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TWO PHILOSOPHERS OF THE PARADOXICAL.

FIRST PAPER: HEGEL.

THERE are two comparatively recent thinkers who are so often remembered and misunderstood in our day that I shall here venture upon the dangerous task of discussing afresh, and in as untechnical fashion as possible, their personal temperaments and their significance as philosophers. These thinkers are Hegel and Schopenhauer. No one is more conscious than I am how little can be told about their metaphysical systems in the compass of two papers addressed to the general reader. My excuse, however, for the present undertaking is twofold. First, I think that something may be gained for the comprehension of both of them by the mere act of putting them side by side; for, with all their contrast and their apparently hopeless divergence, they have, as we shall find, certain striking similarities; and these, properly expounded, will throw light back upon that world of passion and of paradoxes from which they both have sprung, and whose problems they so suggestively embody. This world is, namely, the tragic and wondrous world in which our modern nineteenth-century life finds itself. The philosophers have not invented its paradoxes, but have only given expression to them, each in his own way. In the second place, there is the general excuse for every such essay as the present one, that, if it is impossible to describe briefly the technical intricacies of any metaphysical system, it is also true that every great thinker is much more than his system. He is a man with a noteworthy temperament, with a critical attitude towards the passions of real life, — an attitude which his books seek to embody, but which has its human interest apart from his books. His greatest desert often lies in this, that he tells us something of the meaning of his time. As to the Absolute, concerning which he speculates, he may lead us astray. As to human passions, faiths, hopes, ideals, he is sure to be instructive, just because these furnish the true ground and motive of his speculations. Hence there is a sense in which we have a right to treat the most technical of philosophers in an untechnical and literary fashion, in so far, namely, as he is a representative man of his time, who gives voice to its interests, furnishes a self-conscious expression of its beliefs, and sets before us its problems.

One can, however, do nothing to make clear a thinker's meaning without telling something about his historical relations. Hence I shall have to begin with a few words concerning the course of modern thought down to the time of Kant, and then make the transition to Hegel, to whom the rest of this paper will be devoted. A future paper will deal with Schopenhauer.

I.

Modern philosophy, as we nowadays use the term, is a very recent affair, dating back only to the seventeenth century. Since then, however, philosophy has lived through several periods, which for our purpose we may reduce to three.

The first period was one of what we may call naturalism, pure and simple. The philosophers of this time had left off contemplating the heaven of mediæval piety, and were disposed to deify nature. They adored the rigidity of geometrical methods. They loved the

study of the new physical science which had begun with Galileo. Man they conceived, so far as possible, a mechanism. To us, as we read, they seem cold, formal, painfully systematic, in the bad sense of that word. At heart, however, they are not without a deep piety of their own. The nature which they deify has its magnificent dignity. It is no respecter of our sentimentalities, but it does embody a certain awful justice. You would pray to it in vain, but you may interrogate it fearlessly, for it hides no charmed and magical secrets in its breast which an unlucky word may render dangerous to the inquirer. It notices no insult; it blasts no curious questioner for his irreverence. This nature is a wise nature. Her best children are those who labor most patiently to comprehend her laws. The weak she crushes, but the thoughtful she honors. She knows no miracles, but her laws are an inexhaustible treasure-house of resources to the knowing. In fact, knowledge of such laws is the chief end of man's life.

In strong contrast, however, to this trust in the laws of outer nature and in the absolute validity of reason is the spirit of introspection and of skepticism that slowly developed during the second period of modern thought, — a period which, beginning already before the end of the seventeenth century, culminated in Kant. This period loves above all the study of the wondrous inner world of man's soul. To deify nature is not enough. Man is the most interesting thing in nature, and he is not yet deified; nor can he be until we have won a true knowledge of his wayward heart. He may be a part of nature's mechanism or he may not; still, if he be a mechanism, he is that most paradoxical of things, a knowing mechanism. His knowledge itself, what it is, how it comes about, whence he gets it, how it grows, what it signifies, how it can be defended against skepticism, what it implies, both as to moral truth and as to theoretical truth, — these problems are foremost in the interests of the second period of modern thought. Reflection is now more subjective, an analysis of the mind rather than an examination of the business of physical science. Human reason is still, at first, the trusted instrument, but it soon turns its criticism upon itself. It distinguishes prejudices from axioms, fears dogmatism, scrutinizes the evidences of faith, suspects, or at best has consciously to defend, even the apparently irresistible authority of conscience, and so comes at last, in the person of the greatest of the British eighteenth-century thinkers, David Hume, to a questioning even of its own capacity to know truth, — a doubting attitude which brings philosophy into a sharp and admitted opposition to common sense. At this point, however, a new interest begins in Europe. If the age was already disposed to self-analysis, Rousseau, with his paradoxes and his even pathological love of limitless self-scrutiny, introduced into this man-loving period a sentimental tendency, from which, erelong, came a revival of passion, of poetry, and of enthusiasm, whose influence we shall never outgrow. Not much later came the "storm and stress" period of German literature; and by the time this had run its course, the French Revolution, overthrowing all the mechanical restraints of civilization, demonstrated the central importance of passion in the whole life of humanity.

The philosophy of Kant, developing in the quiet solitudes of his professional studies at Königsberg, in far-eastern Prussia, reflected with a most wonderful ingenuity the essential interests of the time when all this transformation was preparing. In 1781 he published his Critique of Pure Reason, nearly, if not quite, the most important philosophical treatise ever written. The essential doctrine of this book is the thought that man's nature is the real creator of man's

world. It is n't the external world as such that is the deepest truth for us at all; it is the inner structure of the human spirit, which merely expresses itself in the visible nature about us. The interest of Kant's presentation of this paradoxical thought lay not so much in the originality of the conception, for philosophers never invent fundamental beliefs, and this idea of Kant's is as old as deeper spiritual faith itself, but rather in the cool, dispassionate, mercilessly critical ingenuity with which he carries it out. Issued years before the French Revolution, the book seems a sort of deliberate justification of the proud consciousness of man's own absolute rights with which, in that mighty struggle, the human spirit rose against all external restraints, and declared, as we in America had already showed men how to do, that the true world for humanity is the world which the freeman makes, and that the genuinely natural order is one which is not external until reason decrees that it shall exist.

A more detailed account of Kant's philosophy here would of course carry us too far. Fortunately, the most general outlines of his doctrine are in some measure a matter of popular knowledge. He held, as is known, that the human subject finds himself in the presence of a show-world, as one might call it, — a world in space and in time, — which, upon analysis, turns out to be of a most curious and baffling character. For, in the first place, as Kant maintains, it is demonstrable that space and time are what the philosopher calls "forms" of our own "sense perception," and not forms or properties of real things outside of us at all. In view of this analysis, Kant declares that the "things in themselves," whatever they are, which are behind our world of sense, are neither spatial nor temporal in nature, and for that very reason are unknowable. We can know that they exist, but what they are it is absolutely beyond our power to discover. The objects, however, in our show-world itself, the things in space and in time, as they exist *for us*, may indeed be the result of the action of the things in themselves upon our senses, but are for us just *our* objects, made possible by the laws of our own nature.

What these laws of our own nature are will appear a little more clearly if we remember the fact that our world of daily experience is not merely a world of sense, but is also a world of "Understanding;" that is, a world where order reigns, where things happen according to rule, where you can study the connection of cause and effect, where a practically sane conduct of life and a theoretically reasonable study of nature are possible. Yet, as we have seen, for all this its good order, the world of experience is not a world of genuine outer things in themselves, but is our own world of seeming things. How, then, does it get this irresistible good order, this objectively fixed character, that we all attribute to it? Kant's answer is one of the very greatest subtlety and ingenuity. I cannot give it in his words, but must suggest it in my own, since all that is to follow in this paper will have relation to this thought of Kant's.

Each one of us, namely, is, according to Kant, at once a Total Self, a Person, all of whose life of sense goes somehow together to form One Life; and each of us is also, in a curious way, what Kant calls an Empirical Self, — that is, a creature of the moment, a fragmentary being, who flies from one experience to another, and who takes the world as it comes. The fragmentary self of the moment, nevertheless, is constantly trying to think himself with reference to his own total experience. I, for instance, feel just now this total of impressions; I see this paper, this writing upon it, this table, this light, this room. But, also, I do more than merely thus see and feel the moment; for I know who I

am. I have for myself a past, a future, a personality. My present experience is part of my total self. Only as such is it recognizable to me. If I don't know who I, on the whole, am, I don't know anything. But, now, how do I know who I am? Only, says Kant, by bringing my present experience into some orderly relation to my larger self, to my whole experience; and this I can do only by virtue of what Kant calls certain Categories, or Forms of Thought, such as my idea of Cause, whereby I at this moment am linked in the form of time to my own past. I recognize myself as this person only by means of conceiving thoughtfully some causal or other rational relation between this present fleeting moment and all my other experiences. I think my world as one, because I think myself as one. All my experiences make up one experience. "If I be I, as I think I be," then, for that very reason, my show-world must have order in it; must not be flighty, confused, insane. To preserve, therefore, my own sanity (called by Kant the "Unity of Apperception"), to save myself from a mere flight of ideas, I must have the power to give fixity to the world of my experience. And thus it is, as Kant asserts, that the Understanding creates the very laws of nature.

It is needful for us to note the central feature of this doctrine of Kant's. The assurance that nature must have rigid and rational law in it had been, as we have seen, fundamental in the philosophy of the seventeenth century, — fundamental and unquestioned. The age of Hume had come to question this assurance. How can our reason, in demanding that things shall conform to law, be sure that its demands agree with the nature of things? Kant's answer is essentially this: Because the natural world is through and through *our* world, the world of our sense-forms of time and space; and because, also, the laws upon which the very sanity of our self-consciousness depends are laws which assure that this, *our* world, shall have rigid order in it. For, as Kant in substance holds, a sane self-consciousness always appeals from the momentary to the Total Self; and every such appeal sets the moment in orderly relations to the Total Self, brings this fleeting experience into union with the One Experience. The central feature of Kant is, then, this doctrine of the relation of the momentary and the complete self.

Overlong as the foregoing summary may seem to be, it is needed to bring us where we can understand the third period of modern thought, to which Hegel already belongs. For the earlier post-Kantian thinkers the doctrine, "This world is our world, and for us things in themselves are inaccessible," is, on the whole, so fundamental that, for a while, many of them drop the things in themselves altogether out of sight, deny that such things exist, and devote their main study to a consideration of Kant's central problem, the relation of the momentary self to the Universal Self. Prominent amongst the men of this type were first Fichte, and then the principal thinkers of the Romantic School, including Schelling as he was in his first period. Of Kant's Total Self, the true Ego to whom I, the transient self, always appeal, these later speculators soon made an Absolute; that is, a Self whose complete experience embraces not only *my* private life, but all finite life; whose unity puts law not only into my show-world, but also into the world of every intelligence; in short, a Logos, whose rank is once more divine, and whose show-world of seeming things is for us finite beings as true and irresistible a nature as even the seventeenth century had reverenced. Kant, as is known, had found in his subjective doctrine no theoretical proof of God's existence, and, according to him, one postulates an Absolute beyond our experience solely for an ethical reason. But these

Romantic Idealists found in Kant's own doctrine the essential basis of what seemed to them a higher Theism. Who is this Total Self, to which we all appeal, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, but the true and divine Self, the vine whereof we are the branches? So Fichte had already suggested at an early stage, and the development of the thought in numerous and decidedly vague forms is characteristic of the whole Romantic School.

A return, then, to the universal and divinely sovereign outer Truth of the seventeenth century, but with an interpretation of this truth in terms of Kant's thought; an acceptance of Kant's doctrine that the Self is the law-giver of nature, and yet a synthesis of this with the doctrine that there is an Absolute beyond our finite consciousness, — such was the undertaking at the beginning of the third period of modern philosophy.

But now, as must at once be pointed out, neither Hegel nor Schopenhauer is fairly to be described as expressing unmodified this notion of the Absolute: not Hegel, because with him all the stress is laid upon his own fashion of developing his peculiar "Notion" of what the Absolute Self is; not Schopenhauer, because, while he too reached a conception of an Absolute from a Kantian starting-point, he condemned altogether any attempt to call it a Self, or a Logos, or God. Yet both thinkers have a part in the great movement whose end it was to universalize Kant's purely subjective doctrine of knowledge.

II.

With the Idealists of the Romantic School Hegel had indeed many things in common, but he differed from them profoundly in temperament. They reached their Absolute Self by various mystical or otherwise too facile methods, which we cannot here expound. Hegel hated easy roads in philosophy, and abhorred mysticism. He therefore, at first, in his private studies, clung closely to Kant's original mode of dealing with the problems of the new philosophy until he had found his own fashion of reflection. To understand what this fashion was we must turn to the man himself.

Yet, as I now come to speak of Hegel's temperament, I must at once point out that, of all first-class thinkers, he is, personally, one of the least imposing in character and life. Kant was a man whose intellectual might and heroic moral elevation stood in contrast to the weakness of his bodily presence, which, after all, had something of the sublime about it. Spinoza's lonely, almost princely haughtiness of intellect joins with his religious mysticism to give his form grace, and his very isolation nobility. But Hegel is in no wise either graceful or heroic in bearing. His dignity is solely the dignity of his work. Apart from his achievement, and his temperament as making it possible, there is positively nothing of mark in the man. He was a keen-witted Suabian, a born scholar, a successful teacher, self-possessed, decidedly crafty, merciless to his enemies, quarrelsome on occasion, after the rather crude fashion of the German scholar, sedate and methodical in the rest of his official life; a rather sharp disciplinarian when he had to deal with young people or with subordinates, a trifle servile when he had to deal with official or with social superiors. From his biographer, Rosenkranz, we learn of him in many private capacities; he interests us in hardly any of them. He was no patriot, like Fichte; no romantic dreamer, like Novalis; no poetic seer of splendid metaphysical visions, like Schelling. His career is absolutely devoid of romance. We even have one or two of his love-letters. They are awkward and dreary beyond measure. His inner life either had no crises, or concealed them obstinately. In his dealings with his

friends, as, for instance, with Schelling, he was wily and masterful; using men for his advantage so long as he needed them, and turning upon them without scruple when they could no longer serve his ends. His life, in its official character, was indeed blameless. He was a faithful servant of his various successive masters, and unquestionably he reaped his worldly reward. His students flattered him, and therefore he treated them well. But towards opponents he showed scant courtesy. To the end he remains a self-seeking, determined, laborious, critical, unaffectionate man, faithful to his office and to his household, loyal to his employers, cruel to his foes, asking no mercy in controversy and showing none. His style in his published books is not without its deep ingenuity and its marvelous accuracy, but otherwise is notoriously one of the most barbarous, technical, and obscure in the whole history of philosophy. If his lectures are more easy-flowing and genial, they are in the end and as a whole hardly more comprehensible. He does little to attract his reader, and everything to make the road long and painful to the student. All this is not awkwardness; it is deliberate choice. He is proud of his barbarism. And yet — here is the miracle — this unattractive and unheroic person is one of the most noteworthy of all the chosen instruments through which, in our times, the Spirit has spoken. It is not ours to comprehend this wind that bloweth where it listeth. We have only to hear the sound thereof.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in August, 1770, at Stuttgart. His family was of a representative Suabian type; his own early surroundings were favorable to an industrious but highly pedantic sort of learning. At the gymnasium in Stuttgart, which he attended from his seventh year, he was an extraordinarily, but, on the whole, a very healthily studious boy. From his fifteenth until well on in his seventeenth year we find him keeping a diary, from which Rosenkranz has published large fragments. It is in strong contrast to the sentimental diaries that the characteristic youth of genius, in those days, might have been expected to keep. In fact, there was no promise of genius, so far, in the young Hegel. His diary runs on much after this fashion: "Tuesday, June 28 [1785]. I observed to-day what different impressions the same thing can make on different people. . . . I was eating cherries with excellent appetite, and having a very good time, . . . when somebody else, older than I, to be sure, looked on with indifference, and said that in youth one thinks that one cannot possibly pass a cherry-woman without having one's mouth water for the cherries (as we Suabians say), whereas in more advanced years one can let a whole spring pass without feeling an equal longing for such things. Whereupon I thought out the following principle, a rather painful one for me, but still a very profound one, namely, that in youth . . . one can't eat as much as one wants, while in age one does n't want to eat as much as one can."

Such was the philosopher Hegel at fifteen years of age. His diary never records a genuine event. Nothing seems to have happened to this young devourer of cherries and learning, except such marvels as that one day at church he learned the date of the Augsburg Confession; or that, during a walk, one of his teachers told him how every good thing has its bad side; and again, during another walk, tried to explain to him why July and August are hotter than June. Of such matters the diary is full; never does one learn of an inner experience of any significance. Aspirations are banished. The boy is pedantic enough, not to say an out-and-out prig; but this, at any rate, appears as the distinctive feature of his temperament: he is thoroughly objective. He wants to know life as it is in itself, not as it is for him;

he desires the true principles of things, not his private and sentimental interpretation of them. Meanwhile, he is at once well instructed in religious faith, and given so far to the then popular and rather shallow rationalism which loved to make very easy work of the mysterious of every kind and grade. He devotes some space to the explanation of ghost stories. He even records, meanwhile, occasional bits of dry Suabian humor, such as later, in a much-improved form, found place in his academic lectures, and were so characteristic of his style, not to say of his system. The boyish form of this interest in the grotesque may be thus exemplified: "January 3, 1787. Total eclipse of the moon: instruments prepared at the gymnasium, where some gathered to see; but the sky was too cloudy. So the rector told us the following: As a boy, he himself had once gone out with other boys, at night, on the pretense of star-gazing. In reality they had only wandered about. The police found them, and were going to take them into custody; but the gymnasium boys said, 'We're out star-gazing.' 'Nay,' responded the police, 'but you boys ought to go to bed at night, and do your star-gazing in the daytime.'" I note this trifle, because, after all, it means more than one would think. Here and at other places in the young Hegel's record appear glimpses of a certain deep delight in the paradoxical, — a delight which, at times merely dry and humorous, at times keenly intellectual, would mean little in another temperament, but which is, after all, the determining tendency of Hegel's mind.

In fact, if one has eyes to see it, the Hegelian temperament, although not at all the Hegelian depth, is, even as early as this, almost completely indicated. Of the later philosophical genius, as I have said, there is so far no promise; but the general attitude which this genius was to render so significant is already taken by the boy Hegel. The traits present are, for the first, an enormous intellectual acquisitiveness, which finds every sort of learning, but above all every sort of literary and humane learning, extremely interesting. The pedantry which oppresses the German gymnasiast of that day is relieved, meanwhile, by this dry and sarcastic Suabian humor, which notes the oddities and stupidities of human nature with a keen appreciation. The humor involves a love of the grotesque, of the paradoxical, of the eternally self-contradictory in human life. The mature Hegel was to discover the deeper meaning of such paradoxes; for the time being he simply notes them. For the rest, there is one trait already manifest which is also of no small significance in Hegel's life-work. This is a certain observant sensitiveness to all manner of conscious processes in other people, joined with a singularly cool and impersonal aptitude for criticising these processes. Here, indeed, is a feature about Hegel which, later in his mature wisdom, assumed a very prominent place, and which always makes him, even apart from his style, very hard for some people to comprehend. We are used in literature to the man who sympathizes personally with the passions of his fellows, and who thus knows their hearts because of the warmth of his own heart. We know also something of the tragically cynical type of man who, like Swift, not because he is insensitive, but because he is embittered, sees, or chooses to describe in passion, only its follies. We have all about us, moreover, the simply unfeeling, to whom passion is an impenetrable mystery, because they are naturally blind to its depth and value. But Hegel's type is one of the rarest, — the one, namely, whose representative man will, so to speak, tell you, in a few preternaturally accurate though perhaps highly technical words, all that ever you did; who will seem to sound your heart very much as a skillful spe-

cialist in nervous diseases would sound the mysterious and secret depths of a morbid patient's consciousness; but who, all the while, is himself apparently as free from deep personal experiences of an emotional type as the physician is free from his patient's morbid and nervous web-spinning. Hegel has this quasi-professional type of sensitiveness about his whole bearing towards life. Nobody keener or more delicately alive and watchful than he to comprehend, but also nobody more merciless to dissect, the wisest and the tenderest passions of the heart. And yet it is not all mercilessness in his case. When he has analyzed, he does not condemn, after the cynic's fashion. After the dissection comes reconstruction. He singles out what he takes to be the truly humane in passion, he describes the artistic or the religious interests of man, he pictures the more admirable forms of self-consciousness; and now, indeed, his speech may assume at moments a religious, even a mystical tone. He praises, he depicts approvingly, he admires, the absolute worth of these things. You feel that at last you have found his heart also in a glow. But no, this too is an illusion. A word erelong undeceives you as to his personal attitude. He is only engaged in his trade as shrewd professor; he is only telling you the true and objective value of things; he is not making any serious pretenses as to his own piety or wealth of concern. He is still the critic. His admiration was the approval of the on-looker. In his private person he remains what he was before, untouched by the glow of heart of the very seraphs themselves.

In the year 1788 Hegel entered the university of his province at Tübingen. Here he studied until 1793, being somewhat interrupted in his academic work by ill health. His principal study was theology. A certificate given him at the conclusion of his course declared that he was a man of some gifts and industry, but that he had paid no serious attention to philosophy. His reading, however, had been very varied. In addition to theology he had shown a great fondness for the Greek tragedians. His most intimate student friends of note had been the young poet Hölderlin and Schelling himself. Nobody had yet detected any element of greatness in Hegel.

The friendship with Schelling was now continued in the form of a correspondence, which lasted while Hegel, as an obscure family tutor, passed the years from 1793 to 1796 in Switzerland, and then, in a similar capacity, worked in Frankfort-on-the-Main until the end of 1800, when, through Schelling's assistance, he found an opportunity to enter upon an academic career at the University of Jena. During all these years Hegel matured slowly, and printed nothing. The letters to Schelling are throughout written in a flattering and receptive tone. Philosophy becomes more prominent in Hegel's thought and correspondence as time goes on. To Schelling he appeals as to the elect leader of the newest evolution in thought. From the Kantian philosophy, he says, a great new creative movement is to grow, and the central idea of this new movement will be the doctrine of the Absolute and Infinite Self, whose constructive processes shall explain the fundamental laws of the world. This notion Hegel expresses already in 1795, when he is but twenty-five years old and Schelling is but twenty. But as to the development of the new system in his own mind he gives little or no hint until 1800, just before joining Schelling at Jena. Then, as he confesses to his friend, "the Ideal of my youth has had to take a reflective form, and has become a system; and I now am asking how I can return to life and set about influencing men." He had actually, by this time, written an outline of his future doctrine, which was already in all its

essentials fully defined. On his first appearance at Jena, however, he was content to appear as a co-worker, and even as in part an expositor, of Schelling; and probably he purposely exaggerated the agreement between his friend and himself so long as he found Schelling's reputation and assistance a valuable introduction to the learned world, in which the youthful Romanticist was already a great figure, while Hegel himself was so far unknown. In 1801 Hegel began his lectures as Privat-Docent at the University. In 1803 Schelling left the University, and Hegel, now dependent upon himself, erelong made no secret of the fact that he had his own relatively independent philosophy, and that he could find as yet nothing definite and final about his friend's writings. His own first great book, the Phänomenologie des Geistes, finished at about the time of the battle of Jena, and published early in 1807, completed his separation from Schelling, whose Romantic vagueness he unmercifully ridiculed, without naming Schelling himself, in the long preface with which the book opened. In a letter to Schelling accompanying a copy of the Phänomenologie, Hegel indeed explained that his ridicule must be understood as directed against the misuse which the former's followers were making of the Romantic method in philosophy; but the language of the preface was unmistakable. Schelling replied curtly, and the correspondence ended. After the period of confusion which followed the battle of Jena, Hegel, who had been temporarily forced to abandon the scholastic life, found a place as gymnasium director at Nürnberg, where he married in 1811. In 1816 he was called to a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg. He had already published his Logic. In 1818 he was called to Berlin, and here rapidly rose to the highest academic success. He had a great following, came into especial court favor, reached an almost despotic position in the world of German philosophic thought, and died of cholera, at the very height of his fame, in November, 1831.

If we now undertake in a few words to characterize Hegel's doctrine, we must first of all cut loose almost entirely from that traditional description of his system which has been repeated in the text-books until almost everybody has forgotten what it means, and has therefore come to accept it as true. We must furthermore limit our attention to Hegel's theory of the nature of self-consciousness, laying aside all detailed study of the rest of his elaborate system. And, finally, we must be rude to our thinker, as he was to every one else; we must take what we regard as his "Secret" (to borrow Dr. Stirling's word) out of the peculiar language in which Hegel chose to express it, and out of the systematic tomb where he would have insisted upon burying it. So treated, Hegel's doctrine will appear as an analysis of the fundamental Paradox of our Consciousness.

III.

The world of our daily life, Kant had said, has good order and connection in it not because the absolute order of external things in themselves is known to us, but (as I have reworded Kant) because we are sane; because our understanding, then, has its own coherence, and must see its experience in the light of this coherence. Idealism has already drawn the obvious conclusion from all this. If this be so, if it is our understanding that actually creates the order of nature for us, then the problem, "How shall I comprehend my world?" becomes no more or less than the problem, "How shall I understand myself?" We have already suggested into what romantic extravagances the effort to know exhaustively the inner life had by this time led. Some profound but still vague relation

was felt to exist between my own self and an Infinite Self. To this vague relation, which Fichte conceived in purely ethical terms, and which the Romanticists tried to grasp in numerous arbitrary and fantastic ways, philosophy was accustomed to appeal. My Real Self is deeper than my conscious self, and this real self is boundless, far spreading, romantic, divine. Only poets and other geniuses can dream of it justly. But nobody can tell squarely and simply, *mit dürren Worten*, just what he means by it. Now Hegel, as a maliciously cool-headed and sternly unromantic Suabian, did indeed himself believe in the Infinite Self, but he regarded all this vagueness of the Romanticists with contempt, and even with a certain rude mirth. He appreciated all its enthusiasm in his own external way, of course; he could even talk after that dreamy fashion himself, and once, not to the credit of his wisdom, perhaps not quite to the credit of his honesty, he did so, in an early essay, published, as we must note, while he was still Schelling's academic nursling at Jena. But he despised vagueness, and when the time came he said so. Yet still for him the great question of philosophy lay just where the Romanticists had found it; yes, just where Kant himself had left it. My conscious and present self is n't the whole of me. I am constantly appealing to my own past, to my own future self, and to my deeper self, also, as it now is. Whatever I affirm, or doubt, or deny, I am always searching my own mind for proof, for support, for guidance. Such searching constitutes in one sense all my active mental life. All philosophy, then, turns, as Kant had shown, upon understanding who and what I am, and who my deeper self is. Hegel recognizes this; but he will not dream about it. He undertakes an analysis, therefore, which we must here reword in our own fashion, and for the most part with our own illustrations.

Examine yourself at any instant. "I," you say, "know just now this that is now present to me, — this feeling, this sound, this thought. Of past and future, of remote things, of other people, I can conjecture this or that, but just now and here I know whatever *is* here and now for me." Yes, indeed; but *what* is here and now for me? See, *even as I try to tell, the here and now have flown.* I know this note of music that sounds, this wave that breaks on the beach. No, not so; even as I try to tell what I now know, the note has sounded and ceased, the wave is broken and another wave curves onward to its fall. I cannot say, "I know." I must always say, "I just knew." But what was it I just knew? Is it already past and gone? Then how can I now be knowing it at all? One sees this endless paradox of consciousness, this eternal flight of myself from myself. After all, do I really ever know any one abiding or even momentarily finished and clearly present thing? No, indeed. I am eternally changing my mind. All that I know, then, is not any present moment, but the moment that is just past, and the change from that moment to this. My momentary self has knowledge in so far as it knows, recognizes, accepts, another self, the self of the moment just past. And again, my momentary self is known to the self of the next succeeding moment, and so on in eternal and fatal flight. All this is an old paradox. The poets make a great deal of it. You can illustrate endlessly its various forms and shadings. That I don't know my present mind, but can only review my past mind, is the reason, for instance, why I never precisely know that I am happy at the very instant when I am happy. After a merry evening, I can think it all over and say, "Yes, I *have been* happy. It all *was* good." Only then, mark you, the happiness is over. But still, you may say, I know that the memory of my past happiness is itself a happy thing.

No, not even this do I now directly know. If I reflect on my memory of past joy, I see, once more but in a second reflective memory, that my previous memory of joy was itself joyous. But, as you see, I get each new joy as my own in knowledge only when it has fled in being. It is my memory that but a moment since or a while since I was joyful that constitutes my knowledge of my joy. This is a somewhat sad paradox. I *feel* my best joys just when I *know* them least, namely, in my least reflective moments. To know that I enjoy is to reflect, and to reflect is to remember a joy past. But surely, then, one may say, when I suffer I can know that I am miserable. Yes, but once more only reflectively. Each pang is past when I come to know that it was just now mine. "That is over," I say; "what next?" And it is this horror of the "What next?" this looking for my sorrow elsewhere than in the present, namely, in the dreaded and on-coming fatal future, that constitutes the deepest pang of loneliness, of defeat, of shame, or of bereavement. My illustrations are still my own, not Hegel's.

The result of all this possibly too elaborate web-spinning of ours is not far to seek. We wanted to know who any one of us at any moment is, and the answer to the question is, Each one of us is what some other moment of his life reflectively finds him to be. It is a mysterious and puzzling fact, but it is true. No one of us knows what he now is; he can only know what he *was*. Each one of us, however, is *now* only what hereafter he *shall* find himself to be. This is the deepest paradox of the inner life. We get self-possession, self-apprehension, self-knowledge, only through endlessly fleeing from ourselves, and then turning back to look at what we were. But this paradox relates not merely to moments. It relates to all life. Youth does not know its own deep mind. Mature life or old age reflectively discovers a part of what youth meant, and sorrows now that the meaning is known only when the game is ended. All feeling, all character, all thought, all life, exists for us only in so far as it can be reflected upon, viewed from without, seen at a distance, acknowledged by another than itself, reworded in terms of fresh experience. Stand still where you are, stand alone, isolate your life, and forthwith you are nothing. Enter into relations, exist for the reflective thought of yourself or of other people, criticise yourself and be criticised, observe yourself and be observed, exist and at the same time look upon yourself and be looked upon from without, and then indeed you are somebody, — a Self with a consistency and a vitality, a Being with a genuine life.

In short, then, take me moment by moment, or take me in the whole of my life, and this comes out as the paradox of my existence, namely, I know myself only in so far as I am known or may be known by another than my present or momentary self. Leave me alone to the self-consciousness of this moment, and I shrivel up into a mere atom, an unknowable feeling, a nothing. My existence is in a sort of conscious publicity of my inner life.

Let me draw at once an analogy between this fact of the inner life and the well-known fact of social life to which I just made reference. This analogy evidently struck Hegel with a great deal of force, as he often refers to it. We are all aware, if we have ever tried it, how empty and ghostly is a life lived for a long while in absolute solitude. Free me from my fellows, let me alone to work out the salvation of my own glorious Self, and surely (so I may fancy) I shall now for the first time show who I am. No, not so; on the contrary, I merely show in such a case who I am not. I am no longer friend, brother, companion, co-worker, servant, citizen, father, son; I exist for nobody; and ere-

long, perhaps to my surprise, generally to my horror, I discover that I *am* nobody. The one thing means the other. In the dungeon of my isolated self-consciousness I rot away, unheeded and terror-stricken. Idiocy is before me, and my true self is far behind, in those bright and bitter days when I worked and suffered with my fellows. My freedom from others is my doom, the most insufferable form of bondage. Could I speak to a living soul! If any one knew of me, looked at me, thought of me,— yes, hated me, even,— how blessed would be the deliverance! Now, note the analogy here between the inner life in each of us and the social life that each of us leads. Within myself the rule holds that I live consciously only in so far as I am known and reflected upon by my subsequent life. Beyond what is called my private self, however, a similar rule holds. I exist in a vital and humane sense only in relation to my friends, my social business, my family, my fellow-workers, my world of other selves. This is the rule of mental life. We are accustomed to speak of consciousness as if it were wholly an inner affair, which each one has at each moment solely in and by himself. But, after all, what consciousness do we then refer to? What is love but the consciousness that somebody is there who either loves me (and then I rejoice) or does not (and then I am gloomy or jealous)? What is self-respect but a conscious appeal to others to respect my right or my worth? And if you talk of one's secret heart, what is it but just that inner brooding in one's own conscious life which so much the more illustrates, as we say, the very impossibility of knowing myself except by looking back on my past self? See, then, it makes no difference how you look at me; you find the same thing. *All Consciousness is an appeal to other Consciousness.* That is the essence of it. The inner life is, as Hegel would love to express it, *ebensosehr* an outer life. Spirituality is just intercourse, communion of spirits. This is the essential publicity of consciousness, whereby all the secrets of our hearts are known.

Here, then, Hegel has come upon the track of a process in consciousness whereby my private Self and that deeper Self of the Romanticists may be somewhat more definitely connected. Let us state this process a little abstractly. A conscious being is to think, or to feel, or to do something. Very well, then, he must surely think or do this, one would say, in some one moment. So be it; but as a conscious being he is also to know that he thinks or does this. To this end, however, he must exist in more than one moment. He must first act, and then live to know that he has acted. The self that acts is one; the self that knows of the act is another. Thus, there are at least two moments, already two selves. We see at once how the same process could be indefinitely repeated. In order to know myself at all, I must thus live out an indefinitely numerous series of acts and moments. I must become many selves, and live in their union and coherence. But still more. Suppose that what our self-conscious being has to do is to prove a proposition in geometry. As he proves, he appeals to somebody, his other self, so to speak, to observe that his proof is sound. Or, again, suppose that what he does is to love, to hate, to beseech, to pity, to appeal for pity, to feel proud, to despise, to exhort, to feel charitable, to long for sympathy, to converse; to do, in short, any of the social acts that make up, when taken all together, the whole of our innermost self-consciousness. All these acts, we see, involve at least the appeal to many selves, to society, to other spirits. We have no life alone. There is no merely inner Self. There is the world of Selves. We live in our coherence with other people, in our relationships. To sum it all up: From first to last, the law of conscious existence is

this paradoxical but real Self-differentiation, whereby I, the so-called inner Self, am through and through one of many Selves, so that my inner Self is already an outer, a revealed, an expressed Self. The only Mind is the world of many related minds. It is of the essence of consciousness to find its inner reality by losing itself in outer but spiritual relationships. Who am I, then, at this moment? I am just this knot of relationships to other moments and to other people. Do I converse busily and with absorption? If so, I am but just now this centre of the total consciousness of all those who are absorbed in this conversation. And so always it is of the essence of Spirit to differentiate itself into many spirits, and to live in their relationships, to be one solely by virtue of their coherence.

The foregoing illustrations of Hegel's paradox, some of which in these latter paragraphs have been his own, have not begun to suggest how manifold are, according to him, its manifestations. So paradoxical and so true does it seem to him, however, that he looks for further analogies of the same process in other regions of our conscious life. What we have found is, that if I am to be I, "as I think I be," I must be more than merely I. I become myself by forsaking my isolation and by entering into community. My self-possession is always and everywhere self-surrender to my relationships. But now is not this paradox of the spirit applicable still further in life? Does n't a similar law hold of all that we do in yet a deeper sense? If you want to win any end, not merely the end of knowing yourself, but say the end of becoming holy, is n't it true that, curiously enough, you in vain strive to become holy if you merely strive for holiness? Just pure holiness, what would it be? To have never a worldly thought; to be peaceful, calm, untroubled, absolutely pure in spirit, without one blot or blemish, — that would indeed be noble, would it? But consider, if one were thus quite unworldly just because one had never an unworldly thought, what would that be but simple impassivity, innocence, pure emptiness? An innocent little cherub, that, just born into a pure light, had never even heard that there was a world at all, — he would, in this sense, be unworldly. But is such holiness the triumphant holiness of those that really excel in strength? Of course, if I had never even heard of the world, I should not be a lover of the world. But that would be because of my ignorance. And all sorts of things can be alike ignorant, — cherubs, young tigers, infant Napoleons, or Judases. Yes, the very demons of the pit might have begun by being ignorant of the universe. If so, they would have been so far holy. But, after all, is such holiness worth much, as holiness? It is indeed worth a good deal as innocence, just to be looked at. A young tiger or a baby Napoleon fast asleep, or a new-created demon that had not yet grown beyond the cherub stage, — we should all like to look at such pretty creatures. But such holiness is no ideal for us moral agents. Here we are with the world in our hands, beset already with temptation and all the pangs of our finitude. For us holiness means, not the abolition of worldliness, not innocence, not turning away from the world, but the victory that overcometh the world, the struggle, the courage, the vigor, the endurance, the hot fight with sin, the facing of the demon, the power to have him there in us and to hold him by the throat, the living and ghastly presence of the enemy, and the triumphant wrestling with him, and keeping him forever a panting, furious, immortal thrall and bondman. That is all the holiness we can hope for. Yes, this is the only true holiness. Such triumph alone does the Supreme Spirit know, who is tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Holiness, you see, exists by virtue of its

opposite. Holiness is a consciousness of sin with a consciousness of the victory over sin. Only the tempted are holy, and they only when they win against temptation.

All this I set down here, not merely because I believe it, although in fact I do, but because Hegel's cool diagnosis of life loves to mark just such symptoms as this. "Die Tugend," says he, in one passage of his Logic, — "die Tugend ist der vollendete Kampf." Holiness, then, is the very height of the struggle with evil. It is a paradox, all this. And it is the same paradox of consciousness over again. You want the consciousness of virtue; you win it, not by innocence, but through its own very opposite, namely, through meeting the enemy, enduring, and overcoming. Consciousness here, once more as before, differentiates itself into various, into contrasted forms, and lives in their relationships, their conflicts, their contradictions, and in the triumph over these. As the warrior rejoices in the foeman worthy of his steel, and rejoices in him just because he wants to overcome and to slay him; as courage exists by the triumph over terror, and as there is no courage in a world where there is nothing terrible; as strength consists in the mastery of obstacles; as even love is proved only through suffering, grows deep only when sorrow is with it, becomes often the tenderer because it is wounded by misunderstanding: so, in short, everywhere in conscious life. Consciousness is a union, an organization, of conflicting aims, purposes, thoughts, stirrings. And just this, according to Hegel, is the very perfection of consciousness. There is nothing simple in it, nothing *unmittelbar*, nothing there till you win it, nothing consciously known or possessed till you prove it by conflict with its opposite, till you develop its inner contradictions and triumph over them. This is the fatal law of life. This is the pulse of the spiritual world.

For see, once more: our illustrations have run from highest to lowest in life. Everywhere, from the most trivial games, where the players are always risking loss in order to enjoy triumph, from the lowest crudities of savage existence, where the warriors prove their heroism by lacerating their own flesh, up to the highest conflicts and triumphs of the Spirit, the law holds good. Spirituality lives by self-differentiation into mutually opposing forces, and by victory in and over these oppositions. This law it is that Hegel singles out and makes the basis of his system. This is that Logic of Passion which he so skillfully diagnoses, and so untiringly and even mercilessly applies to all life. He gives his law various very technical names. He calls it the law of the universal *Negativität* of self-conscious life; and Negativität means simply this principle of self-differentiation, by which, in order to possess any form of life, virtue, or courage, or wisdom, or self-consciousness, you play, as it were, the game of consciousness, set over against yourself your opponent, — the wicked impulse that your goodness holds by the throat, the cowardice that your courage conquers, the problem that your wisdom solves, — and then live by winning your game against this opponent. Having found this law, Hegel undertakes, by a sort of exhaustive induction, to apply it to the explanation of every conscious relation, and to construct, in terms of this principle of the self-differentiation of Spirit, the whole mass of our rational relations to one another, to the world, and to God. His principle is, in another form, this: that the deeper Self which the Romanticists sought is to be found and defined only by spiritual struggle, toil, conflict; by setting over against our private selves the world of our tasks, of our relationships; and by developing, defining, and mastering these tasks and relationships until we shall find, through the very stress and vastness and necessity and

spirituality of the conflict, that we are in God's own infinite world of spiritual warfare and of absolute, restless Self-consciousness. The more of a Self I am, the more contradictions there are in my nature, and the completer my conquest over these contradictions. The Absolute Self with which I am seeking to raise my soul, and which erelong I find to be a genuine Self, — yes, the only Self, — exists by the very might of its control over all these contradictions, whose infinite variety furnishes the very heart and content of its life.

Hegel, as we see, makes his Absolute, the Lord, most decidedly a man of war. Consciousness is paradoxical, restless, struggling. Weak souls get weary of the fight, and give up trying to get wisdom, skill, virtue, because all these are won only in presence of the enemy. But the Absolute Self is simply the absolutely strong spirit who bears the contradictions of life, and wins the eternal victory.

Yet one may say, if this is Hegel's principle, it amounts simply to showing us how conflict and active mastery continually enlarge our finite selves. Does it enable us to prove that anywhere in the world there is this Absolute Self which embraces and wins *all* the conflicts? Hegel tells us how the individual Self is related to the deeper Self, how the inner life finds itself through its own realization in the contradictions of the outer life; but does he anywhere show that God exists?

To show this is precisely his object. I am not here judging how well he succeeds. The deepest presupposition, he thinks, of all this paradoxical conscious life of ours is the existence of the Absolute Self, which exists, to be sure, not apart from the world, but in this whole organized human warfare of ours. Only Hegel is not at all content to state this presupposition mystically. He desires to use his secret, his formula for the very essence of consciousness, his fundamental law of rationality, to unlock problem after problem, until he reaches the idea of the Absolute Self. Of the systematic fashion in which he attacked this task in his Logic, in his Encyclopædia, and in his various courses of lectures I can give no notion. To my mind, however, he did his work best of all in his deepest and most difficult book, the Phenomenology of Spirit. Here he seeks to show how, in case you start just with yourself alone, and ask who you are and what you know, you are led on, step by step, through a process of active self-enlargement that cannot stop short of the recognition of the Absolute Spirit himself as the very heart and soul of your own life. This process consists everywhere in a repetition of the fundamental paradox of consciousness: In order to realize what I am, I must, as I find, become more than I am or than I know myself to be. I must enlarge myself, conceive myself as in external relationships, go beyond my private self, presuppose the social life, enter into conflict, and, winning the conflict, come nearer to realizing my unity with my deeper Self. But the real understanding of this process comes only, according to Hegel, when you observe that, in trying thus to enlarge yourself for the very purpose of self-comprehension, you repeat ideally the evolution of human civilization in your own person. This process of self-enlargement is the process which is writ large in the history of mankind.

The Phenomenology is thus a sort of freely told philosophy of history. It begins with the Spirit on a crude and sensual stage; it follows his paradoxes, his social enlargement, his perplexities, his rebellions, his skepticism, all his wanderings, until he learns, through toils and anguish and courage, such as represent the whole travail of humanity, that he is, after all, in his very essence, the Absolute and Divine Spirit himself, who is present already on the savage

stage in the very brutalities of master and slave; who comes to a higher life in the family; who seeks freedom again and again in romantic sentimentality or in stoical independence; who learns, however, always afresh, that in such freedom there is no truth; who returns, therefore, willingly to the bondage of good citizenship and of social morality; and who, finally, in the religious consciousness, comes to an appreciation of the lesson that he has learned through this whole self-enlarging process of civilization, — the lesson, namely, that all consciousness is a manifestation of the one law of spiritual life, and so, in the end, of the one eternal Spirit. The Absolute of Hegel's Phenomenology is no Absolute on parade, so to speak, — no God who hides himself behind clouds and darkness, nor yet a Supreme Being who keeps himself carefully clean and untroubled in the recesses of an inaccessible infinity. No, Hegel's Absolute is, I repeat, a man of war. The dust and the blood of ages of humanity's spiritual life are upon him; he comes before us pierced and wounded, but triumphant, — the God who has conquered contradictions, and who is simply the total spiritual consciousness that expresses, embraces, unifies, and enjoys the whole wealth of our human loyalty, endurance, and passion.

And herewith I must, for the present, close. It will, perhaps, be already plain to the reader that there is a great deal in this Hegelian analysis of self-consciousness that seems to me of permanent and obvious value. As to the finality of the philosophical doctrine as a whole, that is another matter, not here to be treated. Still, I may, perhaps, do well, in closing, to suggest this one thought: People usually call Hegel a cold-hearted system-maker, who reduced all our emotions to purely abstract logical terms, and conceived his Absolute solely as an incarnation of dead thought. I, on the contrary, call him one who knew marvelously well, with all his coldness, the secret of human passion, and who, therefore, described, as few others have done, the paradoxes, the problems, and the glories of the spiritual life. His great philosophical and systematic error lay, not in introducing logic into passion, but in conceiving the logic of passion as the only logic; so that you in vain endeavor to get satisfaction from Hegel's treatment of outer nature, of science, of mathematics, or of any coldly theoretical topic. About all these things he is immensely suggestive, but never final. His system, as system, has crumbled. His vital comprehension of our life will remain forever.

Josiah Royce.

IN DARKNESS.

Dumb Silence and her sightless sister Sleep
Glide, mistlike, through the deepening Vale of Night;
Waking, where'er their shadowy garments sweep,
Dream-voices and an echoing dream of light.

John B. Tabb.