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発 表 題 名 (英 語)	Verticalité – Deux espèces de multiplicité chez Bergson et chez Levinas (Verticality – two types of multiplicity in Bergson’s and Levinas’ philosophies)	
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会 議 名 (英 語)	COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL: METAPHYSIQUE, MORALE ET TEMPS / BERGSON, JANKELEVITCH, LEVINAS (International conference: Metaphysics, Morality and Time / Bergson, Jankélévitch, Levinas)	
開催地 (国、市)	Toulouse, France	
参 加 期 間	2012 年 7 月 10 日 ~ 7 月 12 日	
<p>The aim of my lecture was to develop the thesis about two types of multiplicity in Bergson’s and in Levinas’ thoughts. Although Levinas is known as a critic of the Bergsonian notion of ‘duration’, in his late period he mentions his great admiration for this idea, superposing it to his own notion of ‘diachrony’. This dualistic attitude is a proof that Levinas, far from rejecting the notion, develops it much further than his predecessor. Nevertheless, he does not explicitly explain what this Bergsonian concept of ‘duration’ and his own concept of ‘diachrony’ have in common. I tried to reveal the inspiration that our authors share by focusing on the distinction between two types of multiplicity.</p> <p>Initially, I scrutinized the Bergsonian distinction between two types of multiplicity, connecting it with his criticism of ideas of the ‘possible’, ‘nothingness’, and ‘disorder’, through the demonstration of the illusionary character of these concepts derived from the confusion of two kinds of multiplicity. Having made this point, I described the way Levinas introduces these Bergsonian criticisms into his own philosophy:</p> <p>i) The impossibility of ‘nothingness’ that Bergson argues for is transformed in Levinasian thought into the impossibility not to be: “there is” (“<i>il y a</i>”), as, for Levinas, the negation of what is being (<i>l’étant</i>) does not affect the Being (<i>l’être</i>) itself.</p> <p>ii) While Bergson criticizes the idea of the ‘possible’ as retrospective reconstruction from the real, Levinas is against the notion of the ‘possible’ on grounds of its immorality. And so, he introduces two sorts of auto-critique, the first one based on the possibility of the subject, the second one as a resistance to the possibility itself. This second type of auto-critique does not require quantitative change of the subject, which consists of enlargement of its possibility, but rather the qualitative change of the subject, that goes beyond the possible.</p> <p>iii) Furthermore, Levinas takes seriously Bergsonian criticism of the concept of ‘disorder’, which is nothing more than an order other than the one expected by the subject. However, for Levinas, going beyond the possible takes place only through an absolute disturbance (<i>dérangement</i>) of the territory of the possible, and so, he describes this disturbance as something that draws itself back without entering into the horizon of the</p>		

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subject. The notion of ‘diachrony’ is nothing else than a mode of temporality in which the disturbance affects the subject without entering into relations with the subject. Hence, the diachrony forms the qualitative multiplicity which goes beyond the possible.

At first sight, these two conceptions of qualitative multiplicity seem to be mutually exclusive: while the Bergsonian conception is a continuous one, Levinas’ should be treated as discontinuous. However, when closely observed, the common schema is revealed: two incompatible—or “mutually impenetrable” as Bergson puts it—terms in a quantitative multiplicity (i.e., in the space, for Bergson; in the territory of the possible, for Levinas) coexist or penetrate mutually in a qualitative multiplicity (i.e., in the duration, for Bergson; beyond the possible, for Levinas). As Levinas puts the conception of “beyond the possible” as opposed to the notion of ‘horizon’, I branded it ‘vertical’ multiplicity.

In the aftermath discussion, I have received many useful suggestions and questions. These concern: i) The possible introduction of a topological concept of ‘orthogonality’. ii) The possibility of ‘multiplicity’ in a positive sense in Levinas’ philosophy. iii) The relationship between Bergsonian philosophy and phenomenology. The second question made me realize the necessity of a detailed explanation of the Levinasian concept of ‘fecundity’ as “beyond the possible”, that would be revealed as a qualitative multiplicity. The third question gave me the idea of exploring the connection between Bergson and Husserl: firstly, in their thoughts of the impossibility of nothingness, or, more precisely, in the conception that nothingness can be only reconstructed retrospectively from the being; secondly, in the notion of the real (or *das Wirkliche*) which precedes the possible; and thirdly, by approaching their criticism of the Kantian notion of ‘intuition’.

I would like to express my gratitude to the GCOE program which supported my journey and gave me this wonderful opportunity.

