



Mathilde TAHAR--MALAUSSENA

PhD in Philosophy of Biology
Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès (ERRAPHIS)
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Institut de Systématique, Évolution, Biodiversité)

Research fellow in Philosophy of Biology at University College London

Agrégée de philosophie

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Date of birth: October 11, 1991.

Nationality: French

Languages: French mother language; advanced English, Italian; reading of Latin and ancient Greek.

ACTUAL POSITION

Research fellow at University College London (Department of Anthropology) in the framework of Research Project *Animal inventiveness: a new insight on agency in evolution*, funded by the Leverhulme Trust (under the supervision of Dr Alecia Carter). <https://animalinventiveness.com/>

Qualified by the French National Counsel of Universities to be “Maître de conférences”, *i.e.*, to teach philosophy (qualification 17) and epistemology & history of science (qualification 72) at the university level. This qualification is awarded after a peer-reviewed process.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Co-organizer (with Caterina Zanfi) of the seminar “Atelier Bergson” (École Normale Supérieure de Paris – CNRS, in the framework of the IRN project “Global Bergsonism”), since 2022: <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/1938> ; <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/2591>

Member of the research group “Deconstructing Darwinism” (R. G. Delisle, M. Esposito and D. Ceccarelli), since 2021.

Member of the research group “Claude Bernard: Histoire et philosophie d’une théorie physiologique” (L. Loison, project funded by the “Politique Scientifique” of the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), since 2019.

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Assistant teacher at the Université de Rouen, 2021-2022.

Doctoral candidate at the Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 2018-2022.

EDUCATION

2018-2022

Ph. D. in Philosophy of Biology.

At the Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès (ED Allph@, Erraphis) and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Institut de Systématique, Évolution, Biodiversité).

Dissertation subject: “Evolution beyond all finalism: Bergson’s critique of evolutionists”.

Advisors: Prof. Paul-Antoine Miquel (Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès), and Prof. Pierre-Henri Gouyon (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle-CNRS).

Defence: September 23, 2022. Committee: Prof. Arnaud François (Université de Poitiers), Prof. Giuseppe Longo (CNRS, UAR 3608, École Normale Supérieure), Dr Matteo Mossio (CNRS, Université Paris I, IHPST), Prof Charles Wolfe (Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès), Prof. Frédéric Worms (École Normale Supérieure), Dr Caterina Zanfi (CNRS, UMR 8547, École Normale Supérieure).

2016

Agrégation de philosophie, the most selective comprehensive national examination in philosophy.
Ranking: 50. Language: Ancient Greek.

2015-2016

Preparation to *agrégation*.
École Normale Supérieure Ulm.

2013-2015

Étudiante normalienne (École Normale Supérieure Ulm)

Master of Arts (honors) – Contemporary Philosophy.

École Normale Supérieure Ulm and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

Dissertation: “Beyond finality: élan vital, disorder and creation from Bergson” (honors). Advisor: Prof. Frédéric Worms.

2010-2013

Bachelor of Arts (honors) – Philosophy.

Université Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne.

Bachelor of Arts (honors) – History.

Université Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne

University-Level Preparation Courses for entrance to Grandes Écoles – Philosophy.

Lycée Henri IV, Paris.

OTHER TRAINING COURSES

Training “**Vivre avec les autres animaux**” at UVED (Université Virtuelle Environnement et Développement durable) – completion certificate obtained in March 2022.

Courses “**Biodiversity and Evolution**” at AgroParisTech – 2019-2020, second semester.

Master 1 “**Systematic, Evolution, Paleontology – Ecology, Biodiversity, Evolution**” as an auditor at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie – 2017-2018.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

Thesis Award from the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme et de la Société de Toulouse (2023).

Prize at the *Concours général* (a national contest) in Philosophy (2009).

FUNDINGS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Leverhulme Research Project Grant RPG-2023-320 “Animal inventiveness: a new insight on agency in evolution” 2024-2027 (with Dr Alecia Carter). Host university: University College London.

Fellowship for the Villa Vigoni Trinationnal Summer School (Germany-Italy-France) on the theme “Life and Form”, July 2023, July 2024, July 2025.

EMBO Grant for the Venice Summer School 2022 on the theme “The Future of Evolutionary Systems Biology”, August 2022. [*Declined*]

Research fellowship awarded by the CNRS (in the framework of the IRN project “Global Bergsonism”), May-July 2022. Host university: University of Fukuoka.

Research fellowship awarded by the Alpha Doctoral School (Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès), September-December 2020. Host university: University of Verona. [*Cancelled: Covid-19 epidemic*]

Doctoral research fellowship of the Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès, 2018-2022.

RESEARCH

PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS

1. Tahar, M. *Du finalisme en biologie. Bergson et la théorie de l'évolution. Du finalisme en biologie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2024. <https://www.puf.com/du-finalisme-en-biologie>
2. Tahar, M. *Le temps du vivant*. Paris : Vrin, under contract, to be published in 2025.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

1. Tahar M. (2024) La philosophie animale de Bergson. Conscience du vivant, créativité instinctive et biologie contemporaine, *Thaumazein Rivista di Filosofia*, 12 (1), 83-107. <https://doi.org/10.13136/thau.v12i1.277>
2. Tahar M. (2023). Agency, inventiveness, and animal play. Novel insights into the active role of organisms in evolution. *Special Issue on Levels of Biological Agency, Spontaneous Generations*, 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.4245/spongen.v11i1.19966>
3. Tahar, M. (2022). Biological constraints as norms in evolution. Special Issue “Normativity and the Life Sciences”, *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, 44 (1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40656-022-00483-1>
4. Tahar, M. (2022). Bergson’s vitalisms, in M. Tahar (ed.) *Bergson and vitalism(s)*, *Parrhesia*, 36. <https://parrhesiajournal.org/index.php/parr/article/view/379/292>
5. Tahar, M. (2022). The history of the Bergsonian interpretation of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. *Bergsoniana*. 2, 73-90. <https://doi.org/10.4000/bergsoniana.740>

6. Tahar, M. (2021). The historicity of biodiversity. A Bergsonian look at the theory of evolution. *Thaumazein Rivista di Filosofia*, 8, 89-106. <https://doi.org/10.13136/thau.v8i1.113>

Co-authored:

7. Boisseau, A. and Tahar, M. (2022). Remettre à l'œuvre les processus du vivant. Repenser le lien de l'histoire humaine avec l'histoire naturelle : lectures croisées de Bergson et Ruyer. *Rue Descartes*, 101 (1), 23-39. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdes.101.0023>

CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES

1. Tahar, M. (2024). Time and evolutionary history. In R. G. Delisle, M. Esposito et D. Ceccarelli (éds.), *Deconstructing Darwinism: Toward A New Historiography*, Heidelberg/New York/Dordrecht, Springer, 2024, 551-573. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42629-2_19
2. Tahar, M. (2024). Bergson et Haeckel : enquête sur un silence. In L. Bossi and N. Wanlin (eds.) *Ernst Haeckel et les Français*, Paris: Gallimard, 213-241.
3. Tahar, M. (2023). A Bergsonian Perspective on Causality and Evolution. In G. Bianco, G. Van de Vijver, C. Wolfe (eds.) *Canguilhem and Continental Philosophy of Biology*, History, Philosophy and Theory of the Life Sciences, 31, Heidelberg/New York/Dordrecht: Springer, 251–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20529-3_14
4. Tahar, M. (2021). Bergson as visionary in evolutionary biology. In M. Sinclair and Y. Wolf (eds.) *Bergsonian Mind*, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 446–460. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429020735-40>
5. Tahar, M. (forthcoming). Déterminisme et liberté de Claude Bernard à Henri Bergson, en passant par la psychologie expérimentale. In L. Loison (ed.) *Claude Bernard : Histoire et philosophie d'une théorie physiologique*, Paris: Vrin.

BOOK REVIEWS

1. Tahar, M. (2023). Review of T.S. Posteraro (2022). *Bergson's Philosophy of Biology. Virtuality, Tendency and Time*, in *Le carnet de la Société des amis de Bergson* : <https://doi.org/10.58079/lx68>
2. Tahar, M. (2022). Review of E. Kessler (2022). *Bergson, notre contemporain*, in *Le carnet de la Société des amis de Bergson* : <https://doi.org/10.58079/lx5r>
3. Tahar, M. (2019). Review of A. Lefebvre and N. F. Schott (eds.). (2019). *Interpreting Bergson : Critical Essays*, in *Le carnet de la Société des amis de Bergson* : <https://doi.org/10.58079/lx4v>
4. Tahar, M. (2019). Review of M. Sinclair (2019). *Being Inclined : Felix Ravaisson's philosophy of habit*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* : <https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/being-inclined-felix-ravaissons-philosophy-of-habit/>

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

1. Tahar, M. (forthcoming). “Henri Bergson. *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*”. In E. Ballanfat, A. Benoit, C. Nouët and J.-F. Suratteau (eds.), *Encyclopédie des Œuvres Philosophiques*, Paris: Ellipses.
2. Tahar, M. (forthcoming). “Henri Bergson. *L'évolution créatrice*”. In E. Ballanfat, A. Benoit, C. Nouët and J.-F. Suratteau (eds.), *Encyclopédie des Œuvres Philosophiques*, Paris: Ellipses.

GENERAL INTEREST PUBLICATIONS

1. Tahar, M. (2023). “Les animaux, ces inventeurs de génie”. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/les-animaux-ces-inventeurs-de-genie-206646>
2. Tahar, M. (2019). “Les mains sales de Bergson”. *iPhilo*. <https://iphilo.fr/2019/06/13/les-mains-sales-de-bergson-mathilde-tahar/>

SUBMITTED PAPERS

1. Tahar, M. “Élan vital et conscience du vivant : penser la créativité non humaine à partir de la philosophie bergsonienne”. Submitted to: *Actualités de Bergson, Archives de philosophie*.
2. Tahar, M. “Individual Playful Memory : Making sense of biological agency”. Submitted to: *Philosophy, Theory, and Practice in Biology*.

SELECTED LECTURES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

1. “Animal agency and playful relationships”. In Relation to Life Biological Relationality in Contemporary Science, Theory, and Politics. Université Paris 8, Aubervilliers, October 2024.
2. “Causation in evolution. Linking tendency with consciousness”, PBJ International Workshop : Dispositions, Virtuality, Tendency: Bergson and the Metaphysics of Powers, Queen’s University, Belfast, June 2024.
3. “Agency, invention, and play”, Workshop Defining Agency Between Cognition and Biology, Université Paris I, March 2024.
4. “Agency, Inventiveness and animal play”, Paris Toronto Agency Workshop, IHPST Toronto, November 2023.
5. “Agency, invention, and play”, Workshop Defining Agency : Between Cognition and Biology, Université Paris I, March 2024.
6. “How to account for the unpredictability of evolution?”, Colloquium Open Historicity of Life. Theory, epistemology, practice, Ecole Normale Supérieure, November 2023.
7. “Does agency always mean goal-directedness? How to avoid a chicken-and-egg situation”, Workshop Reasons for Action in Non-Human Organisms, UK Leuven, October 2023.

8. “Time(s) in evolutionary biology: the historicity of evolution and the histories of organisms”, Workshop Dynamic Time, Leiden University, December 2022.
9. “Élan vital et conscience du vivant : penser la créativité non-humaine à partir de la philosophie bergsonienne”, Conference Réceptions de Bergson, usages, controverses, problèmes contemporains, Université de Bordeaux Montaigne, December 2022.
10. “L'évolution par-delà tout finalisme : Bergson critique des évolutionnistes”, Journées Jeunes Chercheurs de la Société Française d'Histoire des Sciences et des Techniques, Université Paris-Diderot, December 2022.
11. “Time and Evolutionary History”, Deconstructing Darwinism Workshop (online), September 2022.
12. “Les grands problèmes de l'organicisme aujourd'hui”, Organicism Workshop, Maison des Associations, Castelnaudary, September 2022.
13. “Individualité et liberté : constitution biologique d'un problème philosophique de Claude Bernard à Henri Bergson”, Conference Claude Bernard, Histoire et Philosophie d'une Théorie Physiologique, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, September 2022.
14. “The agency of the living: a creativity at play in evolution”, Bergson Workshop, Fukuoka University, June 2022.
15. “The *élan vital* as a tendency. Causality in evolution beyond Aristotelian modalities”, 45th Husserl-Abend lecture, Tohoku University, June 2022.
16. “Creative consciousness, non-human invention and playfulness: for a new theory of evolution”, Philosophy of science Conference, Tohoku University, June 2022.
17. “Biological interactions and practices of the living world: for a thinking of normativity”, PBJ International workshop: Time and Biology in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, Fukuoka University, June 2022.
18. “Teleology in contemporary evolutionary theory”, PBJ International workshop: Time and Biology in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, Fukuoka University, June 2022.
19. “Bergson's critique of the theories of evolution”, PBJ International workshop: Time and Biology in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, Fukuoka University, June 2022.
20. “Bergson, a philosopher of biology?”, Contemporary Philosophy Conference, Kyushu University, May 2022.
21. “Le problème de l'individuation biologique de Claude Bernard à Henri Bergson”, Conference Claude Bernard, histoire et philosophie d'une théorie physiologique, Université du Québec à Montréal, May 2022.
22. “Norms and Animal Behaviour”, Morphogenesis in Living Systems, CNRS Conference, Piombino, January 2022.
23. “A Bergsonian Perspective on Causality in Evolution”, Canguilhem and Continental Philosophy of Biology Workshop (online), September 2021

24. Keynote “Bergson’s vitalisms ?”, Workshop Bergson and vitalism(s), Ghent University – Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès (online), April 2021.
25. “The History of the Bergsonian Interpretation of Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution”, Global Bergsonism Project, Penn State University (online), October 2020.

SEMINARS AND RESEARCH GROUPS

1. “L’agentivité biologique comme inventivité : Repenser le rôle des organismes non-humains dans l’évolution”, Seminar on the living world, Centre Cavaillès, École Normale Supérieure, March 2024.
2. “Biological time(s)”, Seminar PhilLiSci, University of Bielefeld, December 2023.
3. “Biological agency as inventiveness: the role of playful organisms in evolution”, I2SoS, University of Bielefeld, December 2023.
4. “La philosophie animale de Bergson. Conscience du vivant, créativité instinctive et biologie contemporaine”, Atelier Bergson, École Normale Supérieure, November 2023.
5. “Gradualisme et variations insensibles : un débat oublié du darwinisme”, Seminar H&P Bio, SPHERE, (UMR 7219), October 2023.
6. “Teleology and evolutionary biology”, Seminar of the Institut d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et des techniques, Université Paris I, May 2023.
7. “The selection of insensible variations: history of a debate from Bergson back to Darwin”, Seminar of the Évo-Éco-Paléo lab (UMR CNRS 8198, Université de Lille), May 2023.
8. “Le pouvoir évolutionnaire des contraintes biologiques, le comportement animal et les explications historiques”, Seminar Philosophie, biologie, écologie : interfaces épistémiques, École Normale Supérieure (Ulm), December 2022.
9. “Le finalisme de la théorie de l’évolution par sélection naturelle et les acteurs introuvables”, Seminar Histoire et Philosophie du vivant, September 2021.
10. “L’influence rétrospective d’Henri Bergson sur Claude Bernard”, Seminar Claude Bernard, Fondation des Treilles, July 2021.
11. “La philosophie de Claude Bernard par Henri Bergson”, Research group Claude Bernard, Institut d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et des Techniques, February 2021.
12. “La philosophie pour prolonger la science ? Claude Bernard et Bergson”, Research group Claude Bernard, Institut d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et des Techniques, October 2020.
13. “La plasticité bergsonienne comme piste de réflexion pour la biologie contemporaine”, Research group Plasphen, Muséum National d’Histoire naturelle, November 2019.
14. “Bergson et Haeckel : enquête sur un silence”, Seminar Haeckel, Fondation des Treilles, September 2019.
15. “Les acteurs de l’évolution”, Seminar PhiloDoctes, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, February 2019.

COMMUNICATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. “Le jeu animal, laboratoire d’inventions?” , Association Des Savoirs à Dunkerque, October 2024. <https://www.dessavoirsadunkerque.fr/les-conferences/programme>
2. “L’énergie vitale, mystère ou mythe ?”, Programme ‘Avec philosophie’ hosted by Géraldine Muhlmann, France Culture, September 2024. <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/avec-philosophie/l-energie-vitale-mystere-ou-mythe-2996139>
3. “Le jeu animal, laboratoire d’inventions pour l’évolution ?”, ENMI, Institut de Recherche et d’Innovation, Centre Pompidou, Paris, December 2023. <https://iri-ressources.org/collections/collection-2/season-71/video-938.html>
4. “Au sujet du temps, physique, biologique”, Programme ‘Parcours scientifiques’ hosted by Giuseppe Longo, Radio Fréquence Protestante, December 2023. <https://frequenceprotestante.com/2023/12/15/le-temps-qui-passe/>
5. “Nos sociétés ont-elles encore de la mémoire ?”, Les Voix de la paix (online), October 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSI2rsHEGUc>

POSTER SESSIONS

1. « Selection shapes diverse animal minds », Scientific meeting of the Royal Academy, Bath, June 2024

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

ORGANISATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Co-organiser (with Alecia Carter) of the seminar series “Agency: Between Biology and Philosophy” at UCL (in the framework of the research project “Animal inventiveness : a new insight on agency in evolution”, funded by the Leverhulme Trust) since 2024: <https://www.animalinventiveness.com/post/new-seminar-series-agency-between-biology-and-philosophy>

Co-organiser (with Caterina Zanfi) of the seminar “Atelier Bergson” (École Normale Supérieure de Paris – CNRS, in the framework of the IRN project “Global Bergsonism”), since 2022 <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/1938> ; <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/2591> ; <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/3007> ; <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/3419>

Member of the organisation team of the project Global Bergsonism, with partners in France (SAB/CNRS/ENS Paris), USA (Penn State College), Canada (McGill), Japan (Hosei), Cameroon (Yaounde 1), Brasil (Federal U. São Carlos), Turkey (Yildiz Istanbul), 2019-2024.

Organiser of the international workshop “Bergson and vitalism(s) – an online workshop”, Ghent University – Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès, April 29-30, 2021. <https://bergson.hypotheses.org/1887>

Co-organiser (with Alexis Boisseau and Jonathan Racine) of the international workshop “Heredity of information and biological innovation, how to think about the emergence of novelty”, Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès, October 7, 2021.

SUPERVISING, MENTORING ACTIVITIES AND EXPERTISE

Member of the editorial board of *Dialectical Systems* since 2024.

Member of the board of the Société des amis de Bergson since 2019.

Member of the editorial board of *Bergsoniana*, Société des amis de Bergson, OpenAccess, since 2020.

Guest editor of the Special Issue on Henri Bergson for *Parrhesia*, published in 2022.
<https://parrhesiajournal.org/index.php/parr/issue/view/40/3>

Reviewer for: *Bergsoniana*; *Computational and Structural Biotechnology Journal*; *Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology*; Palgrave Macmillan.

Reviewer of applications for the National Science Center Poland (SONATA funding scheme).

Contribution to the edition of the *Leçons sur Aristote* from the manuscripts of Jacques Brunschwig, Paris, *Ellipses*, 2016.

Member of the scientific committee Sciences-Éthique-Humanités (Comité Consultatif National d'Éthique – Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris), 2013-2015.

TEACHING

2022-2024

Visiting Associate Professor (*Attachée temporaire d'enseignement et de recherches*) in Philosophy of Science at the Université de Lille. 192 hours/year teaching.

Undergraduate classes: philosophy of biology; general philosophy; animal philosophy; history of philosophy; Epistemology; methodology of Academic Work.

2023

Invited Professor at the Université Sorbonne Paris-Nord. (12 hours)

Graduate class to prepare the university diploma of canine mediator in social intervention: animal philosophy.

2021-2022

Assistant teacher at the Université de Rouen. (36 hours)

Undergraduate classes: history of modern philosophy; Kantian philosophy.

2018-2021

Doctoral student and teacher at the Université Toulouse 2-Jean Jaurès. 64 hours/year teaching.

Graduate classes: philosophy of biology; philosophy of time for students preparing for the *agrégation de philosophie*.
Undergraduate classes: philosophy of moral and politics; methodology of academic work; philosophy of sciences.

Invited teacher (*Colleuse*) in philosophy at the Lycée Henri IV, Paris (being a *colleuse* consists of preparing students for the oral exam of the Ecole Normale Supérieure competition).

2016-2017

Philosophy teacher at the Lycée Racine, Paris. 360 hours/year teaching.
Philosophy classes for high school students preparing the “Baccalauréat”.

2011-2015

Invited teacher at the Lycée Victor Duruy, Paris.
Occasional lectures on Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (2011; 2012) and on Bergson (2015).

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Editorial assistant of Erik Orsenna for *La Fabrique du neuf*, Paris, *Cherche-Midi*, 2018.

Glowbule – Vivre avec le cancer: president, 2015-2018.
Communication and event organisation. Fundraising. Contacting hospitals. Creation of the newsletter.

Institut Jean Nicod – Hôpital Albert-Chenevier: research internship, February-June 2014.
Under the supervision of Dr Tiziana Zalla and Dr Giovanna Girardi.
Theoretical and practical research internship on emotional management in patients with autistic disorders: setting up protocols for neuroscience and cognitive science experiments, assisting with the experiments themselves, handling the humanoid robot FACE, interviewing patients.