

## *Vitalism and Becoming: A Comparative Study*

**T**HIS paper is generally intended as a prolegomenon to a fuller study of Indian Vitalism in relation to the corresponding vitalistic theories of the West. An important aspect of this subject has already been alluded to by students of Indian thought and exponents of Buddhism such as Prof. S. Radhakrishnan<sup>1</sup> and Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids,<sup>2</sup> and has even been discussed at some length by a Western philosophical writer, C. E. M. Joad.<sup>3</sup> The problem involved relates to the vitalistic theory of a Life Force as a *metaphysical* ultimate with its important corollary of the conception of

1. *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 367-369.

2. *Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism*, pp. 297, 398; *Buddhism* (1918), p. 226.

3. *Matter, Life and Value*, pp. 39, 369-375.

Becoming as developed mainly by Bergson, and, the early Buddhist attitude to the phenomenon of life, particularly in relation to its concept of *bhava* (lit. becoming). The identification of Buddhist *bhava* with the Bergsonian notion of Becoming, as found in the authorities referred to, raises several important issues on which the ensuing discussion, it is hoped, will throw some light.

It is necessary to remark at the very outset that in common with the Western vitalistic theories early Buddhism holds that life as consciousness is not a mere epiphenomenon of matter.<sup>4</sup> In this, early Buddhist thought is at one with the vitalists and would definitely condemn any form of materialistic or purely mechanistic interpretation of life. This is, indeed, if we accept Driesch's definition of Vitalism, the chief difference between vitalists and their opponents. "The main question of Vitalism is not whether the processes of life can properly be called purposive: it is rather the question if the purposiveness in those processes is the result of a special constellation of factors known already to the sciences of the inorganic, or if it is the result of an autonomy peculiar to the processes themselves."<sup>5</sup> As we shall attempt to show later, early Buddhism, too, posits a vital factor at least in man and animals which by the very nature of its derivation cannot be considered a mere off-shoot of matter. The mode of derivation, however, differs radically from the one ascribed to their own vital force by Driesch, Bergson and other vitalists, particularly of the monistic school. As typical of the advanced philosophical view of Vitalism we shall take up the Bergsonian concept of the *élan vital*, especially in its dynamic aspect,<sup>6</sup> and try to discover its nature both in relation to his own metaphysic and psychology—which for him should be one and the same thing—and also in relation to the vitalistic theory of the Upanishads.

For Bergson the flux of the *élan vital* is the sole reality and matter is an illusion just as for Schopenhauer the Will only could claim full title to be called real.<sup>7</sup> This Vital Force is not something to be confined to particular individuals but "a psychical force at the heart of the universe."<sup>8</sup> This underlying *élan*, akin to the will in us, is God. "He is unceasing life, action, freedom."<sup>9</sup> The individual self is only the spatial and social representation of the real and concrete self or the fundamental self.<sup>10</sup> This position in metaphysics we may justifiably call *spiritual monism* after J. M. Stewart.<sup>11</sup> In the biological sphere, it is the *original impetus* of evolution and the primary

variations.<sup>12</sup> The important fact is that Bergson identifies the vital life force with consciousness in the individual.<sup>13</sup> "If our analysis is correct," says Bergson, "it is consciousness, or rather supra-consciousness, that is at the origin of life. Consciousness, or supra-consciousness, is the force which propels the rocket whose extinguished fragments fall back as matter; consciousness, again, is the name for that which subsists of the rocket itself, passing through the fragments and lighting them up into organisms."<sup>14</sup> It is not surprising to discover behind the veil of this picturesque metaphor a strong bias assimilating Bergson's philosophy to western pantheism such as is implied in the Voluntarism of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann,<sup>15</sup> and what we have preferred to call the "dynamic pantheism" as found in the Upanishads to which we shall refer below. According to Bergson the ultimate ideal of life or the goal of evolution is to be reabsorbed in the Vital Force, or, to use his own words, to "place ourselves . . . by an effort of imagination in the concrete flow of duration."<sup>16</sup>

In this view of Vitalism, broadly speaking, most vitalistic philosophies of the monistic type would unhesitatingly subscribe, though there may not be much agreement as to the conception of the goal of the vital process and the method of its achievement. Joad, however, in the book already referred to, while agreeing with Bergson that there is such a Vital Force in the universe, which implies ceaseless change and activity, refuses to subscribe to a purely monistic view of the universe, but goes on to postulate a pluralistic view in which life continues as a process, with matter as that which it becomes aware of as unconsciousness, and, further posits a world of values as another reality. In the opening paragraph of the work cited he says, "I believe that the universe contains a number of factors or entities separated by irreducible differences in kind. Of these three may, I think, be clearly distinguished, namely, life, matter and value which is neither vital nor material." His theory, however, has this much in common with Bergson, that life is a dynamic principle or force whose chief expression consists in the activity of knowledge. It may be seen that while Bergson has recourse to the metaphysical possibility of an inward *durée* in order to save his "monism of order,"<sup>17</sup> Joad has insisted on the empirical distinction of life and matter—a distinction which from the metaphysical standpoint seems hardly reconcilable with the monistic implication in his third postulate, the ethical "world of value."<sup>18</sup> The recent change in Joad's attitude in favour of monism only confirms the view that all

4. *Digha-Nikāya*, II., p. 63.

5. *The History and Theory of Vitalism*, p. 1.

6. "Life of consciousness" for Bergson is "an existence of constant change." Lindsay, *The Philosophy of Bergson*, p. 93.

7. Cp. Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

8. J. M. Stewart, *Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy*, p. 15.

9. *Creative Evolution*, p. 262.

10. *Time and Free-Will*, p. 231.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

*Creative Evolution*, p. 102.

*Ibid.*, pp. 186-196.

*Ibid.*, p. 275.

Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 490.

*Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 53.

Driesch, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

*Op. cit.*, p. 265.

philosophies admitting a vital force at work *in the universe* and not merely in individuals must swing in the final resort to some form of monism, in accordance with the demands of the "practical reason," and in order to be thorough-going systems of vitalism as opposed to purely mechanistic interpretations of life. For, as Driesch confesses, "Our problem is the problem of pantheism or theism in a special form; at least, if we call *pantheism* the one doctrine that reality is a something which is making itself ("dicu se fait," in the words of Bergson), whilst *theism* would be any theory according to which the manifoldness of material reality is predetermined in an immaterial way."<sup>19</sup>

The foregoing discussion however brief of modern Vitalism in the West we hope, has made clear one important point, viz., that vitalists affirm the existence of a unique vital factor in the universe, which animates all living things from the lowest to the highest expressions of life and that it is a consciousness that informs the living in whatever state of evolution they may occur. It is important to observe that for almost all vitalists the same force is found in the vegetative life. "Everything bears out the belief," says Bergson "that vegetable and animal are descended from a common ancestor which united the tendencies of both in a rudimentary state."<sup>20</sup> The vegetative instinctive (animal) and rational (human) life are not, for Bergson, however three successive stages along the same unilinear evolutionary development but three divergent directions of an activity that has split up as it grew. It may be added that in his view inert matter is a reversal of the vital flow (or consciousness). It is, to use his own expression, not "time flowing," but "time flown,"<sup>22</sup> *becoming* that has *ceased to become*, or, as Joad characterizes it, spent *becoming*. This conception is similar to Schopenhauer's idea of matter as one form of the objectivation of the Will just as men and animals are other objectivations. (The number of vitalists who object to this absorption of matter in the universal Life Force seems to be decreasing). The psychology behind this Bergsonian notion has a curious parallel in the conception of elemental matter in ancient Indian thought where the primary verb denoting dynamism or change, viz., *bhū* which means "to become," provides in its preterite passive participial form the technical term for elemental matter, viz., *bhūta*, which literally means "that which has become," that is to say, ceased to become. The term "bhūta" occurs in the Upanishads in this sense as distinct from the 'conscious' factor in the universe.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore one may find an interesting parallel between the very movements of thought that leads Bergson's Vitalism to some form of pantheism, using the last ter-

19. *History and Theory of Vitalism*, p. 238.

20. *Creative Evolution*, p. 119.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

22. *Time and Free-Will*, p. 221.

23. *Ḷ. bhūta-mātrā and prajāna-mātrā at Kaushītaki Up.* III., 8.

sense given to it by Driesch, and the course of the evolution of early Vitalism which, starting in a crude and rather naïve form of biological monism came to an end in the final merging of Life in the all-embracing pantheistic Brahman of the middle Upanishads.<sup>24</sup>

The above indicated parallelism brings us to the vitalistic theory that prevailed in the philosophy of ancient India prior to Buddhism. The supposition that there is an ultimate vital element in man and animals is already found in the Rgveda (*circa* 2000-1500 B.C.).<sup>25</sup> It is referred to as *Prāṇa* (vital breath), *Ayus* (vitality) or *Asu* (vital spirit).<sup>26</sup> In the Atharvaveda (II. 4. 12) this *Prāṇa*<sup>27</sup> is deified and identified with *Prajāpati*. In the *Saṅgatha Brāhmaṇa* (X, 3. 3) *Prāṇa* is identified with *Agni*, and in the *Jaiminī Upanishad Brāhmaṇa* (IV, 11-13) the precedence of *Prāṇa* over such elemental powers as fire, wind and sun is definitely asserted. *Prāṇa* is said to be all-in-all of the whole creation. When we come to the Upanishads, *Prāṇa* or the Vital Breath assumes the role of the source and inspiration of all activity and it is said in the *Mahā Aitareya Upanishad* that *Prāṇa* externalises himself in the universe, and the same text identifies *Prāṇa* with *Indra*. "I am *Prāṇa*," says *Indra*, "so art thou also *Prāṇa*; *Prāṇa*, all the beings; and *Prāṇa* likewise this sun here who shines."<sup>28</sup> This implication that the vital element in the universe has one of its aspects in solar energy further developed in later Upanishadic texts, such as *Chāndogya* (III, 1. 2) where "*indriyam*" or the vital strength in the perceptive faculties and the bio-motor functions in man is said to be produced from the sun. The philosopher *Kaushītaki* whose doctrines are preserved in the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* which seems to be the standard text of Upanishadic Vitalism was wont to worship the Sun as the source of energy (II, 7). This crude and partly mythological conception of the sun as a source of vital energy seems to be an early anticipation of the connection between the solar energy and vital 'impulsion' both in animals and plants as discussed by Bergson. "The evolution of life really continues . . . , an initial impulsion: this impulsion, which has determined the development of the chlorophyllian function in the plant and of the sensori-motor system in the animal, brings life to more and more efficient acts by the fabrication and use of more and more powerful explosives. Now, what do these explosives represent if not a storing-up of the solar energy . . ."<sup>30</sup> This solar energy is

24. Cp. *Prāṇa* = *Brahma*, *Chāndogya Up.* IV., 10. 4; *Kaush. Up.* II., 1; *Bṛhad. Up.* IV., 4. 7.

25. Vide Winternitz, *Calcutta Review*, November, 1923.

26. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, pp. 209, 403, 404.

27. The word *Prāṇa* originally meaning 'the chief vital breath' (*mukhya prāṇa*), is hypostatized into the 'Cosmic Vital Spirit.'

28. Ranade and Belvalkar, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II., p. 157.

29. The Upanishads refer to these as '*prāṇāḥ*' and '*devāḥ*'. (*Chānd. Up.* II., 7. 1; *Kaush. Up.* III., 3); cp. '*devatā*' (*Bṛhad. I.*, 3. 10).

30. *Creative Evolution*, p. 259.

absorbed by animals through the ingested food which in the last analysis is derived from vegetable.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to observe that the *Chāndogya Upanishad* (VI, 11. 12) asserts the existence of a vital self, *jīvātman*, in plants which is the same as the supreme life principle in the universe.<sup>32</sup> "The branches may die and yet the tree may live if the vital self has not left the whole." This vital essence in the plant is that which creates vitality in man by way of food. Thus the same Upanishad in its doctrine of the 'Way of the Manes' describing the return to the world of the departed ones says: "the plants are born here as rice and barley, herbs and trees, sesame plants and beans. Thence verily, indeed, it is difficult to emerge; for only if someone or other eat him as food and emits him as semen does he develop further."<sup>33</sup> It is needless to point out that the Bergsonian idea that vegetable food is the chief vehicle of the transference of solar energy to man and that vegetative life, therefore, is also an aspect of the universal Life Force is dimly anticipated in these passages.<sup>34</sup> In contrast with Bergson's 'divergent' evolutionism, already referred to, the Upanishads, however, seem to favour the notion of a unilinear development inasmuch as the 'rebirth' of man as plant is indicated.

We have already referred to the monistic tendency of Upanishadic Vitalism clearly seen in its identification of *Prāṇa* with Brahman, the Absolute. Thus it is said: "But this incorporeal, immortal Life is Brahman indeed, is energy (*tejas*) indeed."<sup>35</sup> "Brahma is Life, Brahma is joy..."<sup>36</sup> Which is the one God," asks Śākalya; "Prāṇa," said Yājñavalkya, "they call Him Brahma, the Yon."<sup>37</sup> This final metaphysical position of Upanishadic Vitalism is indeed an early adumbration of what we have termed with Stewart the Spiritual Monism of Bergson: but with this difference, that whereas for Bergson the ultimate reality is a strictly *dynamic* principle "a moving reality,"<sup>38</sup> in the Upanishadic description of *Prāṇa* as Brahman there is little emphasis on its dynamic aspect. We may hasten to add, however, that such a dynamic concept is not altogether absent in the Upanishads, although the absolutist interpreters have only dwelt on the ontological aspect of Brahman as Being (*sat*). Though the term *bhava* rarely occurs as an epithet of Brahman in the early Upanishads and occurs only twice in a late Upanishad perhaps

31. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

32. This idea is already adumbrated in the *Rgveda* where Parjanya or the 'god of rain' is supposed to impregnate the plants with vital essence or seed, (R.V., V., 83: *reto dadhāti cṣadhīṣu garbham*).

33. *Chānd. Up.* V., 10. 6; cp. *Bṛhad. Up.* V., 12; *Kaush.* I., 2.

34. Cp. the vital self (*prāṇātman*) based on the self consisting of the essence of food (*annarasamayātman*) *Tait. Up.* II.

35. *Bṛhad. Up.* IV., 4. 7.

36. *Chānd. Up.* IV., 10. 4.

37. *Bṛhad. Up.* III., 9. 9.

38. *Creative Evolution*, p. 324.

temporary with the rise of Buddhism,<sup>39</sup> there are unmistakable references to the early stage of development to Brahman (= *Prāṇa*) as "the moving," to say, dynamic reality.<sup>40</sup> "There are verily, two forms of Brahman, the congealed and the uncongealed, mortal and the immortal, the stationary (*amṛta*) and the moving (*vat*)..."<sup>41</sup> The last epithet *vat* from the root *yā* "to move" leaves no room for doubt as to its meaning.

Furthermore, just as Bergson identifies the *élan originel* as "the moving reality" with Universal Consciousness as distinct from "the narrowed consciousness which functions in each of us,"<sup>42</sup> so do the Upanishads consistently identify the original Vital Spirit (*Prāṇātman*) with the Universal Consciousness (*Prajñātman*). The idea is early, for the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (VI, 5. 26) identifies *Prāṇa* with Manas or Mind. As pointed out above the *Bṛhad. Upanishad* (IV, 4. 7) characterizes *Prāṇa* or the Vital Spirit as "immortal" (*amṛta*). This conception we may compare with the implication in Bergson's statement that with the restoration of the individual consciousness to its original nature as the universal *élan*, which is the goal of evolution, Life would be "able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death."<sup>43</sup> This conception of "Immortality" is undoubtedly a result of the belief that the vital seed propagates itself. Hence an interesting concurrence between the Upanishadic doctrine and neo-vitalistic reasoning is found in the conception of biological survival. The Upanishads say that the father is reborn in the son,<sup>44</sup> and that therefore, the son is the *Self* (*ātmā*) of the father.<sup>45</sup> In the West writers, such as Samuel Butler<sup>46</sup> and Professor Rignano,<sup>47</sup> have dealt with the possibility of biological survival. The substance of this theory is that the parents continue to exist in their progeny since "the boy of six is the same as the embryo, the embryo as the impregnated ovum, and the impregnated ovum as certain constituents of the parents' bodies."<sup>48</sup> The idea seems to be a necessary conclusion of vitalistic reasoning.

The foregoing discussion of the metaphysical aspect of vitalistic Monism both in Western philosophy, as typical of which we have briefly outlined the Bergsonian position, and also in India as it makes its appearance in the Upanishadic literature, would help us considerably when we now turn to an

39. *Maitri. Up.* VI., 8; VII., 7.

40. Even the Vedic word *āyus*, life, is derived from a dynamic root *i* "to go."

41. *Bṛhad. Up.* II., 5. 1; cp. II., 3. 5; V., 7.

42. *Creative Evolution*, p. 250.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

44. *Ait. Up.* IV., 3.

45. *Kaush. Up.* II., 11.

46. *Unconscious Memory*.

47. *Biological Memory*.

48. Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

examination of the Buddhist concept of *bhava* in relation to Vitalism, which we indicated at the outset as the main purpose of this paper. It is necessary to point out in this connection that even the neo-vitalist concept of *becoming* differs considerably in the case of its various exponents. For Driesch it is in nature or natural reality that the theory of *becoming* is seen to hold, while for the conscious ego *endurance* may be postulated. What endures in nature may be called *substance*.<sup>49</sup> This conception is similar to Herbart's notion of *substances* that persist amid universal *change*.<sup>50</sup> For Bergson the world outside or nature is what has ceased to *become* or "spent *becoming*." But this is only an illusion for if by "an act of sympathy" in intuition we can enter into the external object its true nature as *becoming* is disclosed to us. "Becoming," says Bergson, "is what our intellect and senses would show us of matter, if they could obtain a direct and disinterested view of it."<sup>51</sup> It is because the intellect does not function without a practical interest but is always dominated by a utilitarian motive that in speculating on the nature of the real "we become unable to perceive the true evolution, the *radical becoming*."<sup>52</sup> These statements would show that Bergson's notion of "becoming" is a novel conception inasmuch as for him this *radical becoming* is what intuition would show to be the real nature of the ego also, while for Driesch "the conscious ego" is, metaphysically, *endurance*. Indeed, for Bergson, the highest reality is the *radical becoming* both in nature and mind.

As for the Buddhist theory of *becoming* denoted by the Pali '*bhava*' it may be affirmed at the very outset that the term implies some kind of *dynamism*. The question, however, is whether this dynamism in early Buddhism, has the same context as it has in the Vitalism of such writers as Bergson, and also what relation the Buddhist concept bears to the Indian vitalistic doctrines that we have been describing. In order to do so we shall have to answer the preliminary question: How does the concept of a life-force make its appearance in Buddhism? It may be seen that the word '*Prāṇa*' does not occur in the early Buddhist literature with the pantheistic significance it has in the Upanishads, but exists only in the popular sense of "a living being" or "life" in the nominal sense.<sup>53</sup> It is the same significance that is found in the terms *jīvita* and *jīvitendriya*.<sup>54</sup> The word *jīva* occurs, however, in the Upanishadic sense of the "living soul"<sup>55</sup> but only as referring to the doctrine of others that the body is the same as the living-soul (materialist), and of their opponents

asserted that the body is *not* the same as the living-soul (vitalist). Early Buddhism refuses to commit itself to either position. But on the question of a vital principle in the samsāric<sup>56</sup> individual the position of early Buddhism is made clear in a passage which has never so far been discussed in this connection. In the *Majjhima-Nikāya* in a dialogue between Sāriputta and Mahā-Koṭṭhita, two famous disciples of the Buddha, the former is questioned as to that on which the five sense organs (*indriyāni*) depend; he replies that they depend on '*āyu*' (vitality).<sup>57</sup> To a further question Sāriputta answers that '*āyu*' depends on '*usmā*,' and that the latter in turn depends on the former.<sup>58</sup> It is clear that '*āyu*' here is used in the sense of *vitality* restricted to the life-span of an individual.<sup>59</sup> This explanation is definitely supported by the commentator's gloss on '*āyu*' as "the life-function" (*jīvitendriya*). An examination of the meaning of '*usmā*' and a reference to the Upanishadic use of *tejas* as "Vital Energy," of which the physical manifestation is termed *uspīman*<sup>60</sup> (heat in the body), would seem to establish for this curious term a sense deeper than the mere fact of "vitality" referred to by the other term '*āyu*:' in Buddhism. This contention is further supported by the commentarial gloss on *usmā* as "the element of energy (*tejas*) derived from past Action" (*kammaja-tejo-dhātu*).

Another important fact we discover from the same dialogue is that in the state of death the body is devoid of *āyu*, *usmā* and *viññāṇa* (consciousness), whereas in the (*samāpatti*) state of *saññāvedayitanirodha* in which the individual's mental activity, such as perception and feeling, has ceased, the three processes of *āyu*, *usmā* and *viññāṇa* continue to function.<sup>61</sup> This would clearly indicate that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is a process other than mere mental activity and that *usmā* is only the vital (energizing) aspect of *viññāṇa*, the conscious factor. That is to say, *āyu* or the vitality in the individual depends on the *usmā*-or-*viññāṇa* factor and the *usmā*-or-*viññāṇa* factor in turn depends on *āyu*. That this explanation is correct is seen from the statement elsewhere that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) depends on the psychico-mental unit (*nāma-rūpa*) as its basis (*patipāṭhā*) and the psychico-mental unit depends for its growth (*vuddhī*) on consciousness.<sup>62</sup> Hence the word *āyu* clearly seems to refer to just the *vitality* in the *nāma-rūpa* or the psychico-mental unit which with consciousness (*viññāṇa*) goes to make up the empirical

56. *Samsāra* literally means "coursing," i.e., from birth to birth.

57. This doctrine reminds one of the Upanishadic idea that the perceptive and bio-motor functions (*prāṇāh*) derive from the universal *Prāṇa*, (e.g., *Prhad. Up. I.*, 5. 22; *Tait. Up. II.*, 3; *Kaush. Up. III.*, 2; *Brhad. Up. II.*, 1. 10).

58. "*Ayu usmam paticca tittḥai . . . usmā ayum paticca tittḥati.*" *Majjhima*, I., 295.

59. This sense is the same as found for *āyus* in the Upanishads (e.g., *Prhad. Up. II. I. 10*), which, however, is later identified with *Prāṇa* or Universal Life (*Tait. Up. II.*, 3).

60. *Chānd. Up. III.*, 13. 8.

61. *Majjhima I.*, p. 296.

62. *Dīgha II.*, p. 63.

49. *Op. cit.*, p. 191, 192.

50. Thilly, *op. cit.*, p. 481.

51. *Creative Evolution*, p. 287.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

53. Vide P.T.S. Dict. s.v.; significantly, on *pāṇuṭetam* occurring at *Dīgha I.* 85, the commentary has "*pāṇchi upetam*," i.e., endowed with sense-organs and life functions.

54. *Ibid.*, s.v. 55. *Ibid.*, s. *jīva* (=Gk. *bios*, life); cp. *Chānd. Up. VI.*, 11. 12 *Mait. Up. VI.*, 17.

individual.<sup>63</sup> This *viññāna* is said to 'descend' into the mother's womb after conception as the third factor for successful parturition, the other two being (the physical elements derived from) father and mother.<sup>64</sup>

The above discussion brings us to the main point of our problem: that whereas for vitalists, both Eastern and Western, the Life Force is a metaphysical ultimate of which all phenomena including man are derivatives, for Buddhism a vital force, if any, is only found in relation to the *samsāric* individual (man or animal). This vital force or *āyu* as manifested during the lifetime of an individual is a factor that depends on *usmā*, and therefore *viññāna*, implying *samsāric* continuity by the force of Action. Thus the Buddhist conception of *becoming* has its rationale in *samsāric* evolution, which is nothing else but "the becoming (*bhava*), due to kamma." If we follow the later analysis this *bhava* has two aspects: *kammabhava* implying all action leading to becoming,<sup>65</sup> which is given as the causal aspect, and, *uppatibhava* implying various 'states' of rebirth, which is the fruitational aspect.<sup>66</sup> These 'states' (*bhavā*) are characterized as impermanent, sorrowful and 'evolving' (*vipariṇāmadhammā*).<sup>67</sup> It will be seen, therefore, that *bhava* has no meaning apart from its context in *samsāra*, and that it will not do simply to regard it as implying *becoming* in the vitalistic sense. For Bergson the Absolute<sup>68</sup> or ultimate reality is pure *becoming*, but, as Das Gupta remarks, "this pure duration is only an element of the intellectual, though he positively denies it to be such."<sup>69</sup> But the Goal of Buddhism or Nibbāna is neither *becoming* nor *non-becoming*:<sup>70</sup> neither is it Being as Joad has assumed, nor is it non-Being, for the Upanishadic categories of *sat* and *asat*?<sup>71</sup> are never applied to it. It may be added that the doctrine of biological survival as held by Butler, Rignano and others in the West and found also in the Vitalism of the Upanishads has clearly no significance for early Buddhism, inasmuch as rebirth implies not *biological evolution* but only *samsāric evolution* which we may conclude is the main difference between Buddhism and Vitalism.

O. H. DE A. WIJESKERA.

63. The term '*āyu-saṅkhāra*' (*Majjhima* I., p. 290, etc.) implies that *āyu* is one of the *saṅkhāras* which are part of *nāma*.

64. *Majjhima* I., p. 265; *Aṅguttara* I., p. 176.

65. "*Sabbampi bhavagāṇikammam kammabhavo*," *Vibhavaṅga*, p. 137.

66. "*Kāmaḥavo . . . pañcavokārahavo ; ayaṃ vuccati uppatibhavo*," *ibid*.

67. *Aṅguttara* I., p. 258; II., p. 177.

68. *Creative Evolution*, p. 315.

69. *Philosophical Essays*, p. 7.

70. *Sutta-Nipāta*, 514, 1060, 1068, etc.

71. Being and non-Being.