).

2. Building upon the analysis of the nature of intellectual cognition, Bergson seeks to show its incompatibility with metaphysics, while underscoring the advantage of intuition in this respect. But revealing the peculiarities of intelligence in general or knowing the abilities of particular cognitive skills will only help us understand what kind of picture of reality we should produce by drawing upon it. However, to be able to judge the adequacy of such a picture in relation to reality, it is necessary to have

“infallible cognition” of this reality in advance (Uznadze, 1986, p. 186). Thus, Bergson’s rejection of intelligence’s metaphysical value should be based upon a preliminary knowledge of metaphysical reality. But what is a value of the metaphysics that precedes the critique of our cognition? Therefore, Bergson’s argument regarding the metaphysical unfruitfulness of intelligence is circular, according to Uznadze. “Prior to saying anything about the metaphysical value of intelligence, Bergson has the answer ready. He has it ready because he has two motives accepted in advance without any critique: one is the notion about the ability for metaphysical cognition and the other is related to the presumption of the indisputable nature of metaphysical reality” (ibid.). The following three points from Uznadze’s critique can be viewed as variations or concretizations of this remark:

3. In his attempts to prove the inapplicability of intelligence to metaphysical reality, Bergson regards intelligence as a means to cognize the general and formal while considering the metaphysical realm as a domain of individual reality. Uznadze raises the question: “How does Bergson know that the general and formal are so unfamiliar to the metaphysical realm of reality? How does he know that this domain of reality is characterized by individuality? It is clear that he did not find this out through critique because his critique itself follows merely from this” (ibid.). If anyone, similar to Plato, connected the realm of metaphysical reality to the general and formal, then they would have been equally successful in claiming that the sole organ of metaphysical cognition is intelligence and not intuition. The error of the latter would not have been more inexcusable than that of Bergson, argues Uznadze.

4. Bergson tries to fathom the cognitive value of intelligence by taking its biological role into account, which, in Uznadze’s view, is also a mistake, since there is no direct link between the biological genesis of intelligence and its gnoseological value. Bergson recognizes intelligence as an organ of human’s practice or production, from which only one conclusion can be drawn, namely that the intellectual thought process has developed special traits. The usefulness of the traits of intellectual reasoning in relation to purely theoretical cognition would have been clear only if the nature of the object of theoretical cognition were known in advance.

“[Bergson says that] it is impossible for an action to exist in non-reality; and if, for this reason, intelligence can be regarded – in at least one respect – as a means for perceiving material reality, does it not seem apparent that this rejects the idea that it is fundamentally impossible for an organ of practice to be even considered an organ for cognizing the essence of reality?” (Uznadze, 1986, p. 187).

Even if that was not the case, Bergson himself acknowledges that intellectual cognition has always had a special aspiration to and claim on understanding the

metaphysical realm. “There is no doubt that none of our psychic forces has practiced pure cognition as much as intelligence; the entire history of science and philosophy is the best witness to this situation. Then how is it possible that in one instance practice had developed an appropriate skill for intelligence and none in the other?” (Uznadze, 1986, p. 187).

Bergson seeks the solution to this inconsistency in the metaphysical realm once again and declares the object of intelligence or substance as the opposite direction of positive reality. How can Bergson know about the different domains of metaphysical reality if the question of the ability to understand this realm is still unclear?

5. To Bergson, metaphysics is the sphere of intuition since “life order” is unavailable and incomprehensible to intelligence, which only recognizes and studies “mathematical order.” Intuition fills our knowledge with information about the metaphysical realm because it can grasp the essence of reality. But how is it possible for the contents of such knowledge to be transferred and shared among people? Bergson argues that sharing the insights of intuition with others is possible and acknowledges the mandatory role of intelligence in this process; this means assuming that the insights of intuition should pass the test of discursive reasoning, that is, of intelligence. Otherwise, accepting or not accepting metaphysics would have depended only upon the personal whim of a philosopher rather than being determined by objective necessity (Uznadze, 1986, p. 191).

Bergson’s Metaphysical Theory and Uznadze’s Analysis of the Question of Monism

Uznadze pays particular attention to the important aspects of the metaphysical theory of the French thinker, specifically to the anti-mechanistic and anti-teleological nature of Bergson’s metaphysical theory and the problem of monism.

In Uznadze’s investigation, the analysis of the problem in question is preceded by an extensive reconstruction of Bergson’s metaphysical concept, the main points of which can be summarized as follows: reality, according to Bergson, is manifested through two major tendencies. These tendencies are the impulse of life (*élan vital*) and matter. The material element is never entirely free from the impulse of life. The impulse of life is expressed through different forces in different forms of matter: in non-organic matter, the impulse of life is weakly expressed; in the vegetal world, it has a smaller reach than among animals, while in animals, it manifests itself more purely than in the world of intelligent beings, that is, humans. The impulse of life is an aspiration toward creative mutability; life in its highest form is elevated to the act of consciousness.

Matter is inert by nature, and its essential characteristics include extension and existence in a particular fragment of space. Elements of matter occupy a particular place in relation to one another. The change of matter is nothing but the replacement of positions of its elements. The movement and change of a material body are caused by the influence of an external force. Besides, in case of uniformity of external conditions, the relationships occurring in the material world replicate themselves unchangeably, because these relationships are of a mandatory character; facts and events of material reality are predefined and determined, in other words, they are given together with the past and the present so that nothing truly new occurs. But reality, viewed as a whole, is not limited to the merely material. The impulse of life acts in it, permeating it and employing it as a resource and object. The impulse of life transforms matter, driving it in an unpredictable direction, and gives new shapes to it. Life's action is manifested in altering and transforming the forms of material reality. The essence of life is free action, that is, the constant creation of new forms using the resources of matter; life is an eternal process of creative evolution.

The impulse of life, according to Bergson, does not occur in living organisms alone and has not originated with them; the impulse of life has always been in action; in non-living nature, its action is limited. The genesis of living organisms is the proof that the movement of the world, viewed as a whole, was determined and driven by the impulse of life. The impulse of life is an eternal "soul-giving" origin of matter, while matter acts as a force for the impulse of life, a force requiring coordination with and adaptation to the latter. Uznadze justly notes the existence of a pantheistic pattern and the link between Bergson's metaphysics and Leibniz's Monadology (Uznadze, 1986, p. 28).

The anti-mechanistic and anti-teleological aspects of Bergson's metaphysics are a special topic of discussion in Uznadze's monograph. Some followers of the theory seek to understand a living organism using an analogy with a bodily object. In the process of adaptation to the external environment, a living organism, seemingly similar to a bodily object, is only subject to external influences; it was thought that a living organism was merely a sum of constantly replicated traits determined by external conditions. In homogeneous conditions, a living organism seemingly always responds in a uniform way; thus, its future is totally predictable – intelligence is able to foresee with exact precision life's every next manifestation or state. This perspective recognizes the determination of the entire reality – including living organisms – by the external influence of material elements, with this influence being susceptible to exact calculation. Naturally, such a mechanistic approach is entirely unacceptable to Bergson's metaphysics (Uznadze, 1986, pp. 114–115).

There is another perspective – teleology, that is, the study of “ultimate goals”. According to the teleological approach, everything that a living organism does or will do in the future is determined by a preexisting goal. Teleology dismisses the freedom component characteristic of the impulse of life; it does not acknowledge that life is true creation and a constant “creative evolution.” In Bergson’s view, it is incorrect to talk about “ultimate goals”; life is not a realization of one and the same “ultimate goal”, but rather a constant establishment of new goals. The goals manifested throughout the present life do not necessarily follow from previous goals. Life’s process is a continuous shift of goals, a perpetual process of a creative evolution (Uznadze, 1986, p. 110).

With his metaphysical theory, Bergson tries to solve the utterly complex and eternal problem of the relationship between soul and matter; it is no wonder that this aspect of Bergson’s work incites particular interest in Uznadze.

At face value, Bergson still remains within the dualistic scheme of traditional philosophy, operating with binary opposites such as quantitative and qualitative differences, duration and extension, intelligence and intuition, memory-recollection and memory-perception, etc. Nevertheless, his influential interpreters seek to demonstrate that monism is his philosophy’s core tenet. In this respect, it is interesting that Uznadze is one of the early interpreters who paid special attention to proving Bergson’s monism and opposed his contemporary authors who still viewed non-reducible dualism as the underlying principle of Bergson’s philosophy.

Apart from his extensive monograph dedicated to Bergson’s philosophy, Uznadze touches upon Bergson’s monism in “Bergson’s Monism”, an article published in 1921. Here, Uznadze debates Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, particularly his idea expressed in his 1917 article, according to which, while Bergson’s philosophy, given its central patterns and intentions, is monistic, yet its dualistic articulation is not able to meet its dualistic presumption (Radhakrishnan, 1917). Radhakrishnan tries to prove his claim by indicating that in his explanation of the evolutionary process, together with the impulse of life (*élan vital*), Bergson assumes the preexistence of a different factor, matter, which is equally necessary for both commencing and continuing the evolutionary process; to incite the activity of the *élan vital*, resistance is necessary, which it meets in the form of inert matter and which exists without it (*ibid.*, p. 329). Here, Uznadze also tries to reevaluate Albert Steenbergen’s idea about the presence of a clearly dualistic pattern in Bergson’s philosophy (Steenbergen, 1909).

Specifically, Uznadze claims that Bergson’s early works (*Données immédiates de la conscience* [1889] and *Matière et mémoire* [1896]) do indeed give the impression of dualism; in them, one can clearly see “the inevitable abyss between space, matter, and

soul”, and this opposition is not reconciled but rather enhanced and deepened (Uznadze, 1986, p. 197). Uznadze sees the first attempt at attenuating this opposition in *Evolution créatrice* (1907) where Bergson, in his view, tries to “synthetically weld” the opposing polarities of experience using an ontological principle. But, notes Uznadze, the drastic difference between the traits of matter and the soul is still forcefully apparent here: extension versus non-extension, quantitateness versus qualitateness, necessity and laws versus freedom – with this, we seem to be left with two polarities of reality again. According to Uznadze, one way to overcome this dualism in Bergson’s philosophy, can be found in connecting these two opposing principles, the soul and matter, to a third – super-consciousness, which underlies both and can be seen as the origin of both (ibid., p. 199). But postulating such a primary principle is not yet a guarantee of escaping dualism, since, according to Bergson’s notion, the hindering opposition between matter and the soul still acts as a precondition to the possibility of super-consciousness expanding in the evolutionary process. Uznadze agrees with Radhakrishnan in that it is unclear why the evolution of life on this planet should require this hindering opposition if super-consciousness is capable of producing individual branches of life or matter throughout the process of its evolution without any foreign force or any hindering medium existing independently of it (ibid.). As Uznadze notes, this is exactly the point that allows Bergson’s critics to view an apparent dualistic disposition in his work.

However, Uznadze argues that such an interpretation is the result of overlooking the major pattern of Bergson’s thought or “his core vein” as he calls it. Namely, in this interpretation, matter in its essence is given in the form of homogeneous space and comprehensible and clear objectivity. But is not such a representation of matter merely a product of the operations of intelligence? If we understand matter through intuition, we will see that it is never completely covered by homogeneous space; pure spatiality, certainty, and objectivity only designate the direction and the extreme boundary toward which material development gravitates but which it can never fully reach. Thus, viewing intelligence in a manner untainted by its operations – through intuition, that is – will help us see that the seemingly independently positioned elements of matter “penetrate each other and each of them experiences the influence of the whole, which, therefore, is present in them in certain forms. Thus, although matter expands in the direction of space, it is not able to fully reach it” (ibid., p. 199). The same applies to the soul: That the soul is a pure duration while extension does not have to do anything with it, is true only at the level of principle, while in reality this is only a tendency.

“Psychic life very rarely manifests itself in a pure duration [...]. It is no doubt that if we find anything psychic in matter, then we will be able to discover something material in the psychic. Pure matter and the pure soul should only be viewed as

tendencies. Neither matter nor the soul can ultimately be regarded as fully complete and set apart. The idea that everything existent seems to be given irrevocably [...], in Bergson's opinion, is a superstition that must be exposed and rejected for good" (ibid., pp. 201–202).

At this point, Uznadze once again deems Bergson's dualistic interpretation possible in that while we have not arrived at acknowledging two interdependent opposing principles, we have arrived at recognizing two opposing tendencies in super-consciousness. Can it be that in the form of Bergson's super-consciousness we are dealing with an analogue of Spinoza's substance equipped with the opposing attributes of thought and extension? – asks Uznadze (ibid., p. 202). But his answer to this question is a swift no, viewing the key to the issue in intuition again: intuition will show us that “when two tendencies appear in psychic life [...], we are dealing merely with a modification of psychic tension” (ibid.). The stronger the tension, the more psychic life presents itself as a concentrated, complete, dynamic process, while with greater relaxation it reveals a disposition toward the materialistic world (ibid., p. 203). In these instances, “our past, previously being sealed as an inseparable impulse for us, is divided into thousands and tens of thousands of recollections rushing outward, and the more they are reinforced, the more they refuse to interpenetrate. Thus, our personality strives toward space again”, refers Uznadze to Bergson's words from his *Creative Evolution* (Bergson, 1944, p. 229).

Therefore, in Bergson's philosophy, what, at face value, can be seen as a dualism of separate principles of reality or of different tendencies existing in a single reality, is merely a modification of psychic tension for Uznadze. “Super-consciousness, which includes the notion of a modification of tension, is neither purely psychic nor material; as the degree of tension, it is both material and psychic [...]. In each point of time, reality is simultaneously psychic and material since it experiences tensions to a certain degree” (ibid., pp. 203–204). Pure psychic-ness is impossible, as this requires an absolute tension, and such an absolute upper threshold does not exist. On the other hand, pure material-ness is likewise impossible, as this means the complete elimination of tension, which would equal the nonexistence of reality and, with it, of the material (ibid., p. 204). To put it briefly, pure psychic-ness and pure material-ness are constructs of intelligence, its abstractions. We cannot find anything corresponding to them in reality, the way we grasp them intuitively.

To summarize, Uznadze claims that Bergson's intuitionism is free from the complexities characteristic of vulgar materialism and monism, which are determined by the limitations of an absolutist-intellectualist perspective, while Bergson's evolutionism and intuitionism are spared from those (ibid.).

Comparing Uznadze's version of a monistic reconstruction of Bergson's philosophy to Gilles Deleuze's similar effort might be interesting too, especially considering that for Deleuze, similar to Uznadze, the main challenge related to Bergson's interpretation lies in explaining how it is possible to view Bergson's notions of the monism of time, the qualitative multiplicity of duration, and the binary directions of relaxation-concentration as being in harmony with each other. Additionally, it is important to note that Deleuze's *Bergsonism* published in 1966 – almost half a century after Uznadze's monograph and article – is undoubtedly one of the most influential and popular interpretations of Bergson's work, written at a time when a particularly strong wave of anti-Bergsonism dominated the French philosophy (Gioly, 2003).

Deleuze's formulation of the problem related to Bergson's monism is different from that of Uznadze: if we assume that the transition from monism to dualism in Bergson's work depends on the transition from qualitative differences to differences of levels of relaxation (*détente*) and concentration, then may we not assume that at the core of his thesis he brings back precisely the very thing he was most radically opposed to – the differences in degree and intensity, that is, quantitative differences? How can we reconcile Bergson's two claims: the one that the difference between the past and present is qualitative, and the other that the present is the most concentrated degree of the past (Deleuze, 1991, p. 91)? Here, according to Deleuze, we are not dealing with the issue of monism itself (which is solved to the extent that the coexistence of different degrees of relaxation and concentration implies the existence of a single unified time), but rather with the issue of harmonizing the dualism of qualitative differences with the monism of different degrees of relaxation (*ibid.*).

Deleuze sees the solution to this problem in viewing the dualism and monism in question as the different points of method rather than as different components of the doctrine (*ibid.*, p. 92). Namely, according to him, the different points of method include (1) pure dualism, which corresponds to Bergson's initial emphasis on qualitative differences between space and time, matter and memory, present and past, etc.; (2) a neutralized or balanced dualism, which corresponds to Bergson's reasoning through which he shows that memory is essentially a difference, while matter is a repetition. As a result of that, argues Deleuze, we now have not a qualitative difference between two tendencies, but rather "the difference between qualitative differences and degree-related (quantitative) differences themselves"; (3) monism, which corresponds to the next step of Bergson's reasoning where he shows that if memory is a qualitative difference, and space or matter is a quantitative difference, then all degrees of differences are present between them, that is, the whole nature of the difference itself. Duration is merely the most concentrated degree of matter, while matter is the most relaxed/expanded (*détendu*) degree of duration. Degree-related differences represent the lowest degree of the difference itself, whereas

qualitative differences represent the highest degree of the difference itself. Therefore, we do not have a dualism between qualitative and quantitative parts, and every qualitative or quantitative difference coexists in one reality – time (ibid., p. 92). If we recall that for Bergson, duration – the true reality – is difference rather than identity with itself, virtuality rather than actuality or presence, mutability and movement rather than a solid identity, it becomes clear that we should think of his monism as an ontology of difference, of process.

Ostensibly, it might seem to us that this reconstruction by Deleuze is significantly different from Uznadze's interpretation of Bergson's monism. Uznadze talks about the degrees of tension; might this mean that he ultimately reduced Bergson's monism to an ontology of the manifestation of a single reality with different degrees? We think that such an interpretation would not be accurate. To replace "different degrees of tension", Uznadze uses the phrase "modifications of tension" in the same context. Perhaps less clearly articulated than in Deleuze's work, but Uznadze also presents Bergson's monistic ontology as an ontology of difference, of process, since, ultimately, reality is likewise represented as a tension, creative evolution, and a process of the articulation of differences.

Bergson's Philosophy and the Theory of Set

As noted at the beginning of the paper, some of Uznadze's researchers hold the view that the critical processing of Bergson's philosophy had a significant impact on devising Uznadze's theory of set. Here, we will try to highlight several aspects that show the potential importance of his meeting with Bergson's work for producing this original theory.

The key points of the theory of set can be summarized as follows: Uznadze's goal was to develop a theory of the purposefulness of human behavior that would be neither mechanistic, nor vitalistic. In searching for such a theory, his critique of what, in Uznadze's view, was the error of all previous psychological theories served as a guide for him. Specifically, all these theories relied on a faulty methodological postulate, which Uznadze dubbed "the postulate of directness." Here, Uznadze implied an assumption that psychic events are directly and causally determined by the events causing them (external events or other psychic events). In its attempts to theorize the human psyche, this postulate, in any of its form, assumed the complete dismissal of a subject (Uznadze, 1977, p. 51). Instead, to explain the purposefulness of behavior, Uznadze theoretically proposed and then tried to experimentally prove that the causal mechanism responsible for producing psychic events is mediated by an unconscious reality – the set, which represents a subject's whole state and defines their readiness

for a particular psychic act. “The set is a universal mediating variable between the environment and consciousness, between the events of consciousness themselves, and also between consciousness and behavior” (Imedadze, 2004, p. 188). The set, according to Uznadze, is a specific modification of the whole subject; this is the state that is characteristic of a whole subject and not of their individual processes or functions (ibid.). The set involves subjective and objective factors. Need is a subjective factor, whereas the environment and situation are objective factors. The set is not an occurrence of consciousness; it does not represent the contents of consciousness. However, this does not mean that it is an unconscious part of the psyche in the sense that the unconscious appears in psychological theories, particularly in Freud’s works. Uznadze makes a special effort to show that the Freudian unconscious is a useless concept for psychology: this is a concept for psychic processes that are different from conscious psychic processes only because they lack consciousness. Understood in this manner, conscious and unconscious psychic events do not differ from each other by their intrinsic nature and structure (Uznadze, 1977, p. 44). Understood this way, the unconscious cannot meet the theoretical goal for which Uznadze needs the concept of set; he needs an unconscious element that does not represent the contents of consciousness, but has a crucial influence on the events of consciousness. And this is the set. At the early stage of developing his theory, Uznadze did not even include the set in the psychic realm, calling it the biosphere. Later, he deemed the set an unconscious psychic phenomenon, which evolutionarily precedes the development of consciousness (Imedadze, 2004, p. 193).

What can be the connection between the development of this psychological theory by Uznadze and his thorough analysis of Bergson’s philosophy? One of the primary connections might be the acute awareness of the problem of psychological-physical interaction and the causality occurring in the psychic sphere itself. Of course, Uznadze would have arrived at this issue without Bergson, as at that time it was a highly central topic in psychological or philosophical discussions, but it is no doubt that his in-depth knowledge of Bergson’s philosophy laid a significant foundation, encouraging him to pursue an original solution to the problem in question. The critique of the mechanistic approach, both generally and in relation to psychic events, was of special importance as a particular form of this general problem. At the time of Uznadze’s intellectual coming of age and during his early steps in psychology, the problematic nature of the mechanistic approach was, of course, a topic of quite extensive debate both in philosophy and psychology, but indisputably, Bergson was one of the most important names during the anti-mechanistic movement of this period. The fact that Uznadze had directly worked on the reconstruction and critique of Bergson’s philosophical views was undoubtedly important for him in reexamining his own methodological assumptions in contemporary psychology.

Bergson's special interest in a subject's wholeness, his experiments in understanding the unified nature of psychic life as well as its plurality, should be another linking point. As already noted, the inevitable importance of the subject, as a whole, in understanding and explaining individual psychic acts was the guiding principle for Uznadze when developing his psychological theory of set. Studying Bergson's arguments regarding the inter-penetrability of the elements of psychic life or the "discreteness" of the psyche is very likely to have influenced such an orientation.

Lastly, one more parallel (even if not a direct legacy) can be discerned between Uznadze's concept of set and the role that, according to Bergson, instinct (which he views as a rudimentary form of intuition) plays in the interaction between an organism and the environment. Uznadze's monograph about Bergson can serve as solid evidence that Uznadze had a thorough understanding of the relevant parts of Bergson's work and the theoretical resources present in them as well as their problematic aspects. Thus, it is not surprising that the critical rethinking of Bergson's intuitionism contributed considerably to laying the groundwork for devising the fundamentals of Uznadze's theory of set.

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