

# Table of Contents

Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual . . . . . 1



# Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual

By Leonard Latiff

Henri Bergson (1859-1941), a French philosopher highly influential in the first half of the 20th century, proposed a dramatic new way of thinking about time and duration that took into account mathematics, psychology and evolution. Keith Ansell Pearson's new book on Bergson could also be read as a Bergsonian introduction to Deleuze. The opening paragraph cites Deleuze as its starting point and Pearson makes continual reference to his work throughout. At the book's heart lies the claim that we should think in terms of time rather than space, which means to think in terms of the virtual rather than in terms of the actual. Fundamentally, Pearson is concerned with how we think about memory. It is, he proposes, memory that moves us beyond the psychological toward the ontological and so brings us to problems of being and becoming. By means of this passage we should manage to avoid idealism or empiricism, ending up with a 'net fit for the problem'.

The book is composed of seven interlinking essays. Easily moving between the philosophical, mathematical and evolutionary implications, Pearson, takes in a broad range of thinkers, including Kant, Russell and Darwin, to support his arguments. Explaining without reducing, Pearson manages to confront the most complex areas of Bergson's work soberly, avoiding the linguistic histrionics that can be so seductive when dealing with 20th century thought of a certain strain.

Situating the argument strictly within a philosophical context, it is a text about the nature of time and becoming. Pearson's writing style is easy and lucid, far from the text-twisting reversals found in other Deleuzian work's such as Brian Massumi's excellent *Reader's Guide to Capitalism*. These characteristics make the book suitable for those new to the subject. However, the depth and breadth of Pearson's thinking on the subject also makes it fecund reading for those wishing to extend and inspire their knowledge of both Bergson and Deleuze.

Leonard Latiff <l\_latiff AT yahoo.co.uk> was Mute's intern during spring 2002. We miss him.

*Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life* // Keith Ansell Pearson // Routledge // London // 2001 // £15.99