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1 Hegel and the Classical Pragmatists: Prolegomenon to a Future Discussion

Michael J. Baur

As Richard Bernstein has suggested, there is a very rich and interesting story to be told about how the classical pragmatists (Dewey, Peirce, and James) understood G. W. F. Hegel, made use of Hegel, and ultimately distanced themselves from Hegel. That story cannot be told here. Indeed, the story is so rich and complicated that even its beginnings cannot be told here. But what can be provided, perhaps, is a limited, though hopefully illuminating, perspective on a few salient aspects of the relationship between the classical pragmatists and Hegel. While the following reflections offer no definitive answers about this relationship, they might at least suggest some fruitful lines of enquiry for future discussion.

John Dewey

In a famous passage from his 1930 paper "From Absolutism to Experimentism," John Dewey acknowledged that Hegel had left a "permanent deposit" in his thinking.¹ Scholars have disagreed on just how deeply and widely that deposit ran through Dewey's thought over the course of his life, but none have denied that Dewey's initial philosophical leanings were directly influenced by Hegel's philosophy. Indeed, Hegel's system addressed a deep personal and pragmatic need that had animated Dewey's earliest spiritual and intellectual strivings. For Dewey, Hegel's boldly anti-dualistic and anti-Cartesian philosophy responded to

a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger that only an intellectualized subject-matter could satisfy [T]he sense of divisions and separations that

were, I suppose, borne in upon me as a consequence of a heritage of New England culture, divisions by way of isolation of self from world, of soul from body, of nature from God, brought a painful oppression – or, rather, they were an inward laceration ... Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was ... no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction for me.²

Not surprisingly, Dewey's sensitivity about the practical consequences of philosophy – his sensitivity about philosophy's implications for "human culture, institutions, and the arts" – led him to appreciate Hegel's intolerance for empty, abstract theorizing that was devoid of relevance for human experience as lived. In a passage from his 1897 lecture on Hegel's "Philosophy of Spirit," Dewey praised Hegel for his keen attunement to the real or the actual:

Hegel was a great actualist. By this I mean that he has the greatest respect, both in his thought and in his practice, for what has actually amounted to something, actually succeeded in getting outward form. It was customary then, as now, to throw contempt upon the scientific, the artistic, the industrial and social life, as merely worldly in comparison with certain feelings and ideas which are regarded as specifically spiritual. Between these two, the secular, which after all is here and now, and the spiritual, which exists only in some far off region and which *ought* to be, Hegel had no difficulty in choosing. Hegel is never more hard in his speech, hard as steel is hard, than when dealing with mere ideals, vain opinions and sentiments which have not succeeded in connecting themselves with the actual world.³

According to some critics, Hegel's rationalistic and speculative apriorism is clearly evidenced by his famous dictum (found in the "Preface" to his *Philosophy of Right*) that the actual is the rational and the rational is the actual. But Dewey made reference to this dictum in order to arrive at a rather contrary conclusion. Far from evidencing any kind of unrealistic, speculative rationalism, Dewey claims, Hegel's dictum illustrates Hegel's firm commitment to overcoming all versions (especially the Kantian version) of empty, abstract, aprioristic thinking. According to Dewey:

It was the work of Hegel to attempt to fill in the empty reason of Kant with the concrete contents of history The outcome was the

assertion that history is reason, and reason is history: the actual is the rational, the rational is the actual ... [I]n intellectual and practical effect, it lifted the idea of process above that of fixed origins and fixed ends, and presented the social and moral order, as well as the intellectual, as a scene of becoming, and it located reason somewhere within the struggles of life.⁴

For Dewey, the point behind Hegel's assertion of the identity of "the actual" and "the rational" was not to suggest that "the actual" should be conceived in terms of a fixed, unchanging, rational order, but – quite on the contrary – to suggest that "the actual," with all of its concrete variety and changeability, provided the model for understanding just what is meant by "reason" or "the rational." For Dewey, Hegel's dictum announces the realistic insight that "the rational" is not conceivable in terms of an empty, abstract, formalistic subjective faculty, but is nothing other than the dynamism which permeates the concrete "struggles of life" and the actual "scene of becoming." Far from being a hopelessly rationalistic "pure" cogitator, Dewey believed, Hegel represented the very "quintessence of the scientific spirit."⁵ Hegel quite correctly "denies not only the possibility of getting truth out of a formal, apart thought, but he denies the existence of any faculty of thought which is other than the expression of fact itself."⁶

Dewey had a great deal of respect for Hegel's resistance to all forms of philosophical dualism and for his correlative denial that there can be a pure "faculty of thought belonging to and operated by a mind existing separate from the outer world."⁷ Nevertheless, Dewey did have some worries about Hegel. These worries, connected to Dewey's deep sensitivity about the concrete practical consequences of philosophy, were forcefully expressed in his 1915 work *German Philosophy and Politics*. In this work, Dewey repeats his observation that Hegel's assertion of the identity of the rational and the actual is not the assertion of an unrealistic, rationalist, idealist philosopher. On the contrary, Dewey declared, "Hegel is the greatest realist known to philosophy."⁸ What caused Dewey to worry, however, was what he regarded as an authoritarian and nationalistic streak in Hegel's thought. While the younger, more liberal Hegel had a healthy respect for individuality, this respect eventually gave way (in Hegel's later work) "to the need of subordinating the individual to the established state in order to check the disintegrating tendencies of liberalism."⁹ The mature Hegelian system, therefore, reflects a certain tendency towards "disregarding" and "depreciating" the individual as an individual.¹⁰ Worse still, Dewey claimed, Hegel's depreciation of the individual is bound up with a favorable attitude towards nationalism,

which – in turn – lends support to a pernicious penchant for militarism and bellicosity. For Dewey, “Philosophical justification of war follows inevitably from a philosophy of history composed in nationalistic terms. History is the movement, the march of God on earth through time.... War is explicit realization of ‘dialectic,’ of the negation by which a higher synthesis of reason is assured.”¹¹

Charles Sanders Peirce

Even a cursory glance over the work of Hegel and Charles S. Peirce will reveal that the two thinkers share a great deal in common. Both emphasized the evolutionary or dynamic character of all reality; both were critical of epistemologies which relied on what (thanks to the work of Wilfrid Sellars) has come to be known as the “myth of the given”; both rejected the Kantian notion that an unknowable thing-in-itself can play a constitutive role in our cognitions; and both saw the need to develop an objective set of categories which pertained not just to our subjective thoughts about reality, but to concrete reality itself. And yet Peirce was also a severe critic of Hegel. Some of his most direct, and revealing, criticisms of Hegel can be found in the second and third of his seven “Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism,” delivered in 1903 (the second lecture is published under the title, “On Phenomenology,” and the third is published under the title of “The Categories Defended”). In these two lectures, Peirce discusses what he calls “the Universal, or Short List of Categories,” and from the outset he makes note of the fact that he regards Hegel’s own “three stages” of categorical determination as “the correct list of Universal Categories.”¹² Nevertheless, he explicitly denies that Hegel’s account of the categories could have influenced his own thinking, either directly or indirectly; for according to Peirce, “I reached the same result as [Hegel] did by a process as unlike his as possible, at a time when my attitude toward him was rather one of contempt than of awe....”¹³

The “short list” that Peirce discusses in these lectures is the list of three categories that would later become known as the categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness (Peirce does not make use of this terminology in his second lecture, but introduces it in his third lecture). Peirce speaks of the first category (Firstness) in terms of “presentness,” “immediacy,” and the “quality of feeling”; he speaks of the second category (Secondness) in terms of “struggle,” “reaction,” and “resistance” (as when you “press with all your might against a half-open door,” or “when a man carrying a ladder suddenly pokes you violently with it in the back of the head”¹⁴); and he speaks of the third category (Thirdness)

in terms of “representation,” “learning,” and “lawfulness,” making the further observation that “no modern writer of any stripe, unless it be some obscure student like myself, has ever done [this third category] anything approaching to justice.”¹⁵

Peirce argues that Hegel’s thought regarding each of these three categories is wanting in some crucial way. But the fundamental failing of Hegel’s thinking in general is that it tends to make the immediacy of Firstness, as well as the action or struggle of Secondness, altogether subordinate to the generality or lawfulness of Thirdness. The crucial portion of Peirce’s criticism is worth quoting in full:

Thirdness is [seen to be] the one and sole category. This is substantially the idea of Hegel; and unquestionably it contains a truth.... Not only does Thirdness suppose and involve the ideas of Secondness and Firstness, but never will it be possible to find any Secondness or Firstness in the phenomenon that is not accompanied by Thirdness.... If the Hegelians confined themselves to that position they would find a hearty friend in my doctrine.... But they do not. Hegel is possessed with the idea that the Absolute is One. Three absolutes he would regard as a ludicrous contradiction *in abstracto*. Consequently, he wishes to make out that the three categories have not their several independent and irrefutable standings in thought. *Firstness* and *Secondness* must somehow be *aufgehoben*. But it is not true. They are in no way refuted nor refutable. Thirdness it is true involves Secondness and Firstness, in a sense. That is to say, if you have the idea of Thirdness you must have had the ideas of Secondness and Firstness to build upon. But what is required for the idea of genuine Thirdness is an independent solid Secondness and not a Secondness that is a mere corollary of an unfounded and inconceivable Thirdness; and a similar remark may be made in reference to Firstness.¹⁶

Because Hegel tends to regard the entire universe as “an evolution of Pure Reason,”¹⁷ Peirce suggests, Hegel failed to recognize the “independent solid” status of the categories of Firstness and Secondness, and because of this, he failed also to do justice even to the category of Thirdness. But Hegel’s failure to appreciate genuine Firstness and Secondness is refuted by the qualities and the resistances that we readily find within our own lived experience:

[I]f while you are walking in the street reflecting upon how everything is the pure distillate of Reason, a man carrying a heavy pole suddenly

pokes you in the small of the back [manifesting the "resistance" or "reaction" of Secondness], you may think there is something in the Universe that Pure Reason fails to account for; and when you look at the color *red* and ask yourself how Pure Reason could make *red* to have that utterly inexpressible and irrational positive quality it has [manifesting the "immediacy" or "quality of feeling" of Firstness], you will perhaps be disposed to think that Quality [Firstness] and Reaction [Secondness] have their independent standings in the Universe.¹⁸

This 1903 criticism of Hegel echoes an earlier criticism that Peirce had lodged against Hegel, in a review which he had written of Josiah Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*. In this unpublished 1885 review, Peirce claims that Hegel had virtually ignored Secondness, or the sense of:

action and reaction, resistance, externality, otherness, pair-ness. It is the sense that something has hit me or that I am hitting something; it might be called a sense of collision or clash.... The capital error of Hegel which permeates his whole system in every part of it is that he almost altogether ignores the Outward Clash. Besides the lower consciousness of feeling and the higher consciousness of intuition, this direct consciousness of hitting and of getting hit enters into all cognition and serves to make it mean something real.¹⁹

In his 1905 *Monist* paper on "What Pragmatism Is," Peirce nicely summarizes his sense of the basic difference, as well as affinity, between his own pragmatism and the absolute idealism of Hegel:

the third category – the category of thought, representation, triadic relation, mediation, genuine Thirdness, Thirdness as such – is an essential ingredient of reality, yet does not by itself constitute reality, since this category... can have no concrete being without action, as a separate object on which to work its government, just as action cannot exist without the immediate being of feeling on which to act. The truth is that pragmatism is closely allied to the Hegelian absolute idealism, from which, however, it is sundered by its vigorous denial that the third category (which Hegel degrades to a mere stage of thinking) suffices to make the world, or is even so much as self-sufficient. Had Hegel, instead of regarding the first two stages with his smile of contempt, held on to them as independent or distinct elements of the triune Reality, pragmatists might have looked up to him as the great vindicator of their truth.²⁰

William James

Like Dewey and Peirce, William James was able to appreciate many of Hegel's observations about the empirical world. In *A Pluralistic Universe*, for example, James praises Hegel for his sensitivity to the "empirical flux of things,"²¹ and for his awareness of the dynamic and evolutionary character of all reality. James goes on to note:

This dogging of everything by its negative, its fate, its undoing, this perpetual moving on to something future which shall supersede the present, this is the hegelian intuition of the essential provisionality, and consequent unreality, of everything empirical and finite.... Any partial view whatever of the world tears the part out of its relations, leaves out some truth concerning it, is untrue of it, falsifies it. The full truth about anything involves more than that thing.... Taken so far, and taken in the rough, Hegel is not only harmless, but accurate.²²

For James, there is nothing intrinsically false about Hegel's dialectical picture of reality; considered in itself, this dialectical picture "is a fair account of a good deal of the world."²³ And "as a mere reporter of certain empirical aspects of the actual, Hegel... is great and true...."²⁴ The problem with Hegel, however, is that he did not restrict himself to observing the world as it is. Hegel aimed rather "at being something far greater than an empirical reporter."²⁵ And because of his greater, non-empirical aspirations, Hegel viewed the empirical characteristics of the world "in a non-empirical light.... He pretended therefore to be using the *a priori* method."²⁶

The fundamental failing of Hegel's non-empirical, *a priori* method, James explains, is connected to what is wrong with any form of rationalism:

Rationalism, you remember, is what I called the way of thinking that methodically subordinates parts to wholes, so Hegel here is rationalistic through-and-through. The only whole by which *all* contradictions are reconciled is for him the absolute whole of wholes, the all-inclusive reason to which Hegel himself gave the name of the absolute Idea, but which I shall continue to call "the absolute" pure and simply, as I have done hitherto.²⁷

Because of his rationalistic leanings, James argues, "Hegel was dominated by the notion of a truth that should prove incontrovertible, binding

on everyone, and certain, which should be *the* truth, one, indivisible, eternal, objective and necessary, to which all our particular thinking must lead as to its consummation."²⁸

For James, several problematic consequences follow from Hegel's rationalism: first, Hegel is led to insist on the "must be" of dogmatic, absolutist thinking, and remain ever dissatisfied with the "may be" of fallibilistic, empiricist reasoning;²⁹ furthermore, Hegel is led to the improbable hypothesis "that however disturbed the surface [of the universe] may be, at bottom all is well with the cosmos...."³⁰ However pleasing or assuring it may be to think that there is "central peace abiding at the heart of endless agitation," James notes, Hegel's hypothesis is unrealistic, since it represents "the deepest reality of the world as static and without a history."³¹ Furthermore, it "loosens the world's hold upon our sympathies and leaves the soul of it foreign"³² – in other words, it causes precisely the sort of alienation and disaffection that (as Dewey well knew) Hegel sought to remedy by means of his philosophical system. Worse still, James writes, Hegel's improbable hypothesis introduces into the very heart of the Hegelian system a monstrous and embarrassing unintelligibility. For it "introduces a speculative 'problem of evil'" and "leaves us wondering why the perfection of the absolute should require just such particular hideous forms of life as darken the day for our human imaginations."³³

With his critique, James is implying that Hegel's philosophical system can be shown to collapse, not because it fails to live up to any externally imposed standards or requirements, but rather because it fails to live up to its own rationalistic aspirations. In other words, James is arguing that Hegel's system can be rejected precisely on the basis of a Hegelian-style "immanent critique": the Hegelian system aspires to demonstrate the complete rationality of all reality, and it does so by appealing to a notion of an absolute which Hegel alleges to be fully independent, intelligible, perfect, and self-sufficient. And yet, in spite of this alleged independence, intelligibility, perfection, and self-sufficiency, the absolute mysteriously and inexplicably opts to give birth, within itself, to a finite world that is permeated by fragmentation, unintelligibility, imperfection, and evil. For no intelligible reason at all, the Hegelian absolute "has spontaneously chosen from within to give itself the spectacle of all that evil rather than a spectacle with less evil in it."³⁴ James continues:

Grant that the spectacle or world-romance offered to itself by the absolute is in the absolute's eyes perfect. Why would not the world be more perfect by having the affair remain in just those terms, and

by not having any finite spectators to come in and add to what was perfect already their innumerable imperfect manners of seeing the same spectacle? ... Why, the absolute's own total vision of things being so rational, was it necessary to comminute it into all these coexisting inferior fragmentary visions? ... Why ... should the absolute ever have lapsed from the perfection of its own integral experience of things, and refracted itself into all our finite experiences?³⁵

For James, Hegel's hyper-rationalistic system "lacks internal consistency": it "yields us a problem rather than a solution," and it "creates a speculative puzzle, the so-called mystery of evil and of error, from which a pluralistic metaphysic is entirely free."³⁶

G. W. F. Hegel

In some respects, James's critique of Hegel is the most interesting and most attractive of all the anti-Hegelian ruminations offered by the classical pragmatists, since it creatively makes use of one of Hegel's own philosophical strategies, namely the strategy of immanent critique. But in some ways, James's critique is also the widest of its mark, for the notion of "the absolute" which James attributes to Hegel (and on which his critique depends) bears little resemblance to Hegel's own notion of the absolute. According to James, Hegel's absolute initially has an "integral experience" and "total vision" of things as completely rational, and yet it inexplicably chooses to "refract itself" into the many finite experiences of many finite human knowers. The problem here is that, from Hegel's point of view, any notion of an absolute that fits James's description (any notion of an absolute that is capable of having "experience," "vision," or "choice") would be a hopelessly naïve and anthropomorphic notion. As early as 1795, Hegel had rejected all such anthropomorphic notions of the absolute, opting instead for a more Spinozistic position which denied that the absolute could partake of anything like "experience," "vision," or "choice."³⁷

Worse still, from a Hegelian point of view, the Jamesian account presumes that "the absolute" can somehow first exist on its own, in an initial state of tranquil self-transparency and perfection, and then subsequently "lapse" into a "fragmented" or "refracted" state which includes all the imperfections, struggles, and evils of finite reality. But to think of the absolute in this way – to think of it as capable of having an initially pure and undisturbed existence, apart from the becoming of all finite reality – is to think of it in the way that the Unhappy Consciousness

would think of it. And as Hegel famously notes in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the Unhappy Consciousness fails precisely insofar as it regards the absolute – the Unchangeable – as something that can be what it is apart from the activity of the Changeable. For Hegel, the truth of the matter is that the movement of the Changeable “is just as much a movement” of the Unchangeable.³⁸ For Hegel, then, it is simply wrong to think of the absolute as an infinite entity that can have a perfect, tranquil, self-transparent existence apart from the struggles and movements of finite beings. What is perhaps most interesting here is that Hegel’s idea of the absolute (an idea which he identifies with the idea of God) is closer to James’s own idea of God (“a God as one of the strivers”³⁹) than James himself seems to realize.

As we have seen, Peirce claims that Hegel’s “capital error” was to give inadequate attention to the categories of Firstness and Secondness, and – relatedly – to refuse to acknowledge the inescapable dependence of Thirdness (representation, lawfulness) on Secondness (action) and Firstness (feeling). It is not clear, however, whether and how this criticism can be squared with Hegel’s many statements to the effect that the Thirdness of thought depends inescapably on the Secondness of action and struggle, and on the Firstness of feeling and immediacy. In his 1801 *Differenzschrift*, for example, Hegel explains that philosophy is a form of life, and emerges from within the flow of life only when life’s ordinary satisfactions have been disrupted and when life’s “power of union” has been destroyed and replaced by “opposition.”⁴⁰ A bit later, in his *Natural Law* essay of 1802–03, Hegel argues that the capacity to think rationally and autonomously (“the possibility of abstracting from determinations”) exists only in mortal beings who can envision the possibility of their own non-being, or death.⁴¹ The same notion is repeated, more famously, in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when Hegel argues that the self-certainty which characterizes the freedom of philosophical thought (as in Stoicism and Skepticism) does not emerge from some detached, unhistorical, unchanging noumenal realm, but only from the life and death struggles of living, breathing, desiring beings who can fear their own deaths. Here, in Hegel’s famous master-slave dialectic, we not only see the “outward clash” (Secondness) of “hitting and getting hit” (as Peirce characterizes it), but we see also – and perhaps more convincingly – the “outward clash” (Secondness) of killing and getting killed.⁴²

Even the “absolute knowing” of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* presupposes and depends on the fact of *ongoing* dissonance and struggle (Secondness). This is because Hegel’s account of absolute knowing depends – among

other things – on his (post-Fichtean) insight that no moral consciousness (and thus no sense of any moral “ought”) could exist, if the moral self were not confronted (or perhaps better, *affronted*) by a morally deficient world. If the empirical world that the self encounters were already morally perfected (if Immanuel Kant’s “highest good” were already achieved), then the self could not possibly feel drawn by any moral “ought” to do anything at all. Or stated differently: if the empirical world were already a morally perfected world, and the self nevertheless undertook some action to change the world, then the self would be acting *immorally* (for in acting to change the world, it would be undoing the world’s already achieved state of moral perfection). For Hegel, there can be no such thing as a moral and free self (and thus there can be no such thing as free and autonomous philosophizing) if the empirical world does not confront (or *affront*) the self as morally deficient and in need of change.⁴³

Furthermore, Hegel argues, the empirical world could not appear as morally deficient, if it were not a world populated by other selves who happened to have differing opinions about how the morally deficient world ought to be fixed. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Fichte had previously argued (and as Hegel affirms), autonomous selves are not *morally* affronted by deficiencies and imperfections which exist in nature as such, but only by the perceived moral deficiencies and imperfections of other rational agents insofar as they relate to other selves *through* their control of nature. Thus for Hegel, autonomous moral consciousness (which is bound up with the freedom of philosophical consciousness) can exist only if there are dissonant, conflicting views among a plurality of diversely opinionated moral agents. Absolute knowing is characterized by the awareness that moral deficiency, and thus moral struggle and disagreement, will always be a feature of our lived experience, as long as there is rational selfhood at all. And just as such disagreement and dissonance are inescapable, so too is the imperative to forgive, if self-annihilation (through a fight to the death) is to be avoided. For Hegel, it is not only the case that philosophy *begins* with the “outward clash” of opposition and struggle, but it is also the case that philosophy is *completed* only when this “outward clash” is recognized as inescapable and addressable solely through forgiveness. Those who engage in absolute knowing are those who participate in the activity of *ongoing* forgiving and being-forgiven, in the midst of inescapable moral disagreement.⁴⁴

We return now finally to John Dewey, according to whom – as we have seen – there is in Hegel a pernicious penchant for subordinating,

disregarding, and depreciating the individual, all for the sake of resisting what Hegel regarded as the dangerous, disintegrating tendency of liberalism. Here it is not possible to begin addressing the many aspects of Dewey's forceful critique, but it is possible to make note, at the very least, of a certain ambiguity in Dewey's critique. For Dewey, let us recall, Hegel subordinates or depreciates the individual in favor of the group, the whole, or the state. If understood in one way, this claim is clearly off the mark, since Hegel asserts that ongoing dissonance and disagreement (without which there could be no such thing as moral trespass and forgiveness) are essential features of absolute knowing; furthermore, he asserts that there could be no such thing as dissonance or disagreement if there were not a plurality of differently particularized, differently opinionated individuals. Contrary to what Dewey might be suggesting, then, the individual is not disregarded or depreciated by Hegel: the existence of individuals precisely as individuals (in all their particularity and difference) remains an essential feature of the actuality of absolute knowing in Hegel's account.

But perhaps Dewey had something else in mind. Perhaps he intended to say that Hegel subordinated or depreciated individuals insofar as he failed to accord them the degree of autonomy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination that they actually do have – and ought to have – in reality. Here it is not possible to decide whether such a critique would be justified or not. What can be observed, however, is that such a critique (assuming that this is what Dewey had in mind) would potentially strike at James and Peirce, as well as at Hegel. It is well known that Hegel denied that individuals can be fully self-determining in the Kantian (liberal) sense; for Hegel, no individual can ever have the last word when it comes to his or her own fate, since the individual (as part of a larger whole) remains forever constituted by determining forces beyond his or her own explicit knowledge and control. But would not both James and Peirce have to agree with Hegel on this (and thus potentially disagree with Dewey)? State differently: in a truly pluralistic (Jamesian) universe, or in a truly statistical (Peircean) universe (that is, in a universe where truth does not exist in any one mind, but only in the convergence of many minds), would it not be the case that no individual can ever finally determine his or her own fate? We cannot address these tantalizing questions here, but we can at least observe the following: a truly penetrating analysis of what the classical pragmatists thought about Hegel will – unavoidably – implicate some important questions about what the classical pragmatists must have also thought (even if only implicitly) about each other.

Notes

1. John Dewey. 1930. "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, Vol. 5, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 154.
2. *Ibid.*, 153.
3. John Dewey. 1897. "Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit," in *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit, with the 1897 Lecture on Hegel*, ed. John R. Shook and James A. Good (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2010), 97.
4. John Dewey. 1910. "Intelligence and Morals," in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy: And Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), 65–66.
5. John Dewey. 1891. "The Present Position of Logical Theory," in *The Early Works, 1882–1898*, vol. 1: *Essays and Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 134 and 138.
6. *Ibid.*, 138–39.
7. *Ibid.*, 137.
8. John Dewey. 1915. *German Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), 107.
9. *Ibid.*, 109.
10. *Ibid.*, 111.
11. *Ibid.*, 118.
12. Charles Sanders Peirce. 1903. "On Phenomenology," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1998), 148.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, 150.
15. *Ibid.*, 155–56.
16. Charles Sanders Peirce. 1903. "The Categories Defended," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 177.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 177–78.
19. Charles Sanders Peirce. 1885. "An American Plato: Review of Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 1, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 233.
20. Charles Sanders Peirce. 1905. "What Pragmatism Is," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 345.
21. William James. 1977. *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 44.
22. *Ibid.*, 45.
23. *Ibid.*, 49.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, 49–50.
26. *Ibid.*, 45–46.
27. *Ibid.*, 48–49.
28. *Ibid.*, 50.
29. *Ibid.*, 52.

30. *Ibid.*, 55.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. *Ibid.*, 55–56.
 33. *Ibid.*, 57.
 34. *Ibid.*
 35. *Ibid.*, 57–58.
 36. *Ibid.*, 60.
 37. See, for example, Hegel's 1795 correspondence with Friedrich Schelling. 1952. *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner), I, 15–29. This correspondence is translated in *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 30–41.
 38. G. W. F. Hegel. 1977. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 128.
 39. James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, 56.
 40. G. W. F. Hegel. 1977. *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press), 90–91.
 41. G. W. F. Hegel. 1975. *Natural Law: The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, Its Place in Moral Philosophy, and Its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Law*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 91.
 42. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111–19.
 43. In a similar vein, Arthur Schopenhauer makes a point with which Hegel and the early German Idealists (most notably, Johann Fichte and Schelling) would have readily agreed, namely: that if the empirical world were not given to us as morally deficient, then it could never become for us an object of theoretical knowledge. That is, we would never begin seeking theoretical answers about the empirical world, if it were not already evident to us (from a practical point of view) that the empirical world as given is not as it ought to be (that is, if it were not already evident to us that the empirical world *ought not to be* unintelligible to us). Schopenhauer (undeniably a much better writer than Hegel) makes the point succinctly: "If the world were not something that, *practically* expressed, ought not to be, it would also not be *theoretically* a problem. On the contrary, its existence would ... require no explanation at all" Arthur Schopenhauer. 1969. *The World as Will and Idea*, vol. 2, §46, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Press), 579.
 44. For more on this, see Michael Baur. 2011. "From Kant's Highest Good to Hegel's Absolute Knowing," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hegel*, ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (Oxford: Blackwell), 452–73.

Richard J. Bernstein's Response

Michael Bauer entitles his paper "Hegel and the Classical Pragmatists: Prolegomenon to a Future Discussion." Insofar as his title suggests that the full richness and complexity of Hegel's influence on the varieties of pragmatism has not yet been told, I agree with him. In *The Pragmatic Turn*, as well as in a number of my other writings, I have sought to contribute to this discussion. But a full discussion would need to explore the depth of the interest in Hegel and German Idealism in the United States in period after the Civil War, the important role of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and the influence of the neo-Hegelianism that was so popular in Great Britain. We would need to understand how Hegel was being read, what was being emphasized, and what was neglected. I also think it would be important to extend one's horizon and consider the work of Josiah Royce. Royce is "normally" not included among the pragmatic thinkers, yet, ironically, Royce had a far deeper understanding of Peirce than either James or Dewey. Royce also had a more sensitive understanding of Hegel – especially the *Phenomenology* – than any of the "classical pragmatists." I also think it is important to see how Mead was directly and indirectly influenced by Hegelian currents.

"Influence" in philosophy is not simply a matter of who read whom when. It has much more to do with creative appropriation and/or misappropriation. Throughout the history of philosophy, thinkers commenting on and criticizing previous philosophers have been highly selective – and we might even say that they don't quite "get them right." Think of Aristotle's characterization of Plato, or Kant on Hume, or Hegel on Kant. I frequently tell my students that, if they were taking a graduate course on Plato, or Hume, or Kant, and simply repeated some of the "outrageous" criticisms that Aristotle makes of Plato, or Kant of Hume, or Hegel of Kant, they probably would fail the course. This would also

be true if we restricted ourselves to Peirce on Hegel, Dewey on Hegel, or James on Hegel. A careful reading of Hegel shows (as Baur indicates) that some of the criticisms of these pragmatic thinkers do not always strike their target. I agree. But the important question about influence is to see how a philosopher interprets (or misinterprets) another – what he *does with him or her and why*. Thus, for example, some of Peirce's remarks about Hegel denigrating the categories of Firstness and Secondness "with his smile of contempt" can be answered by citing the appropriate texts from Hegel. But one can ask another philosophical question. Can Hegel really do justice to the role of experience and fallibilism that is central to Peirce's employment of his categorial scheme? I do not want to prejudice how such a question is to be answered. But I do want to suggest that this is an important question to raise in assessing the relation between Peirce and Hegel – that goes "beyond" the issue of Peirce's explicit criticisms of Hegel. I also want to say the same for the other pragmatic thinkers. Can we reconcile Hegel with Dewey's robust naturalism – a naturalism that was in part shaped by the "influence" of Hegel on Dewey? Can we reconcile Hegel with James's pluralism?

Yes, "a future discussion" of Hegel and pragmatism must tell a much richer story of the philosophical context in which the pragmatic thinkers emerged, what they selected and neglected in Hegel's work, whether their explicit criticisms are accurate. But it must also deal with the philosophical strengths and weakness of their distinctive outlooks. I also think that the full story would also have to deal with how the critiques of Hegel by pragmatic thinkers (especially James's lampooning caricatures) contributed to the virtual total neglect of Hegel in America for a half-century or more.

2 The Inferences That Never Were: Peirce, Perception, and Bernstein's The Pragmatic Turn

Richard Kenneth Atkins

In the first chapter of his book *The Pragmatic Turn*, Richard Bernstein has two aims. First, he aims to show that Charles Sanders Peirce is the founder of pragmatism not merely for his statement of the pragmatic maxim but for his criticisms of René Descartes. Second, he aims to apply Peirce's insights to a contemporary issue in the philosophy of perception. I shall comment on Bernstein's success with respect to both aims.

Aim one

With respect to the first aim, Bernstein writes, "I have been arguing that Peirce is the founder of pragmatism for another reason [than that he first enunciated the pragmatic maxim]. His early 1867–68 papers open a way of thinking that goes to the very heart of the matter – profoundly questioning and critiquing the Cartesianism that shaped so much of modern philosophy" (Bernstein 52). I do not think Bernstein intends to claim that Peirce's formulation of the pragmatic maxim plays no role in his being deemed the founder of pragmatism. Rather, I think Bernstein intends to claim that this is not the *only* reason Peirce is considered the founder of pragmatism.

Moreover, it would be patently erroneous to argue that Peirce founded pragmatism *just because* he critiqued Cartesianism. Virtually every philosopher active between Descartes and Peirce critiqued Cartesianism. Peirce inaugurates pragmatism not just because he critiques Cartesianism but because of *how* he critiques it and the consequences thereof.

As Bernstein points out in the "Prologue," the thrust of Peirce's criticism is that Descartes' philosophy supposes that we have four capacities,