Lecture II

1. What I am now to attempt is a task which may appear impossible because self-contradictory—namely, to elucidate what is by hypothesis incapable of elucidation. For the first thing to be observed about the new theory of knowledge is that it is professedly a mystery, in the Greek sense of the word. The saving intuition is not to be reached by any process of intellection, but by a sudden revelation; and except a man be born again he cannot receive it. The habits of thought characteristic of the ordinary Understanding must be cast off. In Schelling's words:

All misunderstanding of the transcendental philosophy is due, not to any unintelligibility in that philosophy, but to a lack of the organ by which it must be apprehended. . . . Unless a man already brings the transcendental way of thinking with him, the transcendental philosophy must always be found unintelligible. It is therefore necessary that one insert oneself into this manner of thinking at the outset, through an act of freedom.¹

¹ Sämtliche Werke, 1 Abt., III: System des transcendentalen Idealismus (1800), pp. 367–70.
Schelling declared it to be his purpose "sharply to cut off the road of approach to philosophy, and so to isolate it on all sides from common knowledge that not a footpath shall lead from the latter to the former." Coleridge was but paraphrasing Schelling when he wrote in the *Biographia Literaria*:

To an Esquimaux or New Zealander, our most popular philosophy would be wholly unintelligible; for the sense, the inward organ, is not yet born in him. So is there many a one among us, yes, and some who think themselves philosophers, too, to whom the philosophic organ is entirely wanting. To such men philosophy is a mere play of words and notions, like a theory of music to the deaf.

This tone is equally characteristic of the philosophy of Bergson. In the words of an exposition formally approved by him, "in order to understand Bergson, it is not necessary to have any previous acquaintance with philosophy, indeed the less the reader knows of current metaphysical notions the easier it may perhaps be for him to adopt the mental attitude required for understanding Bergson. For Bergson says that the tradition of philosophy is all wrong and must be


broken with; according to his view philosophical knowledge can only be obtained by 'a reversal of the usual work of the intellect.'”⁴ As Mr. Walter Lippmann once put it, in a sympathetic account of this philosophy, “in a sense you must become a Bergsonian before you can understand Bergson.”

It would appear, then, that only those who have already achieved the requisite emancipation from the ordinary habits of the intellect and have been initiated into the mystery can understand the doctrine—an awkward situation for the would-be expositor and historian. And what is worse, it is impossible even for the initiated, we are told, to express in words the truth which has been disclosed to them. For the adherers of this epistemology have always insisted upon the ineffableness of what is revealed in self intuition. It is an immediate knowledge of oneself, and by oneself, and cannot be imparted to another. The favorite word of Jacobi, as Levy-Bruhl has remarked,⁵ is unaussprechlich. And Schelling in one of his early writings declares that

not even the language of Plato or of his spiritual kinsman Jacobi, can suffice to convey the distinction between absolute, immutable Being and conditioned, changeable existence. . . . This Absolute

⁵ *La Philosophie de Jacobi* (1894), p. 63.
within us cannot, I think, be framed in human speech; only an intellectual intuition which one has gained for oneself (selbsterrungenes Anschauen des Intellectualen) can supplement the inadequacy of our language. 6

Schopenhauer was reluctant to admit that his own system was a philosophy of the ineffable, since he was well aware of the humor there is in a philosopher's devoting many portly volumes to setting forth that which he at the same time declares to be unutterable in words. Yet there is no consequence which flows more obviously from Schopenhauer's primary principles, in the early version of his system, than the proposition that the true nature of things can never be expressed in "matter-moulded forms of speech." For that which is alien to the very constitutive forms of perception and thought manifestly must be beyond the reach of language, which is but the instrument of the Understanding—i.e., of abstract thought, which is itself at two removes from reality. Schopenhauer, indeed, on occasion admits that it is only in the experiences of mystical ecstasy—experiences which are forever incapable of being told—that the positive meaning of the metaphysics of the Absolute Will can be apprehended; the discourse of the philosopher is rather devoted to telling what the Will is not. "Only

6 Vom Ich, usw.; SW, 1 Abt., I, p. 216.
the worst knowledge, abstract, secondary knowledge, the concept, the mere shadow of true knowledge, is unconditionally communicable." For the conveyance of philosophical insight language is inadequate:

To our own serious meditation and inward observation of things, speaking to others stands related as a machine to a living organism. . . . A man understands wholly only himself; others but half; for at best we can communicate only concepts, not the intuitional apprehension which lies behind the concepts. Consequently, deep philosophical truths can never be brought to light, after the common fashion of thought, by means of conversation. This last is, indeed, useful enough for intellectual exercise, for starting up problems, for ventilating them and afterwards for testing, checking-up and criticising the proposed solution. . . . But neither our knowledge nor our insight are ever much increased by discussing what has been said by others and coming to an agreement with them.⁷

Bergsonism, too, frankly belongs among the philosophies of the ineffable. At the end of a volume devoted to expounding the peculiarities of the "inner life," we are told that these "cannot be expressed in the fixed terms of language";⁸ in fact, Bergson else-

⁷ Parerga and Paralipomena (Eng. tr., Bohn Lib.), II, ch. 1, sec. 6, 7, pp. 166–67. Nothing more false, in my opinion, has ever been said about philosophy.
where says, the philosophical intuition "is repugnant to the very essence of language." It may at first sight appear an embarrassing circumstance for a philosopher to have a message to convey which is, by his own confession, incapable of being put into words. But in point of fact, as the history of both philosophy and religion shows, there are few things which render a doctrine more attractive to many minds than an air of ineffability. Certainly the writings of most of Bergson's disciples show how greatly they have felt the fascination of this quality of mystical unutterableness in his doctrine. The adepts of this philosophy have often the air of going about with monitory fingers on lips and an expression of wondering rapture. One of Bergson's English translators has aptly prefixed to his version, with the author's permission, a motto from Plotinus which is in the true vein of Neoplatonic mysticism: "If a man were to inquire of Nature the reason of her creative activity and she were willing to give ear and answer, she would say—'Ask me not, but understand in silence, even as I am silent and am not wont to speak.'" "It is the idea of mystery," Georges Sorel said, "which should control the interpretation" of this (Bergson's) philosophy.

No subject, then, might seem less suitable for public discourse than such a theory of philosophical knowledge. But, happily for the lecturer, the philoso-
phers themselves, in spite of their commendation of a wise silence, have provided him with abundant precedent for public discourse about these matters; indeed, the philosophers of the ineffable have seldom been the least loquacious of their kind. And the truth is that the doctrine with which we are to be concerned is by no means innocent of conceptual thought nor insusceptible of analytical exposition. Of this the proof must be found in the analysis which is to follow. Meanwhile it must be borne in mind that the assumption that the nature of the "truly real" being is ineffable was not novel nor peculiar to the German philosophers who wrote so much about it. The positive attributes of the God not only of Neoplatonism, but of the medieval theology of Christendom—largely derivative from Neoplatonism—and of the mystics of all religions and all periods, had also been held to be inexpressible in human language. Philosophy could *tell* us only what God is *not*; the *via negativa*, the denial of predicates alien to the essence of deity, was the only strictly veridical way of speaking of the Absolute Being.

2. A more nearly differentiating characteristic of this theory of knowledge is the direction in which it bids us look if we are to find and
grasp the true nature of reality. That direction is “inward”; “look in and not out” is the motto—the initial though not the final motto—of Schelling and most of the school. In short, the “intellectual intuition” is a Selbstanschauung, an intuition of oneself, or rather, of the innermost kernel of oneself; as a German writer on Schelling has observed, “between self-consciousness and intellektuelle Anschauung Schelling makes no distinction.”  

“We dream,” said Novalis, “of travelling round the world; is the world not, then, within us? The depths of our own spirit we do not know. Nach innen geht der geheimnisvolle Weg.” The initiation into the mystery, then, consists in an introduction to our “real” or “deeper” selves.

Only to one it was given to lift the veil of the goddess. What saw he then? He saw—wonder of wonders—himself!

Schleiermacher was equally insistent that the way of intuition meant looking inward rather than outward: “I can know another only through his deeds, for I never perceive his inner activity. . . . But a man’s judgment cannot err when he turns his gaze only upon himself.” “Whenever I turn my gaze back upon the

J. R. Richter, “Intuition” und “intellektuelle Anschauung” bei Schelling und Bergson (1929), p. 18; the remark noted would be more precisely true if qualified by “primarily,” as will later appear.
inner Self, I am forthwith in the realm of the eternal; I behold the activity of the Spirit, which the world cannot change, which time cannot destroy, but which, rather, creates both world and time."¹⁰ Much of Schleiermacher's *Monologues* is simply a proclamation of the gospel of salvation through *Selbstbetrachtung*. Even the not altogether edifying hero of Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde* keeps in the fashion, by forming a resolution "to lose himself ever more deeply in the inner perspective of his own spirit."

Schopenhauer, too, assumed that, in contrast with the Understanding's knowledge of objects, which can never give us more than an acquaintance with mere phenomena, there is available to man an immediate knowledge of the very heart of reality as it is in itself, and that this knowledge must necessarily be self-knowledge. He formulates in the clearest terms the same methodology of philosophical insight, in its contrast with scientific knowledge:

We, who have in view not etiology but philosophy, that is, not relative but unconditional knowledge of the real nature of the world, take the opposite course [to that of natural science], and start from that which is immediately and most completely known to us.¹¹


¹¹ *World as Will and Idea* (Eng. tr.), I, 163.
In this cognition "each of us knows his own nature (Wesen) immediately, apart from all form, even that of subject and object—knows and at the same time is that which he knows, since here the knower and the known are identical." "Philosophy," Schopenhauer writes again, "necessarily requires that which is absolutely immediate for its starting-point. But clearly only that which is given in self-consciousness fulfills this condition—that which is within and subjective."12

So Coleridge, following his German originals, writes in the Biographia Literaria of "the sacred power of self-intuition" which he equates with "the philosophical imagination."13

But this intuiting of the self must not be construed to mean that what is ordinarily understood by introspection—the observation of our fleeting and chaotic contents of consciousness, our sensations, concepts, desires, motives, moods—is the path which leads to the arcana of metaphysics. Such introspection at best acquaints us only with what, in Kantian terminology, was called the empirical Ego; and the true Self is, for the metaphysician in one phase of this tendency, the complete antithesis of this empirical self. Novalis was only expressing a commonplace when he wrote: Unser

12 Ibid., I, 145; III, 59.
sogenanntes Ich ist nicht unser wahres Ich, sondern nur sein Abglanz.\textsuperscript{14} And the “true self” can be known only by itself.

This limitation of the reality known through the \textit{Vernunft} or “intuition of Reason” to \textit{Das Ich}—to the individual Self \textit{qua} knower—was not derived from the teaching of Jacobi, and was not approved by him. Though he was the first to formulate the primary article of the creed of the new epistemology—\textit{i.e.}, the distinction of the Reason and the Understanding and the affirmation of the exclusive potency of the former to give us knowledge of the true nature of “reality”—he believed that man possesses a genuine and indubitable knowledge, not only of his own existence and nature, but also of the existence of God, of a physical world, and of the freedom of the human will. There was thus, almost at the outset, a splitting of the new theory of knowledge into two divergent doctrines as to what can be known with certainty through intuition. How this cleavage came about, and what its consequences were, can be understood only after we have considered the question with which the following section will deal.

\textsuperscript{14} “Our so called Ego is not our true Ego, but only its reflection.” \textit{Fragmente in Schriften}. For the same in Schelling, see \textit{System des transc. Idealismus}, \textit{SW}, III, 375.
3. But why do the new epistemologists insist that self-knowledge is the only true knowledge of reality? As the last-cited passage from Schopenhauer implies, the answer—or a part of the answer—is that it seems to them evident that any certain knowledge must be direct, unmediated, an actual possession by the knower of that which is known. The sacred word from Jacobi to Bergson and LeRoy has been “immediacy,” das Unmittelbare; and it was primarily because self-intuition seemed equivalent to immediate knowledge, a direct “acquaintance with” being, while the Understanding could at most profess only to yield “knowledge about” it, that the former was given the higher place. “Ever since the time of Aristotle,” wrote Jacobi, “there has been going on in the philosophical schools an increasing endeavor to subject immediate knowledge to mediate, the original and fundamental faculty of intuiting or perceiving to the faculty of reflection, which operates by abstraction—to subject the model to its copy, the reality to the verbal symbol, the Reason to the Understanding.”15 By the “immediacy” of intuition these epistemologists did not ordinarily mean the self-evidence of axiomatic propositions, such as were supposed to constitute the foundations of the common logic and of mathematics. For such “abstract fundamental principles” (Grundsätze) Schelling has noth-

15 Einleitung to vol. II of Jacobi’s Werke (1815).
ing but scorn; to place these, he says, "at the summit of philosophy is the death of philosophy."\textsuperscript{16} For "principles" are generalities, combinations of general concepts; but a generality is never a fact of immediate experience, and conceptual thought is the very negation of immediacy; the concept gets in the way of the reality to be known. No idea of anything gives you the existence of that of which it is supposed to be the idea; for the idea, by hypothesis, is not, and does not contain, the being of that which it is said to represent; nor can it offer any full assurance that it is even a correct representation of the properties of that entity-other-than-itself to which it refers.

Now this is, of course, an old motif in philosophy from Descartes to the Scottish School and on to the now not-so-new realists of our own day.\textsuperscript{17} The demand for immediacy—for the direct and therefore sure ap-

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{SW}, 1, I, 243 (1796).

\textsuperscript{17} When he is dealing with the problem of sense-perception, Schelling, like Jacobi, sometimes under the influence of this preconception, uses language which might be adopted by a neo-realist; e.g.: "The sound understanding remains, in spite of everything, unshaken in its belief that the presented object is at the same time the object in itself; and even the academic philosopher, as soon as he turns back to actual life, forgets the whole distinction between phenomena and things in themselves. . . . It can be historically shown that the prime source of all scepticism is the notion that there is an original object outside of us of which the [perceptual] object is merely the effect" (\textit{SW}, 1, II, 377–78, 17).
prehension of what is known—has been a persistent craving among modern epistemologists—not to say, the sin that doth most easily beset them. Thus the epistemology which we are now considering, in this characteristic of it, is a variety of a familiar genus. But it applies immediacy as the criterion of true knowing in a more rigorous and consistent way than do other species of that genus. Genuinely to know anything you must be it—must know it from the inside and not from the outside. In short, the knower (or the knowing act) and the known, subject and object, must be one; and it seemed obvious that only in self-consciousness can this requirement be satisfied. In this alone we experience being, and find reality by being real. Upon this theme Schelling dwells with tedious iteration in his writings of 1795 and his System of Transcendental Idealism of 1800. Only the existence of the Self (as Descartes saw, without seeing the true implications of this insight) is beyond the reach of doubt, since here the object of the thought is identical with the thinking, and the thinking is its own evidence of its existence:

I am! My Ego includes a being that is antecedent (vorhergeht) to all other thinking and representing. It is, because it is thought, and it is thought because it is; therefore, because it is, and is thought
only in so far as it thinks itself. . . . Ich bin, weil ich bin!\textsuperscript{18}

This, then, is the "absolute form of knowledge." For such a knowledge

must be a knowing, the object of which is not independent of it, consequently a knowing which produces its own object—an intuition which is freely productive and \textit{in which that which produces and that which is produced are one and the same}. Such an intuition is termed an intellectual intuition in contrast with the intuition of the senses, in which the intuiting is different from the thing intuited. Such an intuition is the Ego because the Ego itself (as object) first comes into being through the knowing of the Ego.

Schopenhauer, who usually found reasons for disagreeing with Schelling when he could, is explicitly in agreement with him in making this immediatism the basic principle of his theory of knowledge.

Manifestly, it is more correct to teach that the world is to be understood through [knowing] man rather than man through [knowing] the world; for it is from that which is given \textit{immediately}, therefore, in self-consciousness, that what is mediately given, \textit{i.e.}, externally perceived, is to be explained.

Jacobi, however, as we have seen, sometimes drew back from this complete identification of the object of

\textsuperscript{18}Vom Ich, usw.; SW, 1, I, 167.
intuition with *das Ich*. For *his* intuition assured him of the existence both of an external world and of a personal God in certain important senses “external” to the human self. Yet he too liked to dilate upon the ineffably intimate “presence” of God in such intuitional experience.¹⁹ And even for Jacobi the intuition of our own freedom—*which* intuition is identical with *being* free—is the typical example of immediate knowledge. It was this that Fichte recognized when he wrote enthusiastically to Jacobi: “We are in complete agreement. You too look for all truth where I also look for it: in the innermost sanctuary of our own nature.”²¹

This direct apprehension of the Self, Friedrich Schlegel observed, is not the same as having a conception of the Self; it is, in truth, “the certainty of something inconceivable,” *i.e.*, of that of which there can be no concept, *die Gewissheit eines Unbegreiflichen*; it is better described as a feeling than as a thought:

The Ego always eludes us when we seek to fix upon it. The feeling (*das Gefühl*) of this inconceivable is, however, infinitely certain; that is to say, that is certain which one knows immediately, of which no higher proof exists; and that is the case

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²¹ Letter of April 26, 1796.
with consciousness. This cannot further be deduced or proved; it is the ground of everything else, is therefore immediate, absolutely certain. . . . We shall henceforth always call self-consciousness *Empfindung*, as a *finding-in-oneself* (*ein-in-sich-findet*), because the Ego can, properly speaking, not be proved, but only be found.\(^{22}\)

Coleridge, it need hardly be recalled, devoted some twenty consecutive pages of *Biographia Literaria* to a transcription—in part a literal translation—of Schelling's reasonings on this theme (though without mention of their source!).

We are to seek . . . for some absolute truth capable of communicating to other positions a certainty which it has not itself borrowed; a truth self-grounded, unconditional and known by its own light. In short, we have to find a somewhat which *is*, simply because it *is*. In order to be such, it must be one which is its own predicate. . . . This principle . . . manifests itself in the SUM or I AM; which I shall hereafter indiscriminately express by the words spirit, self and self-consciousness. In this, and in this alone, object and subject, being and knowing, are identical. . . . During the act of knowledge itself, the objective and subjective are so instantly united that we cannot determine to which

\(^{22}\) *Philosophische Vorlesungen* (ed. Windischmann), II, 15. The passage cited does not, of course, express Schlegel's final doctrine.
the priority belongs. There is here no first and no second; both are coinstantaneous and one.\textsuperscript{23}

In the \textit{Anima Poetae} he too finds the identity of the immediate object with the "self" best exemplified in feeling:

I think of the wall. Here I necessarily think of the idea and the thinking \textit{I} as two distinct and opposite things. Now let me think of myself, of the thinking being. The idea becomes dim—so dim that I scarcely know what it is; but the feeling is deep and steady, and this I call \textit{I}—identifying the percipient and the perceived.

This demand for immediacy in knowledge, the complete unity of knower and known, is equally fundamental in the philosophy of Bergson. In his \textit{Introduction to Metaphysics}, for example, he distinguishes "two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first implies that we move round an object, the second that we enter into it." The former he calls "relative," the latter "absolute" knowledge. A novelist or a biographer seeks to make me "know" his hero's character. He may, by multiplying incidents,

\textsuperscript{23} Op. cit., ch. XII, pp. 181 f., 174. The last two sentences quoted are taken verbatim from the opening page of Schelling's \textit{System of Transcendental Idealism: Im Wissen selbst ist Objektives und Subjektives so vereint, dass man nicht sagen kann, welchem von beiden die Priorität zukomme. Es ist hier kein Erstes und kein Zweites, beide sind gleichzeitig und Eins.}
descriptions, analyses, tell me much about the hero; but—writes Bergson—“all this can never be equivalent to the simple and indivisible feeling which I should experience if I were able for an instant to identify myself with the person of the hero himself.”

“That which is properly himself, that which constitutes his essence, cannot be perceived from without.” Imaginative sympathy may perhaps achieve some approximation to it. But metaphysics discloses to us “a means of possessing a reality absolutely instead of knowing it relatively, of placing oneself within it instead of looking at it from outside points of view, of having the intuition instead of making the analysis.” And, of course, this “reality which we can thus seize from within . . . is our own personality in its flowing through time—our enduring self.”

A philosophy which thus bases itself solely upon what is immediately given stands, Bergson insists, on a wholly different footing from all other philosophies:

Is it asserted that this manner of envisaging concepts [as merely tools for action] is simply a philosophical theory, and that this theory is neither better nor worse than other theories? I reply that the immediate is its own justification and has its value in itself, independently of this theory of the

concept. In fact, all philosophies which limit the scope of the immediate are necessarily in conflict with one another, being merely so many views taken of the immediate by placing oneself at different points of view—by taking aim at it with different categories.

But when we come back to the immediate in its actual immediacy—not as a sort of target to be shot at from the outside—all the conflicts between philosophical theories disappear, with the disappearance of the problems which give rise to them.

Each of these philosophies, when one places oneself at the point of view of one of the others, appears as a source of contradictions and insoluble difficulties. On the contrary, the return to the immediate removes the contradictions and oppositions, by dissipating the problem about which the combat arose. This power of the immediate—I mean its capacity to resolve oppositions by suppressing problems—is, in my opinion, the external mark by which the true intuition of the immediate may be recognized.\textsuperscript{25}

To a consideration of the potency claimed for the immediate in the last sentence we shall have to return at a later point; for the present, the passage is pertinent simply as an especially clear expression of the

\textsuperscript{25} Bergson's note on the article "Immédiat" in Lalande's \textit{Vocabulaire de la Philosophie} (1928), I, 349.
fundamental place of immediatism in Bergson's doctrine.

4. The identification of knowledge with a sort of immediate experience has often led these epistemologists to adopt a fashion of speech which sounds like that of scientific empiricism. Since the "intuition" was conceived, not as the recognition of the truth of a general proposition, but, after the analogy of sense-perception, as the direct apprehension of a concrete datum, the philosophy based upon this intuition professed to be a simple report of empirical facts; and it assumed that tone of condescension towards "mere reasoning" and "dialectic" which empiricists have usually held. Thus, according to Jacobi (as one of his contemporaries of Schellingian affiliations expressed it):

Of actual existence there are not two kinds of knowledge, an a priori and an a posteriori, but only one, the a posteriori, through sensation (Empfindung). And since all knowledge which does not arise a priori is faith, therefore all real knowledge depends upon faith, since things must first be given before one is in a position to apprehend relations between them.²⁶

²⁶ T. A. Rixner, in his Handbuch der Gesch. der Philosophie (1823), III, 319. The terms Rixner here uses are equivalent in
But this so-called faith is not an inferior sort of knowledge, but rather a knowledge at first hand, "infinitely better and less deceptive than that deduced by demonstrative reasoning, and yielding a perception of the super-sensible." "It is not a science or kind of knowledge either capable of, or in need of, proof." Schelling repeats and accentuates this remark in 1795:

From experience, from immediate experience, must all our knowledge come: this is a truth which has already been expressed by many philosophers, who fell short of the whole truth of the matter only in that they failed to make clear the nature of this intuition [or perception]. From experience, indeed; but—since all experience which refers to objects is mediated through another—from an experience immediate in the strictest sense of the word, an experience that is self-produced and independent of all external causality, must our knowledge be derived.27

Somewhat in this spirit Friedrich Schlegel wrote in one of the Athenaeumsfragmente:

"Demonstrations" in philosophy are merely demonstrations in the sense which the word has in tech-
nical military language [i.e., displays, parades]. . . . They have their purpose and value as attestations of competency and proofs of virtuosity, like the bravura passages of a singer, or the use of Latin by philologists. And they have no small rhetorical effectiveness. But the main thing, after all, is merely that a man should know something and should say it. To prove it or even explain it is in most cases wholly superfluous. . . . The categorical style of the Decalogue remains the most suitable even to the most subtle Naturphilosophie . . . Leibniz affirmed and Wolff proved: enough said.28

It is amusing to find Schopenhauer reproaching his immediate precursors for their ignorance of this idea, in a passage in which he is plainly engaged in filching the idea from them.

A strange and unsuitable definition of philosophy—which Kant, nevertheless, has presented—is this, that it is a knowledge from mere concepts (aus blossen Begriffen). In truth, concepts possess nothing except what has been put into them after it has first been begged or borrowed from intuitive [or perceptual, anschaulich] experience, that true and inexhaustible source of all insight. Consequently a true philosophy cannot be spun out from mere abstract concepts, but must be grounded on observation and experience, inner and outer. Not through experiments in the combination of con-

cepts, such as have been carried out so often, especially by the sophists of our own time—by Fichte and Schelling, and in the most deplorable fashion of all by Hegel, and in the domain of ethics by Schleiermacher—not in such a way can anything be rightly accomplished in philosophy. Philosophy must, like art and poetry, have its source in the intuitive apprehension of the world (in der anschaulichen Auffassung der Welt). 29

The same type of phraseology recurs in Bergson. He is given to remarking that there is a sense in which the method of an intuitional philosophy is identical with the method of positive science. Both, namely, are strictly empirical. The author of the Essai sur les données immédiate de la conscience delighted to represent himself, not as a subtle dialectician, but as merely a faithful reporter of observed—but inwardly observed—facts. 30 All that is not the pure and simple statement of a fact (la constatation pure et simple des faits) he desires to avoid; there is to be no admixture of mere inference and ratiocination in his teaching. “The philosophic method, as I understand it,” he writes to Father de Tonquédec, “is rigorously moulded upon experience (inner or outer) and does

30 No one, of course, can read many pages of Bergson and continue to regard this representation as lifelike.
not permit one to enunciate a conclusion which in any measure goes beyond the considerations upon which it is based. If my works have been able to inspire some confidence in minds which philosophy had hitherto left indifferent, it is for this reason: I have never given any place to what was simply a personal opinion, or a conviction incapable of being objectified by this particular method.\textsuperscript{31}

5. The immediatism which has been illustrated in the two preceding sections may, to the non-philosophical reader, seem only a highly abstract and technical—and also a highly obscure—epistemological theorem. But it helped to produce in some of the writers affected by this way of thinking a rather characteristic moral and aesthetic temper—an antipathy or, at the least, a professed antipathy, to all that is secondhand in life, thought, and art. Nothing is really valid for a man except what he has himself inwardly and intimately experienced. The bare intellectual apprehension of a truth (\textit{i.e.}, of a relation between general concepts), especially if it be a truth merely learned from someone else, is not enough; for thinking or reasoning \textit{about} things is never equivalent

\textsuperscript{31}Les Études, publiés par les Peres de la Société de Jésus (1912).
to direct experiencing. This idea easily passed over into, or was confused with, an emphasis on intensity or energy of feeling as a mark of the true intuitive apprehension of the "real"; for feeling seems a more immediate and internal and personal experience than thinking. When you feel, the feeling, as we have seen Coleridge intimating, is you, not a dubious image of something else external to you.

Thus Schelling liked to reiterate that reality must be lived, not thought:

One who does not know anything real within him and outside of him—who does but play with concepts and lives only by concepts—whose faculty of intuition has been killed through the substitution of memorizing for immediate experience (durch Gedächtniswerk) or through the corrupting influence of society—one to whom his own existence is nothing more than a languid thought—how, pray, can such a one speak of reality? It is as if a blind man should talk about colors.\(^\text{32}\)

And again, connecting this idea with some of the themes which we have earlier noted:

A philosophy which is grounded upon the essential nature of man himself cannot resort to lifeless formulas—so many prisons for the human spirit—nor to labored artifices of philosophizing, which do

\(^{32}\text{SW.}, 1, I, 353.\)
but ... bury the living functioning of the human mind in dead faculties. It rather, if I may borrow an expression of Jacobi's, has for its aim to unveil and reveal *Existence* (*Dasein*). ... Its spirit and essence, therefore, ... its highest object, must be, not something mediated through concepts nor laboriously put together into concepts, but that in man which is immediately present to himself alone.  

*Philosophiren*, wrote Novalis in the same spirit, *ist dephlegmatisiren, vivificiren*. "Hitherto philosophers in their inquiries have first put philosophy to death and then dismembered it. Only in the most recent times has a beginning been made at studying philosophy alive."  

Thus the word "life"—in a sense difficult to determine except that it implies a contrast with the intellectual functions, with all the reflective processes in which philosophy had usually been supposed to consist—became another of the sacred words of these philosophers. Even Fichte, in a fragment of 1799, went so far as to set up a formal antithesis between "life" and "philosophizing" in the traditional sense: "To live is, distinctively, not to philosophize, to philosophize is, distinctively, not to live. (*Leben ist ganz eigentlich Nichtphilosophiren; Philosophiren ist*  

\[33 \text{Vom } \text{Ich, usw.; SW, I, I, 156.} \]

\[34 \text{Schriften, 5te Aufl., II, 113.} \]
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ganz eigentlich Nichtleben); and I know of no more apt way of defining the two conceptions than this. There is here a perfect antithesis." Fichte, however, adds that though the two "standpoints" cannot be unified, the philosopher must nevertheless try to place himself in both. It was more characteristic of German thinkers of Schellingian sympathies to say that the new and true philosophy, precisely because it was an escape from the devitalizing Understanding, was a return to, a rediscovery of, "life."

Here again Bergson repeats the same strain. To philosophize, for him, is (ostensibly) not to reflect about life, but to abandon the reflective or external attitude, and thus to live more intensely and directly than can those who have not been emancipated through the discovery of the inadequacy of the intellect. For, in Bergson's own phrase, intelligence is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend the living (l'intelligence est caractérisée par une incompréhension naturelle de la vie). "So long"—writes one of his disciples, E. LeRoy—"So long as you insist upon seeking the object outside itself—where it certainly is not—how shall you ever discover its inward reality and its distinctive essence? . . . The philosopher

35 In Fichte's Leben und literarischer Briefwechsel (1862), II, 174–75.
36 L'évolution créatrice (1907), p. 308; English tr., p. 165.
should take an attitude exactly the reverse of all this: should not keep at a distance from things, but . . . should make that effort of sympathy by which one places oneself within the object, merges oneself to its rhythm and—in one word—lives it." But this is the complete antithesis to what philosophers call "conceptual analysis, the attempt to resolve all reality into general notions."\(^{37}\)

6. It may, however, well seem that we ourselves have thus far hardly discovered what the intellectual intuition is "from within." For we have been given little more than external and negative characterizations of it, in somewhat general terms.

\(^{37}\) E. LeRoy, *Une philosophie nouvelle* (1912), pp. 35–39. In his later work, *La pensée primitive* (1929), LeRoy, distinguishing the *données immédiates* or *données primitives*, which are *vécues* rather than *conçues*, from all reflective and practical thought, declares that "our task is to return to these [the immediate data] as much as possible in order to equalize ever more and more notre intelligence claire à notre perception primordiale." To say this, however—he insists—is "not to fail to recognize the sovereign and universal rôle of thought"; it is only "to distinguish between the intuitive and the discursive function of the mind; the latter should be adjusted to (se régler sur) the former." Just how this recognizes "the sovereign and universal role of thought" I am unable to understand; but I quote the words as indicating that the citation in the text may not express precisely LeRoy's later position.
We have been told several things about it: that it is an "immediate" kind of knowing; that it is therefore wholly different from conceptual thought, but is more akin to feeling or to sensation; that it is not, however, a sensing of the physical qualities of external objects, but is a knowing of our own "inner" or "deeper" self. But since these epistemologists insist that it is a special kind of experience, and also that it cannot be communicated by verbal descriptions, it would seem that, if he is to introduce us, the uninitiated, to it, he should either tell us what we must do to get this experience, or—if it be something that we have already had without realizing its import—should point to those moments or phases of experience in which it is exemplified. The philosophers of the ineffable have usually taken the former course; they have told us through what discipline or propaedeutic the soul may be made ready to receive the saving knowledge; thus Plato bids us study mathematics and practise austerity of life, and the mystics, however inexpressible they have recognized the ultimate experience of "union" with the divine to be, have often been explicit enough in enumerating the stages of approach to it.

Now, if we ask one of these epistemologists to point us to the experience which is the intuition, or at least to show us the road to it, we sometimes get a very curious answer. We have seen that, according to his
doctrine, we apprehend the inner self in the degree in which we turn away from the external world and from the practical business of our sensible existence. It should apparently follow that we are nearer to an "immediate unintellectualized possession" of the deep-lying Ego in sleep than in waking life. And Schelling does not fail to note this implication, though he does not much care for it, and for the most part keeps it in the background. In sleep, he observes, though the senses are stilled, the soul cannot be wholly unconscious but must continue in some way to produce representations.

But so long as the soul is thus freed from the body, and thereby all relation to external space becomes impossible to it—in this condition the soul sees everything only within itself; nothing in it takes the form of a concept or a judgment. 38

But just this "seeing everything within oneself," without the intrusion of the "forms of conception or judgment" should be for Schelling precisely—the intellektuelle Anschauung.

To this possible way of construing the "intuition" corresponded that preoccupation with sleep, dream,

somnambulism, and revery which is characteristic of many writers of what is often called the German Romantic Period. All of them, the French author of a psychological study of Novalis has remarked (with some exaggeration), were, or believed themselves to be, endowed in some degree with “a spontaneous intuition which has its locus in the inner faculty of dreaming,” (une spontanéité d’intuition, qui a primitivesment son siège dans l’organe intérieur du rêve)\(^3\) Novalis, for example, and J. W. Ritter, conceived that “in the state of trance or autohypnotic sleep they had discovered a condition of ‘willlessness’ (Unwillkur) in which the soul attains a pure intuition of the Absolute. The consciousness of a man in this condition of Unwillkür (... the ‘intellectual intuition’)—of a man, in other words, who is in a hypnotic sleep—thus becomes the key of knowledge.”\(^4\) Tieck writes in the same vein in William Lovell (1795–96):


\(^4\) Walzel, Deutsche Romantik (1912), pp. 45 ff.; cf. the same work, pp. 139–40. But on the other hand, Novalis elsewhere writes: “Sleep is a suspension of the higher faculties—a withdrawal of the intellectual impulsion—the impulsion which is supposed to be absolute” (Schlummer ist ein Anhalten des höheren Organs—eine Entziehung des geistigen Reitzes—des absolut seyn sollenden Reitzes). (Schriften, [1901], II, 1, p. 135).
Perhaps dreams are our highest philosophy. Perhaps we are to experience a great revelation which will accomplish at one stroke what reason must forever fail to accomplish: a solution of all mysteries, both those within and those without us. Perhaps all illusion will vanish when we reach a height of vision which to the rest of mankind seems the height of absurdity.

While Brandes goes too far when he describes the dream-state as "the ideal of German Romanticism," he would have kept within the truth if he had said that it was one of the ideals of many writers of the so-called Romantic period; and the writers who most explicitly treated it as such, it is evident, were in harmony with one—though a decidedly minor—strain in Schelling's philosophy.

In Schopenhauer we find it affirmed clearly enough that the Will—which is to say, the true nature of our own being and of the universal life—is more clearly revealed in the sleeping than in the waking state. "Nothing," he writes, "proves more clearly the secondary, dependent, conditioned nature of the intellect than its periodical intermittence."

In deep sleep all knowledge and forming of ideas ceases. But the kernel of our nature, the metaphysical part of it which the organic functions necessarily

41 The Romantic School in Germany, p. 15.
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prsuppose as their primum mobile, must never pause, if life is not to cease. . . . In sleep, when only the vegetative life is carried on, the Will works only according to its original and essential nature, undisturbed from without, with no diminution of its power through the activity of the intellect.

But nothing could well be more boldly in conflict than this inverted inference with the prevailing tendency of Schopenhauer's reasoning, at least in his earlier and better-known writings. For he ordinarily tells us that it is the intellect which spreads the veil of Māyā before the face of reality and thus is the source of all the evil of existence.

It is similarly an implication of Bergson's account of the relation of intuition to the intellect that the type of ordinary experience which approximates his much-extolled intuition is none other than sleep—or at least, dream. For in this state the mind is relatively, though even yet not absolutely withdrawn into itself; it is freed from the exigencies of action, and its points of contact with the material world in which action takes place are obstructed. And since the intuition consists in a complete withdrawal into the inner self, and demands a complete freedom from the preoccupations of the active life, it must be to that condition, or at least to an approximation to it, that we attain in our dreaming life. This implication has been little
noted by Bergson's commentators; yet it cannot be said to be a tacit one. On the contrary, it is explicitly drawn out in his earliest book. We are there told that the true experience of "duration," which for most of us in our waking hours is habitually falsified by the intrusion into it of spatial forms and quantitative categories, is attained by all of us in sleep:

That our ordinary conception of duration depends on a gradual incursion of space into the domain of pure consciousness is proved by the fact that in order to deprive the Ego of the faculty of perceiving a homogeneous \[i.e.,\] a spatialized and therefore "denatured" time, it is enough to take away from it this outer circle of psychic states which it uses as a balance-wheel. These conditions are realized when we dream; for sleep, by relaxing the play of the organic functions, alters the communicating surface between the Ego and external objects. Here we no longer measure duration, but feel it; from quantity it returns to the state of quality; we no longer estimate past time mathematically.\(^{42}\)

The reader of these words must remember that, throughout the work from which they are taken, just this result—the return to "pure duration," the purgation of consciousness from all ideas of number and measure, the apprehension of it as "quality" with no

element of "quantity" is held up as the consummation most to be desired by those who would attain philosophical insight. Throughout Matter and Memory, also, the same implication is writ large for all who can put two propositions together and recognize their joint import. For there too we are shown, on the one hand, how, through the demands of the life of action, consciousness, which in its genuine character is pure and complete memory, gets deformed into sense-perception in a series of supposed "present" and instantaneous moments, of which transformation our bodily mechanism is a sort of expression; and we are told, on the other hand, that "in deep sleep we have at least a functional break in the nervous system between stimulation and motor-reaction, so that dreams would be the state of a mind of which the attention was not fixed by the sensori-motor equil­ibrium of the body."\textsuperscript{43} In short, on "the plane of dream" we have pure memory; but, according to the doctrine of the volume in question, "pure recollection is already spirit," whereas external perception "is in a sense matter." But the business of philosophy (though not of science or practical life) is with spirit rather than matter; its concern is to know consciousness in its primal purity, not in its functional meta­morphoses or disguises. Hence it should follow that a

\textsuperscript{43} Matter and Memory (Eng. tr., London, 1911), p. 228.
method, if not the method, of philosophizing is to dream. As Bergson has elsewhere declared:

The dream state is the substratum of our normal state. Nothing is added in waking life; on the contrary, waking life is obtained by the limitation, concentration and tension of that diffuse psychic life which is the dreaming life. . . . The dreaming ego is less tense, but more extended, than the waking ego. 44

How hardly, then, shall they that are awake possess that intuition of le moi profond through which alone philosophical insight is attained!

All this, then, is an unmistakable part of the Bergsonian doctrine of the nature of intuition. But it is, of course, a part of which the significance seems seldom fully realized by the author of the doctrine, one of those which he oftenest forgets, and, indeed, as we shall see, sometimes expressly contradicts. One of the ablest of Bergson's disciples, Segond, has noted this apparent implication, but endeavors to show that it is only apparent. "It is true," he writes, "that our misapprehensions of the real and of becoming are due to our employing for purposes of thought the forms of action. . . . And if dream, which is foreign to action, reestablishes between things the continuity which action abolishes, ought we not to seek in it the

44 Revue philosophique (December, 1908), p. 574.
faithful image of that pure knowledge which eludes
the forms of our practical thinking?" To justify his
finally negative answer to this question, Segond ob-
serves that “in this dream-knowledge there are lacking
the effort of volition and the intelligent orientation of
our personal memories which that effort makes possi-
ble.” Precisely; but, on Bergsonian principles, they
ought to be lacking. Segond appears determined to
regard pure intuition and intellect, the form of “specu-
lation” and the form of action, as equally fundamental
in Bergson’s account of the method of metaphysical
insight. But if there is anything which Bergson plainly
repudiates, it is the supposition that the two can possi-
bly be equally fundamental or equally valuable. If
he had not disregarded this fact, Segond would have
been compelled to answer his question in the affirm-

This, however, is not the heart of the mystery for
these philosophers; they were not, after all, chiefly
preachers of a gospel of philosophic salvation through
somnolence, and the intuition of the deeper self did
not consist merely in a state of consciousness in which
the activity of the bodily senses is reduced to a mini-
mum. The essence and the value of the intuition were
conceived, above all—in the phase of the doctrine
with which we are just now concerned—to lie in the

fact that that experience was regarded as an escape from the limitations and frustrations of time—at least of time as we commonly think of it. This, however, is so large, important, and involved a topic that it must be dealt with in another lecture.