

On Some Hegelisms

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We are just now witnessing a singular phenomenon in British and American philosophy. Hegelism, so defunct on its native soil that I believe but a single youthful disciple of the school is to be counted among the privat-docenten and younger professors of Germany, and whose older champions are all passing off the stage, has found among us so zealous and able a set of propagandists that to-day it may really be reckoned one of the most powerful influences of the time in the higher walks of thought. And there is no doubt that, as a movement of reaction against the traditional British empiricism, the hegelian influence represents expansion and freedom, and is doing service of a certain kind. Such service, however, ought not to make us blindly indulgent. Hegel's philosophy mingles mountain-loads of corruption with its scanty merits, and must, now that it has become quasi-official, make ready to defend itself as well as to attack others. It is with no hope of converting independent thinkers, but rather with the sole aspiration of showing some chance youthful disciple that there *is* another point of view in philosophy that I fire this skirmisher's shot, which may, I hope, soon be followed by somebody else's heavier musketry.

The point of view I have in mind will become clearer if I begin with a few preparatory remarks on the motives and difficulties of philosophizing in general.

To show that the real is identical with the ideal may roughly be set down as the mainspring of philosophic activity. The atomic and mechanical conception of the world is as ideal from the point of view of some of our faculties as the teleological one is from the point of view of others. In the realm of every ideal we can begin anywhere and roam over the field, each term passing us to its neighbor, each member calling for the next, and our reason rejoicing in its glad activity. Where the parts of a conception seem thus to belong together by inward kinship, where the whole is defined in a way congruous with our powers of reaction, to see is to approve and to understand.

Much of the real seems at the first blush to follow a different law. The parts seem, as Hegel has said, to be shot out of a pistol at us. Each asserts itself as a simple brute fact, uncalled for by the rest, which, so far as we can see, might even make a better system without it. Arbitrary, foreign, jolting, discontinuous—are the adjectives by which we are tempted to describe it. And yet from out the bosom of it a partial ideality constantly arises which keeps alive our aspiration that the whole may some day be construed in ideal form. Not only do the materials lend themselves under certain circumstances to aesthetic manipulation, but underlying their worst disjointedness are three great continua in which for each of us reason's ideal is actually reached. I mean the continua of memory or personal consciousness, of time and of space. In these great matrices of all we know, we are absolutely at home. The things we meet are many, and yet are one; each is itself, and yet all belong together; continuity reigns, yet individuality is not lost.

Consider, for example, space. It is a unit. No force can in any way break, wound, or tear it. It has no joints between which you can pass your amputating knife, for it penetrates the knife and is not split. Try to make a hole in space by annihilating an inch of it. To make a hole you must drive something else through. But what can you drive through space except what is itself spatial?

But notwithstanding it is this very paragon of unity, space in its parts contains an infinite variety, and the unity and the variety do not contradict each other, for they obtain in different respects. The one is the whole, the many are the parts. Each part is one again, but only one fraction; and part lies beside part in absolute nextness, the very picture of peace and non-contradiction. It is true that the space between two points both unites and divides them, just as the bar of a dumb-bell both unites and divides the two balls. But the union and the division are not *secundum idem*: it divides them by keeping them out of the space between, it unites them by keeping them out of the space beyond; so the double function presents no inconsistency. Self-contradiction in space could only ensue if one part tried to oust another from its position; but the notion of such an absurdity vanishes in the framing, and cannot stay to vex the mind.¹ Beyond the parts we see or think at any given time extend further parts; but the beyond is homogeneous with what is embraced, and follows the same law; so that no surprises, no foreignness, can ever emerge from space's womb.

Thus with space our intelligence is absolutely intimate; it is rationality and transparency incarnate. The same may be said of the ego and of time. But if for simplicity's sake we ignore them, we may truly say that when we desiderate rational knowledge of the world the standard set by our knowledge of space is what governs our desire.² Cannot the breaks, the jolts, the margin of foreignness, be exorcised from other things and leave them unitary like the space they fill? Could this be done, the philosophic kingdom of heaven would be at hand.

But the moment we turn to the material qualities of being, we find the continuity ruptured on every side. A fearful jolting begins. Even if we simplify the world by reducing it to its mechanical bare poles,—atoms and their motions,—the discontinuity is bad enough. The laws of clash, the effects of distance upon attraction and repulsion, all seem arbitrary collocations of data. The atoms themselves are so many independent facts, the existence of any one of which in no wise seems to involve the existence of the rest. We have not banished discontinuity, we have only made it finer-grained. And to get even that degree of rationality into the universe we have had to butcher a great part of its contents. The secondary qualities we stripped off from the reality and swept into the dust-bin labelled 'subjective illusion,' still *as such* are facts, and must themselves be rationalized in some way.

But when we deal with facts believed to be purely subjective, we are farther than ever from the goal. We have not now the refuge of distinguishing between the 'reality' and its appearances. Facts of thought being the only facts, differences of thought become the only differences, and identities of thought the only identities there are. Two thoughts that seem different are different to all eternity. We can no longer speak of heat and light being reconciled in any *tertium quid* like wave-motion. For motion is motion, and light is light, and heat heat forever, and their discontinuity is as absolute as their existence. Together with the other attributes and things we conceive, they make up Plato's realm of immutable ideas. Neither *per se* calls for the other, hatches it out, is its 'truth,' creates it, or has any sort of inward community with it except that of being comparable in an ego and found more or less differing, or more or less resembling, as the case may be. The world of qualities is a world of things almost wholly discontinuous *inter se*. Each only says, "I am that I am," and each says it on its own account and with absolute monotony. The continuities of which they *partake*, in Plato's phrase, the ego, space, and time, are for most of them the only grounds of union they possess.

It might seem as if in the mere 'partaking' there lay a contradiction of the discontinuity. If the white must partake of space, the heat of time, and so forth,—do not whiteness and space, heat and time, mutually call for or help to create each other?

Yes; a few such *à priori* couplings must be admitted. They are the axioms: no feeling except as occupying some space and time, or as a moment in some ego; no motion but of something moved; no thought but of an object; no time without a previous time,—and the like. But they are limited in number, and they obtain only between excessively broad genera of concepts, and leave quite undetermined what the specifications of those genera shall be. What feeling shall fill *this* time, what substance execute *this* motion, what qualities combine in *this* being, are as much unanswered questions as if the metaphysical axioms never existed at all.

The existence of such syntheses as they are does then but slightly mitigate the jolt, jolt, jolt we get when we pass over the facts of the world. Everywhere indeterminate variables, subject only to these few vague enveloping laws, independent in all besides.—such seems the truth.

In yet another way, too, ideal and real are so far apart that their conjunction seems quite hopeless. To eat our cake and have it, to lose our soul and save it, to enjoy the physical privileges of selfishness and the moral luxury of altruism at the same time, would be the ideal. But the real offers us these terms in the shape of mutually exclusive alternatives of which only one can be true at once; so that we must choose, and in choosing murder one possibility. The wrench is absolute: "Either—or!" Just as whenever I bet a hundred dollars on an event, there comes an instant when I am a hundred dollars richer or poorer without any intermediate degrees passed over; just as my wavering between a journey to Portland or to New York does not carry me from Cambridge in a resultant direction in which both motions are compounded, say to Albany, but at a given moment results in the conjunction of reality in all its fulness for one alternative and impossibility in all its fulness for the other,—so the bachelor joys are utterly lost from the face of being for the married man, who must henceforward find his account in something that is not them but is good enough to make him forget them; so the careless and irresponsible living in the sunshine, the 'unbuttoning after supper and sleeping upon benches in the afternoon,' are stars that have set upon the path of him who in good earnest makes himself a moralist. The transitions are abrupt, absolute, truly shot out of a pistol; for while many possibilities are called, the few that are chosen are chosen in all their sudden completeness.

Must we then think that the world that fills space and time can yield us no acquaintance of that high and perfect type yielded by empty space and time themselves? Is what unity there is in the world mainly derived from the fact that the world is *in* space and time and 'partakes' of them? Can no vision of it forestall the facts of it, or know from some fractions the others before the others have arrived? Are there real logically indeterminate possibilities which forbid there being any equivalent for the happening of it all but the happening itself? Can we gain no anticipatory assurance that what is to come will have no strangeness? Is there no substitute, in short, for life but the living itself in all its long-drawn weary length and breadth and thickness?

In the negative reply to all these questions, a modest common-sense finds no difficulty in acquiescing. To such a way of thinking the notion of 'partaking' has a deep and real significance. Whoso partakes of a thing enjoys his share, and comes into contact with the thing and its other partakers. But he claims no more. His share in no wise negates the thing or their share; nor does it preclude his possession of reserved and private powers with which they have nothing to do, and which are not all absorbed in the mere function of sharing. Why may not the world be a sort of republican banquet of this sort, where all the qualities of being respect one another's personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time?

To me this view seems deeply probable. Things cohere, but the act of cohesion itself implies but few conditions, and leaves the rest of their qualifications indeterminate. As the first three notes of a tune comport many endings, all melodious, but the tune is not named till a particular ending has actually come,—so the parts actually known of the universe may comport many ideally possible complements. But as the facts are not the complements, so the knowledge of the one is not the knowledge of the other in anything but the few necessary elements of which all must partake in order to be together at all. Why, if one act of knowledge could from one point take in the total perspective, with all mere possibilities abolished, should there ever have been anything more than that act? Why duplicate it by the tedious unrolling, inch by inch, of the foredone reality? No answer seems possible. On the other hand, if we stipulate only a partial community of partially independent powers, we see perfectly why no one part controls the whole view, but each detail must come and be actually given, before, in any special sense, it can be said to be determined at all. This is the moral view, the view that gives to other powers the same freedom it would have itself,—not the ridiculous 'freedom to do right,' which in my mouth can only mean the freedom to do as *I* think right, but the freedom to do as *they* think right, or wrong either. After all, what accounts do the nether-most bounds of the universe owe to me? By what insatiate conceit and lust of intellectual despotism do I arrogate the right to know their secrets, and from my philosophic throne to play the only airs they shall march to, as if I were the Lord's anointed? Is not my knowing them at all a gift and not a right? And shall it be given before they are given? *Data! gifts!* something to be thankful for! It is a gift that we can approach things at all, and, by means of the time and space of which our minds and they partake, alter our actions so as to meet them.

There are 'bounds of ord'nance' set for all things, where they must pause or rue it. 'Facts' are the bounds of human knowledge, set for it, not by it.

Now, to a mind like Hegel's such pusillanimous twaddle sounds simply loathsome. Bounds that we can't overpass! *Data!* facts that say, "Hands off, till we are given"! possibilities we can't control! a banquet of which we merely share! Heavens, this is intolerable; such a world is no world for a philosopher to have to do with. He must have all or nothing. If the world cannot be rational in my sense, in the sense of unconditional surrender, I refuse to grant that it is rational at all. It is pure incoherence, a chaos, a nulliverse, to whose haphazard sway I will not truckle. But, no! this is not the world. The world is philosophy's own,—a single block, of which, if she once get her teeth on any part, the whole shall inevitably become her prey and feed her all-devouring theoretic maw. Naught shall be but the necessities she creates and impossibilities; freedom shall mean freedom to obey her will, ideal and actual shall be one: she, and I as her champion, will be satisfied on no lower terms.

The insolence of sway, the *hubris* on which gods take vengeance, is in temporal and spiritual matters usually admitted to be a vice. A Bonaparte and a Philip II. are called monsters. But when an *intellect* is found insatiate enough to declare that all existence must bend the knee to its requirements, we do not call its owner a monster, but a philosophic prophet. May not this be all wrong? Is there any one of our functions exempted from the common lot of liability to excess? And where everything else must be contented with its part in the universe, shall the theorizing faculty ride rough-shod over the whole?

I confess I can see no *à priori* reason for the exception. He who claims it must be judged by the consequences of his acts, and by them alone. Let Hegel then confront the universe with his claim, and see how he can make the two match.

The universe absolutely refuses to let him travel without jolt. Time, space, and his ego are continuous; so are degrees of heat, shades of light and color, and a few other serial things; so too do potatoes call

for salt, and cranberries for sugar, in the taste of one who knows what salt and sugar are. But on the whole there is nought to soften the shock of surprise to his intelligence, as it passes from one quality of being to another. Light is not heat, heat is not light; and to him who holds the one the other is not given till it give itself. Real being comes moreover and goes from any concept at its own sweet will, with no permission asked of the conceiver. In despair must Hegel lift vain hands of imprecation; and since he will take nothing but the whole, he must throw away even the part he might retain, and call the nature of things an *absolute* muddle and incoherence.

But, hark! What wondrous strain is this that steals upon his ear? Incoherence itself, may it not be the very sort of coherence I require? Muddle! is it anything but a peculiar sort of transparency? Is not jolt passage? Is friction other than a kind of lubrication? Is not a chasm a filling?—a queer kind of filling, but a filling still. Why seek for a glue to hold things together when their very falling apart is the only glue you need? Let all that negation which seemed to disintegrate the universe be the mortar that combines it, and the problem stands solved. The paradoxical character of the notion could not fail to please a mind monstrous even in its native Germany, where mental excess is endemic. Richard, for a moment brought to bay, is himself again. He vaults into the saddle, and from that time his career is that of a philosophic desperado,—one series of outrages upon the chastity of thought.

And can we not ourselves sympathize with his mood in some degree? The old receipts of squeezing the thistle and taking the bull by the horns have many applications. An evil frankly accepted loses half its sting and all its terror. The Stoics had their cheap and easy way of dealing with evil. *Call* your woes goods, they said; refuse to *call* your lost blessings by that name,—and you are happy. So of the unintelligibilities: call them means of intelligibility, and what further do you require? There is even a more legitimate excuse than that. In the exceedingness of the facts of life over our formulas lies a standing temptation at certain times to give up trying to say anything adequate about them, and to take refuge in wild and whirling words which but confess our impotence before their ineffability. Thus Baron Bunsen writes to his wife: "Nothing is near but the far; nothing true but the highest; nothing credible but the inconceivable; nothing so real as the impossible; nothing clear but the deepest; nothing so visible as the invisible; and no life is there but through death." Of these ecstatic moments the *credo quia impossibile* is the classical expression. Hegel's originality lies in his making their mood permanent and sacramental, and authorized to supersede all others,—not as a mystical bath and refuge for feeling when tired reason sickens of her intellectual responsibilities (thank Heaven! that bath is always ready), but as the very form of intellectual responsibility itself.

And now after this long introduction, let me trace some of Hegel's ways of applying his discovery. His system resembles a mouse-trap, in which if you once pass the door you may be lost forever. Safety lies in not entering. Hegelians have anointed, so to speak, the entrance with various considerations which, stated in an abstract form, are so plausible as to slide us unresistingly and almost unwittingly through the fatal arch. It is not necessary to drink the ocean to know that it is salt; nor need a critic dissect a whole system after proving that its premises are rotten. I shall accordingly confine myself to a few of the points that captivate beginners most; and assume that if they break down, so must the system which they prop.

First of all, Hegel has to do utterly away with the sharing and partaking business he so much loathes. He will not call contradiction the glue in one place and identity in another; that is too half-hearted. Contradiction must be a glue universal, and must derive its credit from being shown to be latently involved in cases that we hitherto supposed to embody pure continuity. Thus, the relations of an ego with its objects, of one time with another time, of one place with another place, of a cause with its

effect, of a thing with its properties, and especially of parts with wholes, must be shown to involve contradiction. Contradiction, shown to lurk in the very heart of coherence and continuity, cannot after that be held to defeat them, and must be taken as the universal solvent,—or, rather, there is no longer any need of a solvent. To 'dissolve' things in identity was the dream of earlier cruder schools. Hegel will show that their very difference is their identity, and that in the act of detachment the detachment is undone, and they fall into each other's arms.

Now, at the very outset it seems rather odd that a philosopher who pretends that the world is absolutely rational, or in other words that it can be completely understood, should fall back on a principle (the identity of contradictories) which utterly defies understanding, and obliges him in fact to use the word 'understanding,' whenever it occurs in his pages, as a term of contempt. Take the case of space we used above. The common man who looks at space believes there is nothing in it to be acquainted with beyond what he sees; no hidden machinery, no secrets, nothing but the parts as they lie side by side and make the static whole. His intellect is satisfied with accepting space as an ultimate genus of the given. But Hegel cries to him: "Dupe! dost thou not see it to be one nest of incompatibilities? Do not the unity of its wholeness and the diversity of its parts stand in patent contradiction? Does it not both unite and divide things; and but for this strange and irreconcilable activity, would it be at all? The hidden dynamism of self-contradiction is what incessantly produces the static appearance by which your sense is fooled."

But if the man ask how self-contradiction *can* do all this, and how its dynamism may be seen to work, Hegel can only reply by showing him the space itself and saying: "Lo, *thus*." In other words, instead of the principle of explanation being more intelligible than the thing to be explained, it is absolutely unintelligible if taken by itself, and must appeal to its pretended product to prove its existence. Surely, such a system of explaining *notum per ignotum*, of making the *explicans* borrow credentials from the *explicand*, and of creating paradoxes and impossibilities where none were suspected, is a strange candidate for the honor of being a complete rationalizer of the world.

The principle of the contradictoriness of identity and the identity of contradictories is the essence of the hegelian system. But what probably washes this principle down most with beginners is the combination in which its author works it with another principle which is by no means characteristic of his system, and which, for want of a better name, might be called the 'principle of totality.' This principle says that you cannot adequately know even a part until you know of what whole it forms a part. As Aristotle writes and Hegel loves to quote, an amputated hand is not even a hand. And as Tennyson says,—

"Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Obviously, until we have taken in all the relations, immediate or remote, into which the thing actually enters or potentially may enter, we do not know all *about* the thing.

And obviously for such an exhaustive acquaintance with the thing, an acquaintance with every other thing, actual and potential, near and remote, is needed; so that it is quite fair to say that omniscience

alone can completely know any one thing as it stands. Standing in a world of relations, that world must be known before the thing is fully known. This doctrine is of course an integral part of empiricism, an integral part of common-sense. Since when could good men not apprehend the passing hour in the light of life's larger sweep,—not grow dispassionate the more they stretched their view? Did the 'law of sharing' so little legitimate their procedure that a law of identity of contradictories, forsooth, must be trumped up to give it scope? Out upon the idea!

Hume's account of causation is a good illustration of the way in which empiricism may use the principle of totality. We call something a cause; but we at the same time deny its effect to be in any latent way contained in or substantially identical with it. We thus cannot tell what its causality amounts to until its effect has actually supervened. The effect, then, or something beyond the thing is what makes the thing to be so far as it is a cause. Humism thus says that its causality is something adventitious and not necessarily given when its other attributes are there. Generalizing this, empiricism contends that we must everywhere distinguish between the intrinsic being of a thing and its relations, and, among these, between those that are essential to our knowing it at all and those that may be called adventitious. The thing as actually present in a given world is there with *all* its relations; for it to be known as it *there* exists, they must be known too, and it and they form a single fact for any consciousness large enough to embrace that world as a unity. But what constitutes this singleness of fact, this unity? Empiricism says, Nothing but the relation-yielding matrix in which the several items of the world find themselves embedded,—time, namely, and space, and the mind of the knower. And it says that were some of the items quite different from what they are and others the same, still, for aught we can see, an equally unitary world might be, provided each item were an object for consciousness and occupied a determinate point in space and time. All the adventitious relations would in such a world be changed, along with the intrinsic natures and places of the beings between which they obtained; but the 'principle of totality' in knowledge would in no wise be affected.

But Hegelism dogmatically denies all this to be possible. In the first place it says there are no intrinsic natures that may change; in the second it says there are no adventitious relations. When the relations of what we call a thing are told, no *caput mortuum* of intrinsicity, no 'nature,' is left. The relations soak up all there is of the thing; the 'items' of the world are but *foci* of relation with other *foci* of relation; and all the relations are necessary. The unity of the world has nothing to do with any 'matrix.' The matrix and the items, each with all, make a unity, simply because each in truth is all the rest. The proof lies in the *hegelian* principle of totality, which demands that if any one part be posited alone all the others shall forthwith *emanate* from it and infallibly reproduce the whole. In the *modus operandi* of the emanation comes in, as I said, that partnership of the principle of totality with that of the identity of contradictories which so recommends the latter to beginners in Hegel's philosophy. To posit one item alone is to deny the rest; to deny them is to refer to them; to refer to them is to begin, at least, to bring them on the scene; and to begin is in the fulness of time to end.

If we call this a monism, Hegel is quick to cry, Not so! To say simply that the one item is the rest of the universe is as false and one-sided as to say that it is simply itself. It is both and neither; and the only condition on which we gain the right to affirm that it is, is that we fail not to keep affirming all the while that it is not, as well. Thus the truth refuses to be expressed in any single act of judgment or sentence. The world appears as a monism *and* a pluralism, just as it appeared in our own introductory exposition.

But the trouble that keeps us and Hegel from ever joining hands over this apparent formula of brotherhood is that we distinguish, or try to distinguish, the respects in which the world is one from

those in which it is many, while all such stable distinctions are what he most abominates. The reader may decide which procedure helps his reason most. For my own part, the time-honored formula of empiricist pluralism, that the world cannot be set down in any single proposition, grows less instead of more intelligible when I add, "And yet the different propositions that express it are one!" The unity of the propositions is that of the mind that harbors them. Any one who insists that their diversity is in any way itself their unity, can only do so because he loves obscurity and mystification for their own pure sakes.

Where you meet with a contradiction among realities, Herbart used to say, it shows you have failed to make a real distinction. Hegel's sovereign method of going to work and saving all possible contradictions, lies in pertinaciously refusing to distinguish. He takes what is true of a term *secundum quid*, treats it as true of the same term *simpliciter*, and then, of course, applies it to the term *secundum aliud*. A good example of this is found in the first triad. This triad shows that the mutability of the real world is due to the fact that being constantly negates itself; that whatever *is* by the same act *is not*, and gets undone and swept away; and that thus the irremediable torrent of life about which so much rhetoric has been written has its roots in an ineluctable necessity which lies revealed to our logical reason. This notion of a being which forever stumbles over its own feet, and has to change in order to exist at all, is a very picturesque symbol of the reality, and is probably one of the points that make young readers feel as if a deep core of truth lay in the system.

But how is the reasoning done? Pure being is assumed, without determinations, being *secundum quid*. In this respect it agrees with nothing. Therefore *simpliciter* it is nothing; wherever we find it, it is nothing; crowned with complete determinations then, or *secundum aliud*, it is nothing still, and *hebt sich auf*.

It is as if we said, Man without his clothes may be named 'the naked.' Therefore man *simpliciter* is the naked; and finally man with his hat, shoes, and overcoat on is the naked still.

Of course we may in this instance or any other repeat that the conclusion is strictly true, however comical it seems. Man within the clothes is naked, just as he is without them. Man would never have invented the clothes had he not been naked. The fact of his being clad at all does prove his essential nudity. And so in general,—the form of any judgment, being the addition of a predicate to a subject, shows that the subject has been conceived without the predicate, and thus by a strained metaphor may be called the predicate's negation. Well and good! let the expression pass. But we must notice this. The judgment has now created a new subject, the naked-clad, and all propositions regarding this must be judged on their own merits; for those true of the old subject, 'the naked,' are no longer true of this one. For instance, we cannot say because the naked pure and simple must not enter the drawing-room or is in danger of taking cold, that the naked with his clothes on will also take cold or must stay in his bedroom. Hold to it eternally that the clad man *is* still naked if it amuse you,—'tis designated in the bond; but the so-called contradiction is a sterile boon. Like Shylock's pound of flesh, it leads to no consequences. It does not entitle you to one drop of his Christian blood either in the way of catarrh, social exclusion, or what further results pure nakedness may involve.

In a version of the first step given by our foremost American Hegelian,³ we find this playing with the necessary form of judgment. Pure being, he says, has no determinations. But the having none is itself a determination. Wherefore pure being contradicts its own self, and so on. Why not take heed to the *meaning* of what is said? When we make the predication concerning pure being, our meaning is merely the denial of all other determinations than the particular one we make. The showman who advertised

his elephant as 'larger than any elephant in the world except himself' must have been in an Hegelian country where he was afraid that if he were less explicit the audience would dialectically proceed to say: "This elephant, larger than any in the world, involves a contradiction; for he himself is in the world, and so stands endowed with the virtue of being both larger and smaller than himself,—a perfect Hegelian elephant, whose immanent self-contradictoriness can only be removed in a higher synthesis. Show us the higher synthesis! We don't care to see such a mere abstract creature as your elephant." It may be (and it was indeed suggested in antiquity) that all things are of their own size by being both larger and smaller than themselves. But in the case of this elephant the scrupulous showman nipped such philosophizing and all its inconvenient consequences in the bud, by explicitly intimating that larger than any *other* elephant was all he meant.

Hegel's quibble with this word *other* exemplifies the same fallacy. All 'others,' as such, are according to him identical. That is, 'otherness,' which can only be predicated of a given thing *A*, *secundum quid* (as other than *B*, etc.), is predicated *simpliciter*, and made to identify the *A* in question with *B*, which is other only *secundum aliud*,—namely other than *A*.

Another maxim that Hegelism is never tired of repeating is that "to know a limit is already to be beyond it." "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." The inmate of the penitentiary shows by his grumbling that he is still in the stage of abstraction and of separative thought. The more keenly he thinks of the fun he might be having outside, the more deeply he ought to feel that the walls identify him with it. They set him beyond them *secundum quid*, in imagination, in longing, in despair; *argal* they take him there *simpliciter* and in every way,—in flesh, in power, in deed. Foolish convict, to ignore his blessings!

Another mode of stating his principle is this: "To know the finite as such, is also to know the infinite." Expressed in this abstract shape, the formula is as insignificant as it is unobjectionable. We can cap every word with a negative particle, and the word *finished* immediately suggests the word *unfinished*, and we know the two words together.

But it is an entirely different thing to take the knowledge of a concrete case of ending, and to say that it virtually makes us acquainted with other concrete facts *in infinitum*. For, in the first place, the end may be an absolute one. The *matter* of the universe, for instance, is according to all appearances in finite amount; and if we knew that we had counted the last bit of it, infinite knowledge in that respect, so far from being given, would be impossible. With regard to *space*, it is true that in drawing a bound we are aware of more. But to treat this little fringe as the equal of infinite space is ridiculous. It resembles infinite space *secundum quid*, or in but one respect,—its spatial quality. We believe it homogeneous with whatever spaces may remain; but it would be fatuous to say, because one dollar in my pocket is homogeneous with all the dollars in the country, that to have it is to have them. The further points of space are as numerically distinct from the fringe as the dollars from the dollar, and not until we have actually intuited them can we be said to 'know' them *simpliciter*. The Hegelian reply is that the *quality* of space constitutes its only *worth*; and that there is nothing true, good, or beautiful to be known in the spaces beyond which is not already known in the fringe. This introduction of a eulogistic term into a mathematical question is original. The 'true' and the 'false' infinite are about as appropriate distinctions in a discussion of cognition as the good and the naughty rain would be in a treatise on meteorology. But when we grant that all the worth of the knowledge of distant spaces is due to the knowledge of what they may carry in them, it then appears more than ever absurd to say that the knowledge of the fringe is an equivalent for the infinitude of the distant knowledge. The distant spaces even *simpliciter* are not yet yielded to our thinking; and if they were yielded *simpliciter*, would not be yielded

secundum aliud, or in respect to their material filling out.

Shylock's bond was an omnipotent instrument compared with this knowledge of the finite, which remains the ignorance it always was, till the infinite by its own act has piece by piece placed itself in our hands.

Here Hegelism cries out: "By the identity of the knowledges of infinite and finite I never meant that one could be a *substitute* for the other; nor does true philosophy ever mean by identity capacity for substitution." This sounds suspiciously like the good and the naughty infinite, or rather like the mysteries of the Trinity and the Eucharist. To the unsentimental mind there are but two sorts of identity,—total identity and partial identity. Where the identity is total, the things can be substituted wholly for one another. Where substitution is impossible, it must be that the identity is incomplete. It is the duty of the student then to ascertain the exact *quid, secundum* which it obtains, as we have tried to do above. Even the Catholic will tell you that when he believes in the identity of the wafer with Christ's body, he does not mean in all respects,—so that he might use it to exhibit muscular fibre, or a cook make it smell like baked meat in the oven. He means that in the one sole respect of nourishing his being in a certain way, it is identical with and can be substituted for the very body of his Redeemer.

'The knowledge of opposites is one,' is one of the hegelian first principles, of which the preceding are perhaps only derivatives. Here again Hegelism takes 'knowledge' *simpliciter*, and substituting it for knowledge in a particular respect, avails itself of the confusion to cover other respects never originally implied. When the knowledge of a thing is given us, we no doubt think that the thing may or must have an opposite. This postulate of something opposite we may call a 'knowledge of the opposite' if we like; but it is a knowledge of it in only that one single respect, that it is something opposite. No number of opposites to a quality we have never directly experienced could ever lead us positively to infer what that quality is. There is a jolt between the negation of them and the actual positing of it in its proper shape, that twenty logics of Hegel harnessed abreast cannot drive us smoothly over.

The use of the maxim 'All determination is negation' is the fattest and most full-blown application of the method of refusing to distinguish. Taken in its vague confusion, it probably does more than anything else to produce the sort of flicker and dazzle which are the first mental conditions for the reception of Hegel's system. The word 'negation' taken *simpliciter* is treated as if it covered an indefinite number of *secundums*, culminating in the very peculiar one of self-negation. Whence finally the conclusion is drawn that assertions are universally self-contradictory. As this is an important matter, it seems worth while to treat it a little minutely.

When I measure out a pint, say of milk, and so determine it, what do I do? I virtually make two assertions regarding it,—it is this pint; it is not those other gallons. One of these is an affirmation, the other a negation. Both have a common subject; but the predicates being mutually exclusive, the two assertions lie beside each other in endless peace.

I may with propriety be said to make assertions more remote still,—assertions of which those other gallons are the subject. As it is not they, so are they not the pint which it is. The determination "this is the pint" carries with it the negation,—"those are not the pints." Here we have the same predicate; but the subjects are exclusive of each other, so there is again endless peace. In both couples of propositions negation and affirmation are *secundum aliud*: this is *a*; this is n't not-*a*. This kind of negation involved in determination cannot possibly be what Hegel wants for his purposes. The table is not the chair, the fireplace is not the cupboard,—these are literal expressions of the law of identity and contradiction,

those principles of the abstracting and separating understanding for which Hegel has so sovereign a contempt, and which his logic is meant to supersede.

And accordingly Hegelians pursue the subject further, saying there is in every determination an element of real conflict. Do you not in determining the milk to be this pint exclude it forever from the chance of being those gallons, frustrate it from expansion? And so do you not equally exclude them from the being which it now maintains as its own?

Assuredly if you had been hearing of a land flowing with milk and honey, and had gone there with unlimited expectations of the rivers the milk would fill; and if you found there was but this single pint in the whole country,—the determination of the pint would exclude another determination which your mind had previously made of the milk. There would be a real conflict resulting in the victory of one side. The rivers would be negated by the single pint being affirmed; and as rivers and pint are affirmed of the same milk (first as supposed and then as found), the contradiction would be complete.

But it is a contradiction that can never by any chance occur in real nature or being. It can only occur between a false representation of a being and the true idea of the being when actually cognized. The first got into a place where it had no rights and had to be ousted. But in *rerum naturâ* things do not get into one another's logical places. The gallons first spoken of never say, "We are the pint;" the pint never says, "I am the gallons." It never tries to expand; and so there is no chance for anything to exclude or negate it. It thus remains affirmed absolutely.

Can it be believed in the teeth of these elementary truths that the principle *determinatio negatio* is held throughout Hegel to imply an active contradiction, conflict, and exclusion? Do the horse-cars jingling outside negate me writing in this room? Do I, reader, negate you? Of course, if I say, "Reader, we are two, and therefore I am two," I negate you, for I am actually thrusting a part into the seat of the whole. The orthodox logic expresses the fallacy by saying the we is taken by me distributively instead of collectively; but as long as I do not make this blunder, and am content with my part, we all are safe. In *rerum naturâ*, parts remain parts. Can you imagine one position in space trying to get into the place of another position and having to be 'contradicted' by that other? Can you imagine your thought of an object trying to dispossess the real object from its being, and so being negated by it? The great, the sacred law of partaking, the noiseless step of continuity, seems something that Hegel cannot possibly understand. All or nothing is his one idea. For him each point of space, of time, each feeling in the ego, each quality of being, is clamoring, "I am the all,—there is nought else but me." This clamor is its essence, which has to be negated in another act which gives it its true determination. What there is of affirmative in this determination is thus the mere residuum left from the negation by others of the negation it originally applied to them.

But why talk of residuum? The Kilkenny cats of fable could leave a residuum in the shape of their undevoured tails. But the Kilkenny cats of existence as it appears in the pages of Hegel are all-devouring, and leave no residuum. Such is the unexampled fury of their onslaught that they get clean out of themselves and into each other, nay more, pass right through each other, and then "return into themselves" ready for another round, as insatiate, but as inconclusive, as the one that went before.

If I characterized Hegel's own mood as *hubris*, the insolence of excess, what shall I say of the mood he ascribes to being? Man makes the gods in his image; and Hegel, in daring to insult the spotless *sôphrosune* of space and time, the bound-respecters, in branding as strife that law of sharing under whose sacred keeping, like a strain of music, like an odor of incense (as Emerson says), the dance of

the atoms goes forward still, seems to me but to manifest his own deformity.

This leads me to animadvert on an erroneous inference which hegelian idealism makes from the form of the negative judgment. Every negation, it says, must be an intellectual act. Even the most *naïf* realism will hardly pretend that the non-table as such exists *in se* after the same fashion as the table does. But table and non-table, since they are given to our thought together, must be consubstantial. Try to make the position or affirmation of the table as simple as you can, it is also the negation of the non-table; and thus positive being itself seems after all but a function of intelligence, like negation. Idealism is proved, realism is unthinkable. Now I have not myself the least objection to idealism,—an hypothesis which voluminous considerations make plausible, and whose difficulties may be cleared away any day by new discriminations or discoveries. But I object to proving by these patent ready-made *à priori* methods that which can only be the fruit of a wide and patient induction. For the truth is that our affirmations and negations do not stand on the same footing at all, and are anything but consubstantial. An affirmation says something about an objective existence. A negation says something *about an affirmation*,—namely, that it is false. There are no negative predicates or falsities in nature. Being makes no false hypotheses that have to be contradicted. The only denials she can be in any way construed to perform are denials of our errors. This shows plainly enough that denial must be of something mental, since the thing denied is always a fiction. "The table is not the chair" supposes the speaker to have been playing with the false notion that it may have been the chair. But affirmation may perfectly well be of something having no such necessary and constitutive relation to thought. Whether it really is of such a thing is for harder considerations to decide.

If idealism be true, the great question that presents itself is whether its truth involve the necessity of an infinite, unitary, and omniscient consciousness, or whether a republic of semi-detached consciousnesses will do,—consciousnesses united by a certain common fund of representations, but each possessing a private store which the others do not share. Either hypothesis is to me conceivable. But whether the egos be one or many, the *nextness* of representations to one another within them is the principle of unification of the universe. To be thus consciously next to some other representation is the condition to which each representation must submit, under penalty of being excluded from this universe, and like Lord Dundreary's bird 'flocking all alone,' and forming a separate universe by itself. But this is only a condition of which the representations *partake*; it leaves all their other determinations undecided. To say, because representation *b* cannot be in the same universe with *a* without being *a's neighbor*; that therefore *a* possesses, involves, or necessitates *b*, hide and hair, flesh and fell, all appurtenances and belongings,—is only the silly hegelian all-or-nothing insatiateness once more.

Hegel's own logic, with all the senseless hocus-pocus of its triads, utterly fails to prove his position. The only evident compulsion which representations exert upon one another is compulsion to submit to the conditions of entrance into the same universe with them—the conditions of continuity, of selfhood, space, and time—under penalty of being excluded. But what this universe shall be is a matter of fact which we cannot decide till we know what representations *have* submitted to these its sole conditions. The conditions themselves impose no further requirements. In short, the notion that real contingency and ambiguity may be features of the real world is a perfectly unimpeachable hypothesis. Only in such a world can moral judgments have a claim to be. For the bad is that which takes the place of something else which possibly might have been where it now is, and the better is that which absolutely might be where it absolutely is not. In the universe of Hegel—the absolute block whose parts have no loose play, the pure plethora of necessary being with the oxygen of possibility all suffocated out of its lungs—there can be neither good nor bad, but one dead level of mere fate.

But I have tired the reader out. The worst of criticising Hegel is that the very arguments we use against him give forth strange and hollow sounds that make them seem almost as fantastic as the errors to which they are addressed. The sense of a universal mirage, of a ghostly unreality, steals over us, which is the very moonlit atmosphere of Hegelism itself. What wonder then if, instead of converting, our words do but rejoice and delight, those already baptized in the faith of confusion? To their charmed senses we all seem children of Hegel together, only some of us have not the wit to know our own father. Just as Romanists are sure to inform us that our reasons against Papal Christianity unconsciously breathe the purest spirit of Catholicism, so Hegelism benignantly smiles at our exertions, and murmurs, "If the red slayer think he slays;" "When me they fly, I am the wings," etc.

To forefend this unwelcome adoption, let me recapitulate in a few propositions the reasons why I am not an hegelian.

1. We cannot eat our cake and have it; that is, the only real contradiction there can be between thoughts is where one is true, the other false. When this happens, one must go forever; nor is there any 'higher synthesis' in which both can wholly revive.
2. A chasm is not a bridge in any utilizable sense; that is, no mere negation can be the instrument of a positive advance in thought.
3. The continua, time, space, and the ego, are bridges, because they are without chasm.
4. But they bridge over the chasms between represented qualities only partially.
5. This partial bridging, however, makes the qualities share in a common world.
6. The other characteristics of the qualities are separate facts.
7. But the same quality appears in many times and spaces. Generic sameness of the quality wherever found becomes thus a further means by which the jolts are reduced.
8. What between different qualities jolts remain. Each, as far as the other is concerned, is an absolutely separate and contingent being.
9. The moral judgment may lead us to postulate as irreducible the contingencies of the world.
10. Elements mutually contingent are not in conflict so long as they partake of the continua of time, space, etc.,—partaking being the exact opposite of strife. They conflict only when, as mutually exclusive possibilities, they strive to possess themselves of the same parts of time, space, and ego.
11. That there are such real conflicts, irreducible to any intelligence, and giving rise to an excess of possibility over actuality, is an hypothesis, but a credible one. No philosophy should pretend to be anything more.

NOTE.—Since the preceding article was written, some observations on the effects of nitrous-oxide-gas-intoxication which I was prompted to make by reading the pamphlet called *The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy*, by Benjamin Paul Blood, Amsterdam, N. Y., 1874, have made me understand better than ever before both the strength and the weakness of Hegel's philosophy. I strongly urge others to repeat the experiment, which with pure gas is short and harmless enough. The effects will of course vary with the individual. Just as they vary in the same individual from time to time; but it is probable that in the former case, as in the latter, a generic resemblance will obtain. With me, as with every other person of whom I have heard, the keynote of the experience is the tremendously exciting sense of an intense metaphysical illumination. Truth lies open to the view in depth beneath depth of almost blinding evidence. The mind sees all the logical relations of being with an apparent subtlety and instantaneity to which its normal consciousness offers no parallel; only as sobriety returns, the feeling of insight fades, and one is left staring vacantly at a few disjointed words and phrases, as one stares at a cadaverous-looking snow-peak from which the sunset glow has just fled, or at the black cinder left by an extinguished brand.

The immense emotional sense of *reconciliation* which characterizes the 'maudlin' stage of alcoholic drunkenness,—a stage which seems silly to lookers-on, but the subjective rapture of which probably

constitutes a chief part of the temptation to the vice,—is well known. The centre and periphery of things seem to come together. The ego and its objects, the *meum* and the *tuum*, are one. Now this, only a thousandfold enhanced, was the effect upon me of the gas: and its first result was to make peal through me with unutterable power the conviction that Hegelism was true after all, and that the deepest convictions of my intellect hitherto were wrong. Whatever idea or representation occurred to the mind was seized by the same logical forceps, and served to illustrate the same truth; and that truth was that every opposition, among whatsoever things, vanishes in a higher unity in which it is based; that all contradictions, so-called, are but differences; that all differences are of degree; that all degrees are of a common kind; that unbroken continuity is of the essence of being; and that we are literally in the midst of *an infinite*, to perceive the existence of which is the utmost we can attain. Without the *same* as a basis, how could strife occur? Strife presupposes something to be striven about; and in this common topic, the same for both parties, the differences merge. From the hardest contradiction to the tenderest diversity of verbiage differences evaporate; *yes* and *no* agree at least in being assertions; a denial of a statement is but another mode of stating the same, contradiction can only occur of the same thing,—all opinions are thus synonyms, are synonymous, are the same. But the same phrase by difference of emphasis is two; and here again difference and no-difference merge in one.

It is impossible to convey an idea of the torrential character of the identification of opposites as it streams through the mind in this experience. I have sheet after sheet of phrases dictated or written during the intoxication, which to the sober reader seem meaningless drivel, but which at the moment of transcribing were fused in the fire of infinite rationality. God and devil, good and evil, life and death, I and thou, sober and drunk, matter and form, black and white, quantity and quality, shiver of ecstasy and shudder of horror, vomiting and swallowing, inspiration and expiration, fate and reason, great and small, extent and intent, joke and earnest, tragic and comic, and fifty other contrasts figure in these pages in the same monotonous way. The mind saw how each term *belonged* to its contrast through a knife-edge moment of transition which *it* effected, and which, perennial and eternal, was the *nunc stans* of life. The thought of mutual implication of the parts in the bare form of a judgment of opposition, as 'nothing—but,' 'no more—than,' 'only—if,' etc., produced a perfect delirium of theoretic rapture. And at last, when definite ideas to work on came slowly, the mind went through the mere *form* of recognizing sameness in identity by contrasting the same word with itself, differently emphasized, or shorn of its initial letter. Let me transcribe a few sentences:

What's mistake but a kind of take?
What's nausea but a kind of -ausea?
Sober, drunk, *-unk*, astonishment.
Everything can become the subject of criticism—how
criticise without something *to* criticise?
Agreement—disagreement!!
Emotion—motion!!!
Die away from, *from*, die away (without the *from*).
Reconciliation of opposites; sober, drunk, all the same!
Good and evil reconciled in a laugh!
It escapes, it escapes!
But——
What escapes, WHAT escapes?
Emphasis, EMphasis; there must be some emphasis in order

for there to be a phasis.
No verbiage can give it, because the verbiage is *other*.
Incoherent, coherent—same.
And it fades! And it's infinite! AND it's infinite!
If it was n't *going*, why should you hold on to it?
Don't you see the difference, don't you see the identity?
Constantly opposites united!
The same me telling you to write and not to write!
Extreme—extreme, extreme! Within the *extensity* that
'extreme' contains is contained the '*extreme*' of intensity.
Something, and *other* than that thing!
Intoxication, and *otherness* than intoxication.
Every attempt at betterment,—every attempt at otherment,—is a——.
It fades forever and forever as we move.

There *is* a reconciliation!
Reconciliation—*e*conciliation!
By God, how that hurts! By God, how it *does n't* hurt!
Reconciliation of two extremes.
By George, nothing but *othing*!
That sounds like nonsense, but it is pure *onsense*!
Thought deeper than speech——!
Medical school; divinity school, *school*! SCHOOL! Oh my
God, oh God, oh God!

The most coherent and articulate sentence which came was this:—

There are no differences but differences of degree between different degrees of difference and no difference.

This phrase has the true Hegelian ring, being in fact a regular *sich als sich auf sich selbst beziehende Negativität*. And true Hegelians will *überhaupt* be able to read between the lines and feel, at any rate, what *possible* ecstasies of cognitive emotion might have bathed these tattered fragments of thought when they were alive. But for the assurance of a certain amount of respect from them, I should hardly have ventured to print what must be such caviare to the general.

But now comes the reverse of the medal. What is the principle of unity in all this monotonous rain of instances? Although I did not see it at first, I soon found that it was in each case nothing but the abstract *genus* of which the conflicting terms were opposite species. In other words, although the flood of ontologic *emotion* was Hegelian through and through, the *ground* for it was nothing but the world-old principle that things are the same only so far and no farther than they *are* the same, or partake of a common nature,—the principle that Hegel most tramples under foot. At the same time the rapture of beholding a process that was infinite, changed (as the nature of the infinitude was realized by the mind) into the sense of a dreadful and ineluctable fate, with whose magnitude every finite effort is

incommensurable and in the light of which whatever happens is indifferent. This instantaneous revulsion of mood from rapture to horror is, perhaps, the strongest emotion I have ever experienced. I got it repeatedly when the inhalation was continued long enough to produce incipient nausea; and I cannot but regard it as the normal and inevitable outcome of the intoxication, if sufficiently prolonged. A pessimistic fatalism, depth within depth of impotence and indifference, reason and silliness united, not in a higher synthesis, but in the fact that whichever you choose it is all one,—this is the upshot of a revelation that began so rosy bright.

Even when the process stops short of this ultimatum, the reader will have noticed from the phrases quoted how often it ends by losing the clue. Something 'fades,' 'escapes;' and the feeling of insight is changed into an intense one of bewilderment, puzzle, confusion, astonishment. I know no more singular sensation than this intense bewilderment, with nothing particular left to be bewildered at save the bewilderment itself. It seems, indeed, *a causa sui*, or 'spirit become its own object.'

My conclusion is that the togetherness of things in a common world, the law of sharing, of which I have said so much, may, when perceived, engender a very powerful emotion, that Hegel was so unusually susceptible to this emotion throughout his life that its gratification became his supreme end, and made him tolerably unscrupulous as to the means he employed; that *indifferentism* is the true outcome of every view of the world which makes infinity and continuity to be its essence, and that pessimistic or optimistic attitudes pertain to the mere accidental subjectivity of the moment; finally, that the identification of contradictories, so far from being the self-developing process which Hegel supposes, is really a self-consuming process, passing from the less to the more abstract, and terminating either in a laugh at the ultimate nothingness, or in a mood of vertiginous amazement at a meaningless infinity.

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1. The seeming contradiction between the infinitude of space and the fact that it is all finished and given and there, can be got over in more than one way. The simplest way is by idealism, which distinguishes between space as actual and space as potential. For idealism, space only exists so far as it is represented; but all actually represented spaces are finite; it is only possibly representable spaces that are infinite.
 2. Not only for simplicity's sake do we select space as the paragon of a rationalizing continuum. Space determines the relations of the items that enter it in a far more intricate way than does time; in a far more fixed way than does the ego. By this last clause I mean that if things are in space at all, they must conform to geometry; while the being in an ego at all need not make them conform to logic or any other manner of rationality. Under the sheltering wings of a self the matter of unreason can lodge itself as safely as any other kind of content. One cannot but respect the devoutness of the ego-worship of some of our English-writing Hegelians. But at the same time one cannot help fearing lest the monotonous contemplation of so barren a principle as that of the pure formal self (which, be it never so essential a condition of the existence of a world of organized experience at all, must notwithstanding take its own *character* from, not give the character to, the separate empirical data over which its mantle is cast), one cannot but fear, I say, lest the religion of the transcendental ego should, like all religions of the 'one thing needful,' end by sterilizing and occluding the minds of its believers.
 3. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, viii. 37.

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