

**Stony Brook University
The Graduate School**

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Abstract

Critique of a Homuncular Model of Mind from the Neo-Vitalist Perspective

By

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This dissertation is a philosophical defense of the Bergsonian notion that that which separates the quick from the dead is a special solidarity of the past with the present and future. Named variously memory, spirit, or duration—depending upon the acuity of phenomenological focus—this solidarity in conscious beings involves a metaphysical economy whereby ever flowing images ultimately grounded in a sensorial body continuously serve to map out solutions for survival and well-being.

The integrity of thought and its warm and intimate substrate—the bodily—is what will be seen to stitch the most profound self together in the most primordial fashion. That the temporal aspect of this stitching is merely the obverse of its sensorial component will become clear after a contrapositive exposition of the temporality of the purely spatial and homogeneous “consciousness” of robots.

Once this holism has been demonstrated, as outlined above, through its progressive systematicization in the thought of Henri Bergson, William James, and finally Antonio Damasio—we will proceed to turn it on its head. Returning to the cinematographical nature of the operation of the intellect hypothesized by Damasio and Bergson, a final section of the essay will offer an interpretation of the modern fragmentation of self and world based upon the proliferation of images.

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Dissertation Advisor: Harvey Cormier