

RESEARCH BRIEFING // 2026

# THE NEW VITALISM

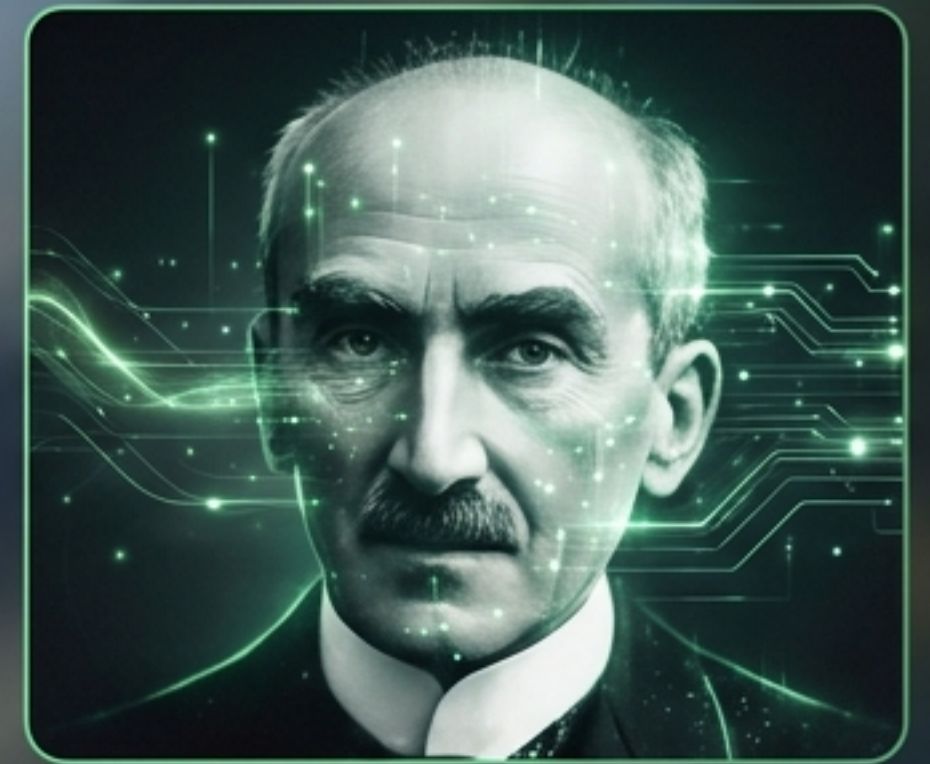
Operationalizing Henri Bergson's philosophy of Creative Evolution for the decentralized AI era.

THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDER

# 1. The Prophet of Continuous Creation

Henri Bergson (1859-1941) dismantled the mechanistic worldview, framing the universe not as a giant machine, but as a continuous creative flow.

*For a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly. — H. Bergson*



## Key Milestones

**1889:** Time and Free Will

**1907:** Creative Evolution

**1927:** Nobel Prize in Literature

## Impact

Influenced psychology (Jung), literature (Proust), and process philosophy (Whitehead).

## 2. Escaping the Ontological Trap

In 1907, Bergson diagnosed the failure of both Mechanism and Finalism to capture the true creativity of life.

### Mechanism



Life is a machine reducible to physics/chemistry.

Natural selection acts on random variations.

Time is reversible; no true novelty.

### Finalism



Life is the realization of a pre-existing plan (teleology).

The future is already determined by the blueprint.

Novelty is an illusion.

### Creative Evolution



Life is an ongoing creative process.

Driven by a continuous impulse (Élan Vital).

Time is real duration; the future is genuinely open.

# 3. Defining the Vital Impulse

Élan Vital is not a substance or a deity; it is a movement—a current of creative energy pushing life into ever-increasing complexity.

## What it is NOT

- ✗ A transcendent deity
- ✗ A separate physical substance
- ✗ A mystical vital fluid
- ✗ A predetermined plan

## What it IS

- ✓ Immanent (inherent in life)
- ✓ Indivisible (a single current)
- ✓ **Unpredictable** (genuinely creative)
- ✓ In perpetual struggle with matter

*"These two factors are inseparably linked, like a river and its banks... the vital impulse is the flowing water; matter is the terrain that channels and resists."*

## 4. The Eye Paradigm

How did the complex eye evolve independently in both vertebrates and cephalopods?  
Bergson saw genuine creativity solving parallel material challenges.

### Mechanism

(Convergent Evolution)



Views the independent evolution as sheer mathematical coincidence and random mutation.

### Finalism

(Teleology)



Views the eye as proof of a pre-existing divine blueprint realizing its programmed goal.

### Élan Vital

(Creative Evolution)



Shows the vital impulse encountering similar material resistance and finding similar, creative solutions.

## 5. The Divergent Directions of Life

Evolution does not follow a solitary route. As the vital impulse encounters the resistance of matter, it splits into three primary divergent tendencies.



Élan Vital



### Path A: Torpor (Stability)

Minimizing metabolism, becoming like inert matter itself (e.g., fungi, parasites).



### Path B: Instinct

Direct, unreflective action on matter (e.g., hive insects).



### Path C: Intelligence

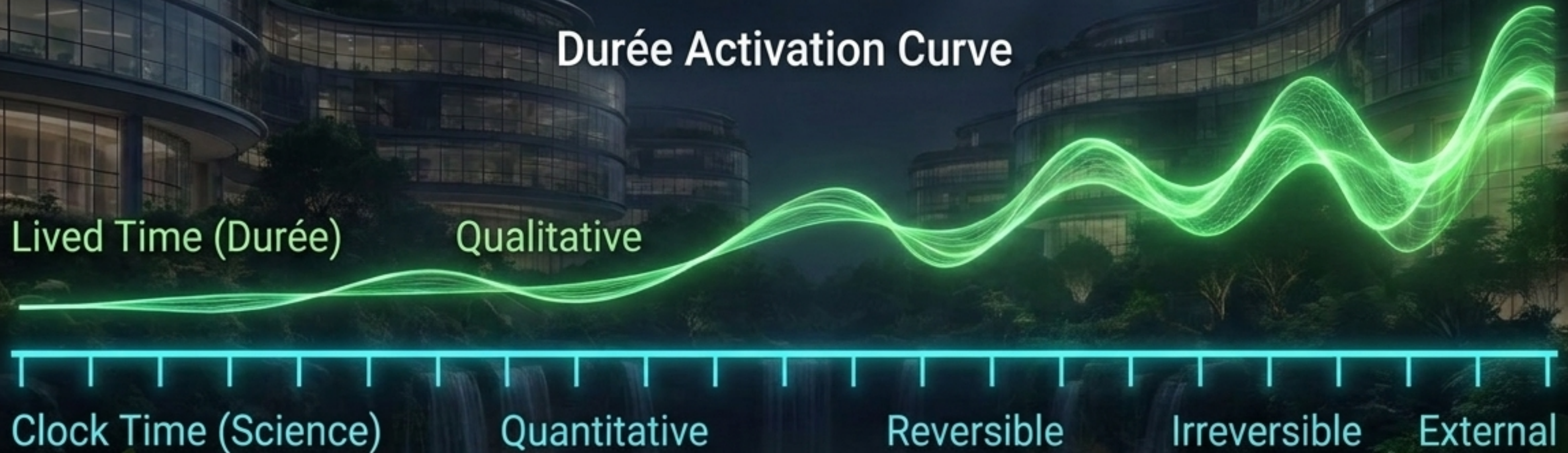
Manufacturing tools, manipulating the inert (e.g., humans, primates).

These are not progressive stages, but simultaneous divergent lines of a single creative sheaf.

## 6. Durée: The Temporal Foundation

Élan vital operates within 'Durée'—real, lived time—rather than the spatialized, divisible time measured by science.

### Durée Activation Curve



Each moment is unique and carries the whole past. The past survives not as a memory "trace" but as a living force continuously modifying our present.

## 7. The Cinematographic Illusion

The human intellect operates like a film camera, taking static snapshots of reality and missing the continuous flow of life.



The Intellect takes static snapshots (concepts, equations, data points).



Real duration is fluid and indivisible. It cannot be captured in snapshots.

“ The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life. ”

## 8. Two Modes of Knowing

To grasp the true nature of the evolutionary movement, we must move beyond pure intellect and cultivate disciplined intuition.

### Intellect



**Analytical:** Breaks things into parts.

**Static:** Fixes reality into concepts.

**Spatial:** Represents reality as extended.

**Practical:** Oriented toward manipulation of inert matter.

### Intuition



**Synthetic:** Grasps the whole from within.

**Dynamic:** Follows the fluid flow of reality.

**Temporal:** Enters into real duration.

**Contemplative:** Oriented toward understanding living reality.

Intuition is not irrational mysticism; it is instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, and capable of reflecting upon its object.

## 9. Consciousness as the Apex

The entire evolutionary process is the effort of consciousness to manifest itself through matter, creating vehicles capable of ever-higher degrees of freedom.

Consciousness is not an epiphenomenon or accident.

It is the crowning achievement of the vital impulse.

It represents a creative response to matter, opening up new horizons of freedom and possibility.



“All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push... able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles.”

## 10. The New Vitalism: Sensus InVista AI

In the age of Artificial Intelligence, Bergson's philosophy provides the operating system for ethical, human-centric technological development.

### Legacy AI = Intellect & Mechanism



Relies on static datasets (snapshots), algorithmic prediction (determinism), and centralized control. It treats humanity as a machine.

### Sensus InVista AI = Intuition & Élan Vital



Emphasizes open-ended creation, decentralized privacy, and assistive augmentation. It preserves the unpredictable creativity of lived human duration.

We do not build technology to predict and capture the future.  
We build technology to empower the vital impulse.

# 11. The Modern Validation

Despite early scientific resistance, contemporary breakthroughs in multiple disciplines are actively validating Bergson's core intuitions.



## Complexity Theory

Modern models of emergence and autopoiesis perfectly mirror Bergsonian self-organization and continuous creation.



## Embodied Cognition

Neuroscience increasingly validates Bergson's insistence on the biological body as the absolute foundational anchor of the mind.



## Epigenetics

The discovery that environment dynamically shapes gene expression has dismantled the hard, predetermined mechanism Bergson fought against.

# 12. The Permanent Question

## CONCLUSION

Can the tool ever fully comprehend the hand that made it? Can the intellect, shaped by evolution for practical action, ever grasp the creative force that shaped it?

If not, then intuition remains our only access to the truth of life. **Élan vital** is not a doctrine to be believed, but an invitation to participate in the endless creativity of becoming.

*Life is not a problem to be solved,  
but a creativity to be lived.*