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Actuality and Intelligibility

Hegel and Peirce on Experience Vis-à-Vis Reason

Vincent Colapietro

“The capital error of Hegel which permeates his whole system in every part of it is that he almost altogether ignores the Outward Clash.” (8.41)¹
“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 [...] suffices to make the world, or is even so much as self-sufficient.” (“What Pragmatism Is” in *The Monist* [1905])²

1. Introduction

- 1 My aim is to compare two thinkers for the purpose of illuminating a topic both judged to be pivotal.³ That topic is the relationship between experience and reason. In the first main section after this Introduction, I will consider how Hegel no less than Peirce takes philosophy to be the offspring of experience, thereby showing how Hegel’s apparently overweening rationalism⁴ is intimately tied to an unabashed empiricism. In the next section, I will consider how close Hegel’s appreciation of doubt is to Peirce’s, contrasting their understanding with Descartes’s. In the third and final section, save for the Conclusion, I will highlight the commitment of these two thinkers to intelligibility. As fundamental as the appeal to experience is in each of their projects, their commitment to the intelligibility of nature, history, and humanity is no less fundamental. While in the Conclusion I will draw together my main conclusions and underscore several open questions, my task in this Introduction is threefold. I want to highlight the *obstacles* confronting anyone who desires to draw Hegel and Peirce together as closely as I am disposed to do, the philosophical and not just the historical *importance* of doing so, and finally the order in which I intend to treat this topic.⁵ I have already outlined this order,

so what remains to be done in the Introduction concerns the obstacles facing us and the importance of our topic.

- 2 At the outset of any comparison between G. W. F. Hegel and C. S. Peirce, various questions forcefully, almost violently, intrude themselves, not least of all two *interpretive* questions.⁶ To what extent did Peirce actually break with *a priori* modes of inquiry (cf. Short 2007)?⁷ To what extent is it accurate to take Hegel's logic to be an *a priori* articulation of what any instance of saying, whatever counts as an intelligible utterance, minimally entails (cf. Bowman 2015)?
- 3 These hermeneutic questions immediately invite philosophical ones. What indeed does saying anything about anything minimally entail? For Hegel, who bears patient, painstaking witness in the *Logic* to the dialectical process, the answer is: nothing less than the categories as they unfold themselves in this monumental work. These categories are not subjective forms imposed upon a subject matter: they are rather immanent, if only implicit, in the *Sache* itself. For Peirce, the answer to this question demands nothing less than the categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness (see, e.g., 6.323-24) and especially the recursive function of these distinct categories (see Savan 1987-88, Chapter II; also, Esposito 1980, Chapter VI, especially 179-94).⁸ Closely allied to these questions, there is another *philosophical* question: to what extent is it possible, in philosophy, to avoid *a priori* inquiry and to rely on a thoroughly experiential approach. if indeed it is at all possible?
- 4 Peirce's philosophical genius no less than Hegel's is bound up with his lifelong endeavor to articulate a categorical scheme adequate to the multitudinous forms of human experience. In both cases, the derivation of the categories seems, at once, intimately connected to the contingencies of experiential compulsion and the necessities of purely formal rationality. Experience deprived of the power to overthrow the regnant forms of human cognition is only nominally experience. Reason incapable of plumbing the depths of experience is, likewise, only nominally reason. The name *experience* properly designates only what has the force to topple the seemingly most unassailable edifices of human thought, just as the word *reason* designates what possesses the capacity to anticipate the course of experience, but also to revise itself in light of the frustration of those anticipations.⁹ As much as thought is always an instance of reverie, it is at the same time an instance of *working through* the impasses and defeats to which it is brought by its own definitive demands. For neither Hegel nor Peirce is reason given at the outset, except in the most inchoate, implicit form. It is more than anything else an achievement and, as such, it emerges from experience, our confrontation with actuality. Philosophy, as an exemplification of rationality, one in which a relentless drive toward *reflexive* understanding (in a word, self-understanding) is a defining feature of this rational endeavor, provides a dramatic instance of reason springing from the womb of experience. Peirce's guiding question, "*How [do] things grow*"? (7.267n8); see also, EP 2: 373-4), is manifestly also Hegel's. The salience of this question is, for these philosophers, equally pressing for understanding the cosmos and human reason as it undergoes dramatic transmutations in the course of striving to define its historical functions. Indeed, Hegel no less than Peirce evinces an appreciation of the role of experience in inaugurating, sustaining, and driving the growth of rationality. As paradoxical as this must sound to many readers, such growth is, at the same time, "a self-development of thought" (Peirce, 4.10).¹⁰

2. Philosophy as the Offspring of Experience

- 5 In the judgment of both his immediate successors and, a generation or so later, the classical pragmatists, the dialectic of experience and reason did not culminate in Immanuel Kant's monumental achievement. As insightful and suggestive as his critical philosophy has proven to be, from his time to ours, an altogether adequate account in which the demands of reason and the disclosures of experience are harmoniously integrated cannot be found in Kant's writings. From Fichte to Peirce and beyond, up to the present, critics of Kant have alleged unresolved tensions and fundamental occlusions in his ingenious endeavor to grant both experience and reason their due. In his writings, the *a priori* reason of the rationalists and the *a posteriori* facts of the empiricists were candidly acknowledged but not intimately allied. Moreover, the forms of thought were, by implication, static, inert, and external (see, e.g., Sedgewick 2010). His theoretical reconciliation falls short of doing adequate justice to the dynamic integration in our historical endeavors such as experimental science, political governance, and artistic creation of experiential compulsion and rational necessity or, at least, exigency.¹¹ Finally, Kant's categories, at least in the judgment of such critics as Hegel and Peirce, were invincibly subjective, rather than at once forms of thought *and* forms of being. As they appear in Kant's system, they were, in effect, *given* apart from the actual history in which they assumed determinate shape (Sedgewick). The very consideration of their historicity was precluded by the constraints within which Kant was struggling to think through the question of the categories. As such, the forms of intelligibility were themselves unintelligible. Self-legislative reason, self-thinking thought, emerged from a matrix in which reason discovers itself to be, time and again, a heteronomous agent acting in behalf of an unacknowledged, or unsuspected, power, in which thinking comes to the realization that its autonomy is an achievement, and an invincibly precarious achievement. The autonomy of reason is rooted in a confrontation with otherness. This confrontation results in reason becoming other than it has been, becoming to some extent its own other. On Hegel's account and Peirce's, heteronomy is not so much the opposite of autonomy as a condition for the attainment and refinement of whatever degree of self-governance a rational animal can obtain.
- 6 Even if it turns out that the *a priori* mode of inquiry cannot be avoided, the role of experience is hardly negligible or, in a sense, even secondary. Does not Hegel insist, "experience is the real author of *growth* and *advance* in philosophy" (1975: §12, p. 18)? There is unquestionably a sense in which primacy appears to be granted to experience when he claims, "philosophy is the child of experience, and owes its rise to *a posteriori* fact. As a matter of fact, thinking is always the negation of what we have immediately before us" (*ibid.*: §12, p. 17). Such claims obviously accord an importance to experience. One way of reading Hegel's *Logic*, then, is to say that it presupposes nothing *but* "what we have immediately before us" at some chance moment (*whatever* this might be). In this instance, however, the *a priori* would seem to presuppose the *a posteriori*. Robert Stern supports this reading when he asserts: "[T]he only grounds for the sort of investigation carried out by the *Logic* into thought (which must therefore [thereafter?] be carried out presuppositionally insofar as thought is its object) is exactly the kind of 'real doubt' championed by the pragmatists at the expense of the 'artificial doubt' associated with Cartesianism" (Stern, 2011: 570). In fact, Hegel is emphatic about this: as Stern explains,

“it is [from Hegel’s perspective] only when consciousness has been brought to a state of genuine despair [i.e., radical doubt] that it will be ready for the *Logic*, a despair the ‘shilly-shallying’ doubt of Descartes can never achieve [...]” (*ibid.*).¹² Textually, Hegel’s *Logic* presupposes his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Methodologically and substantively, the work of elaborating a system of categories begins with the collapse of thought, a doubt so radical as to warrant being described as despair. The negativity constitutive of thought is however boundless and productive. It ceaselessly drives toward its own negation. In the process of negation, the shapes of consciousness or the forms of experience are negated but not utterly annihilated. They are inevitably preserved. In Hegel’s *Logic*, thought commences, ever again: the resurrection of thinking assumes a history of thought in which thinking has suffered defeat at its own hands.¹³ I will return to this crucial point in the next section.

- 7 On this account, the *a priori* is paradoxically posterior to the *a posteriori*. Pure thought is, of course, thought and, in turn, thought only emerges out of experience, above all, the *experience of error*. This is true for Hegel no less than Peirce.¹⁴ Thought as such emerges only out of a long, intricate history of countless, fundamental errors (errors so fundamental that their rejection thrusts us into nothing less than a different world than the one in which we were so much at home).¹⁵ The burden of exhibiting that history is the task of Hegel’s, though not Peirce’s, phenomenology. There is, accordingly, a sense in which Hegel’s *Logic* presupposes his *Phenomenology* and that sense encompasses the tangled history of error as a presupposition of a hyperformal science of logic (Zambrana 2015), i.e., the *presuppositionless* science of logic.
- 8 Thought as it emerges from this history is one thing; thought as it is *in itself*, namely apart from this history and all else, is another. In Peircean terms, thought as historically emergent is an instance of thirdness, while thought as it is, in itself, is a case of firstness. Thought, in the form of inquiry, emerges when beliefs break down and doubt seizes us. That is, the *experience of error* signals the birth of thought in this sense (Peirce, CP 7.345). What also complicates this account of thought as thirdness is, of course, that thought in itself is an instance of the firstness of thirdness, the qualitatively felt immediacy of mediation. With Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, we begin with thought (to use the language of Peirce’s categories) in its Secondness and, with his *Logic*, we move toward thought in its Firstness; then, in the culminating parts of his philosophical system (*Naturphilosophie* and *Geistphilosophie*), we move toward thought in its increasing Thirdness.¹⁶ In its culmination, we arrive at what Peirce would call the thirdness of thirdness (CP 5.121; also in EP 2: 197). “Reasonable reasonableness is Thirdness as Thirdness” (EP 2: 197), but such reasonableness is concrete.¹⁷ In processural terms, concreteness is to be understood (to borrow a term from Whitehead, but for a purpose not altogether his) in terms of *concrecence*, the process of growing ever more concrete, just as actuality is to be conceived as actualization. The German word *Wirklichkeit* no less than the English one actuality at least hint at a link with activity. The actual has the capacity to exert itself on what is other than itself. It in effect works on the densely sedimented results of an ongoing historical process. It unsettles sedimented patterns of thought and forms of life, opening paths to novel modes of thinking and of living. Forms of life no less than patterns of thought implode, since they prove in the course of history, under the pressure of experience, inadequate to both their defining aspirations and the actual conditions in which human striving alone amounts to anything significant and substantive. For our purpose, thinking is a process in which its failures generate the possibility of its

resurrection from the ashes of self-immolation. The history of reason, be it in the form of Hegel's dialectical notion of *Vernunft* or Peirce's experimental conception of intelligence, is to a great extent a history of failure, frustration, and indeed humiliation.

- 9 Neither was a skeptic in the sense that he denied the very possibility of knowledge (far from it), but both were appreciative of what might be called the *experience* of skepticism, reason's recurrent collapses and ensuing struggles to reclaim and revivify itself. That is, both are resolutely anti-skeptical philosophers who nonetheless take the disorienting experience of radical doubt with the utmost seriousness. While such doubt is far from what Descartes tried to produce by his adherence to a method of treating the dubious as though it were false, it is in a certain respect more radical than such methodic or make-believe doubt. Hegelian and Peircean doubt are rooted in a critical awareness of the epochal upheavals of historically generated doubts. These epochal upheavals provide the experiential matrices out of which rational thought, in its endeavor to secure an effective autonomy, endeavors to re-establish itself. Thinking always presupposes the experience of thinking and, thus, the *experience* of doubt in a radical sense, the sense in which agential disorientation is so profound that at the time of its dramatic appearance human rationality cannot be certain of a successful recovery.

3. Cartesian, Hegelian, and Peircean Doubt: Skepticism as Experience

- 10 The *experience* of error is truly an experience, that which we live through. Moreover, it profoundly alters the actual shape of human consciousness in the most concrete sense (experience as *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*).¹⁸ It might even be identified as what skepticism practically (or experientially) means. We are thrown into radical doubt, into seemingly invincible despair. So understood, skepticism is not a thesis we put forth or a stance we take, but an experience we live through. For all of their unbounded confidence in our cognitive capacities, both Hegel and Peirce are deeply appreciative of the significance of skepticism in this experiential sense. There is an important sense in which they have a deeper appreciation of such radical doubt than does the celebrated champion of methodic skepticism (see, e.g., Peirce, CP 6.498).
- 11 Of course, students of Peirce will be quick to point out that he was not a skeptic. And, in the textbook sense, he of course was not. Virtually all of these students however tend to draw an all too sharp distinction between his fallibilism and skepticism. They are far from wrong in taking pains to distinguish Peirce's fallibilism from virtually all forms of skepticism. In doing so, they are simply following Peirce's emphatic rejection of universal doubt as a methodical principle. But something tends to get lost. Peirce's attitude toward skepticism is possibly more nuanced than even his some of his most insightful expositors appreciate (e.g., Haack 1983; Hookway 1992; Potter 1985; and Short 2007). Given the relevance of our experience of doubt to the argument being presented here, it is crucial to highlight several of the ways in which his attitude is nuanced. Especially in reference to self-understanding, the tendency to set fallibilism and skepticism in stark opposition obfuscates what needs to be clarified – above all, how the experience of radical doubt plays a role in the constitution of reflexive comprehension.
- 12 In certain respects, to repeat, Peirce's fallibilism is closer to skepticism than even his most astute expositors appear to appreciate. It is unquestionably imperative to keep in

mind his claim, “there is a world of difference between fallible knowledge and no knowledge” (1.37). It is equally important to take seriously his assertion, “if we have no immediate perception of a non-ego, [then] we can have no reason to admit the supposition of an existence so contrary to all experience as that would in that case be” (*ibid.*). Put otherwise (and less misleadingly), “we have *direct experience of things in themselves*” (6.95). Against modern rationalists and modern empiricists, against Locke no less than Descartes, hence, he asserts: “Nothing can be more completely false than that we experience only our own ideas” (*ibid.*).¹⁹ We directly (or “immediately”) *experience* reality. Any idea of what is absolutely other than what we experience or conceive would be beyond our power of conjecturing, were “absolute” or irreducible otherness not integral to our experience. We can imagine ourselves capable of framing an intelligible conception of unknowable things in themselves only because we have had the experience of reality rending asunder our most deeply entrenched convictions and beliefs. As it turns out, however, we are mistaken in this. What we imagine ourselves able to do cannot in principle be done, since it entails a contradiction. There is, indeed, a world of difference between imagining ourselves capable of framing such a conception and truly *being* able to frame one. Kant was convinced that we have the capacity to frame an intelligible conception of unknowable things in themselves, indeed, that there is no inherent obstacle to framing such a conception. Peirce was equally convinced that there is an inherent and hence invincible obstacle to doing so. As logicians, transcendental or otherwise, they profoundly disagreed about what is logically possible. As a result, they, as philosophers, equally disagreed about what is cognitively accessible to the human mind.

- 13 “There is nothing, then, to prevent our knowing,” Peirce insists, “outward things as they really are and it is most likely that we do thus know them in numberless cases” (5.311). But we can never be absolutely certain that we possess such knowledge in any specific case. Reversing what I take to be the Kantian presumption, Peirce is arguing that second-order knowledge is less secure and less certain than first-order knowledge. This is important for my argument. Descartes and Kant take first-order knowledge to be dependent on second-order knowledge, whereas Peirce does not.
- 14 Peirce does not hesitate to give radical doubt his utmost (if qualified) respect. After all, he writes, “*scepticism about the reality of things*, – provided it be genuine and sincere, and not a sham, – is a healthy and growing state of mental development” (8.43; emphasis added). Such skepticism is not a doctrine to be refuted, once and for all; it is rather an experience to be countenanced, time and again (cf. Alasdair MacIntyre 2006a). The formal refutation of a doctrine is one thing, the experiential defeat of our certainty quite another. As a doctrine, skepticism is, for those animated by the passionate desire to discover what they do not know, of little or no interest (cf. Ransdell 2000; also, Potter 1985). As an experience about the reality of things, however, genuine skepticism is an ineliminable part of human inquiry. No less than Hegel and MacIntyre, Peirce appreciated this. For finite, fallible, and arguably fallen²⁰ beings such as we are, the pursuit of knowledge cannot but be a journey of despair, though one in which the Phoenix of hope arises from the ashes of its self-immolation.
- 15 At, or at least near, the center of Peirce’s vision, then, there is a recognition of our *experience* of our ignorance and errors. Nothing is, in my judgment, more central to his philosophy than his valorization of this experience. This is evident in his insistence: “The *experience* of ignorance, or of error, which we have, and which we gain by means of correcting our errors, or enlarging our knowledge [i.e., diminishing our ignorance], does

enable us to experience and conceive something which is independent [...]” (7.345; emphasis added).²¹ We have an experience of that which is independent of our finite minds (including any actual historical community) and, on the basis of this experience, we form a conception of reality as that which is independent of such thought (not thought in general, but thought insofar as it is finite). What is independent of finite mind is *not* independent of infinite mind. It is indeed relative to mind in the sense of an unbounded capacity able to transform itself into an ever more adequate means of grasping the actual disclosures of our evolving experience. Mind as given (or inherited) is however never fully adequate to reality as given in experience. In turn, reality as given in experience is itself never passively given. It actively elicits the creative activity of an evolving intelligence.

- 16 Peirce could not have had a stronger ally than Hegel in accrediting the experience, while rejecting the *doctrine*, of skepticism. At the center of their projections,²² there is an unblinking acknowledgment of the devastating power of radical doubt. The utter defeat of a definitive stance or determinate shape of human consciousness (e.g., Sense Certainty; or Stoicism, Skepticism, or Unhappy Consciousness) results from the inadequacy of that stance *in the face* of determinate phenomena, that is, of compulsive experience²³ (what Peirce was inclined to call the Outward Clash). Such a shape indeed implodes, from its own *inherent* inadequacy, but it does so as a result of what, in the course of experience, it must but cannot acknowledge. But what results is a determinate negation and, as a consequence of this, a more adequate understanding is attained. This positive aspect of immanent critique needs to be appreciated no less than its destructive facet.²⁴ Such adequacy is predominantly a retrospective judgment; in contrast, the abiding sense that even our greatest cognitive achievements are corrigible moments in an ongoing process points to the prospective character of experimental inquiry as an historical practice (i.e., an evolved and evolving endeavor).
- 17 For both thinkers, then, thought emerges in response to what is encountered in experience and what is so encountered is not to be located in consciousness (or the self), not even in the dialogue between self and other, but in the *process* wherein alterity and reflexivity, (more simply) other and self emerge and evolve in an open-ended manner. So, Peirce, referring to Hegel’s *Logic*, desires, as Hegel does, readers who are not “impressed by the more tangible, wooden, and dead ideas, – or corpses of ideas, – rather than by the more elusive, fluid, and living ones” (7.642). “Remembering [...] that philosophy is a science based upon everyday experience, we must,” Peirce advises, “not fall into the absurdity of setting down as a datum and starting-point of philosophy any abstract and simple idea, as Hegel did when he began his logic with pure Being” (8.112; Review of Royce’s *The World & the Individual*, c. 1900). In philosophy, our point of departure ought to be not specifically an abstract and simple idea (say, the idea of Being, i.e., pure being), but virtually *any* concrete and complex one. This criticism of Hegel is however immediately followed by an endorsement: “we must set out from ideas familiar and complex, as *Hegel began* his greater masterpiece by considering a man sitting under a tree in a garden in the afternoon” (*ibid.*, emphasis added). We must begin with finite minds entangled in the actual circumstances of their precarious lives, though the quiet moment of a person sitting safely in pastoral seclusion is admittedly one in which the precarious character of human life is hardly prominent. “We must not begin by talking of pure ideas, – vagabond thoughts that tramp the public roads without any human habitation, – but [we] *must begin with men and their conversations*” (1.112; emphasis added). Philosophical inquiry grows out

of commonplace experience and, as it turns out, the experience of utterance (hence, the *phenomenon of articulation*) is especially salient to the work of the philosopher. “We are familiar with the phenomenon of a man’s expressing an opinion, sometimes decidedly, often otherwise. Perhaps it will be a mere suggestion, a mere question” (*ibid.*). Not the *a priori* idea of pure Being, but rather the inescapably familiar phenomenon of expression, constitutes the beginning of philosophical thought deliberately striving to assume radical responsibility for its own fateful development. In Peirce’s judgment, then, Hegel’s logic, as the discipline in which the long list of the most fundamental categories are displayed in their dialectical necessity, actually begins with the experientially familiar phenomenon of expression, in any of its modes (even that of “a mere question,” perhaps *especially* that of an urgently felt interrogative).²⁵ “We learn by experience,” as Hegel himself so tellingly observes in the Preface to *PhG* (A. V. Miller translation), “that we meant something other than we meant to mean; and this correction of our meaning compels our knowing to go back to the proposition, and understand it in some other way” (1977: 39).²⁶

- 18 The meaning of being is inseparable from the being of meaning, that is, from the being of signs, as they are concretely embodied in (say) human expression, hence as they are inadequately present in any actual instance. This is what I am inclined to call Peirce’s master ontological argument, though it rarely is cast in the form of an argumentation. It is however frequently encountered in his writings as an “argument” (thus, as an enthymeme in which the *form* of the argument is more or less unstated). One iteration of this argument is this argument runs as follows:

The mode of being of the composition of thought [...] is the living intelligence which is the creator of all intelligible reality, as well as knowledge of such reality. It is the *entelechy*, or perfection of being. (6.341)

So, then, there are these three modes of being: first, the being of a feeling, in itself, unattached to any subject, a possibility floating *in vacuo*, not rational yet capable of rationalization; secondly, there is the being that consists in arbitrary brute action upon other things, not only irrational but anti-rational, since to rationalize it would be to destroy its being;²⁷ and thirdly, there is living intelligence from which all reality and all power are derived, which is rational necessity and necessitation. (6.342; emphasis added)

- 19 If Secondness is taken completely by itself, hence utterly apart from Thirdness, it would be entirely stripped of what Hegel calls the ideality of finitude (see *Lesser Logic*). And this would result in rendering things, finite things in their brute interactions, ultimately unintelligible. But Peirce is no less an advocate of intelligibility than Hegel. Does he not equate being with cognizability?
- 20 In an intriguing passage, Peirce compares his speculative rhetoric to Hegel’s objective logic (see Fisch 1986; Kent 1977). The point of the comparison appears to be that, in both cases, the finite thinker is not arranging distinct categories in an intelligible sequence but rather such a thinker is tracing out the movement of thought itself as thoughts unfold themselves according to an immanent logic. Note first, however, that for Peirce the third and culminating branch of logic is “the highest and most living branch” (2.333), the one wherein if anyone is unduly impressed by
- [...] the more tangible, wooden, and dead ideas, – or corpses of ideas, – rather than by the more elusive, fluid, and living ones, my principal care will be to correct such notions. (7.642)
- 21 Much like Hegel, then, fluid and living ideas, not static and dead ones, are the focus of Peirce’s concern. “With Speculative Rhetoric, Logic, in the sense of Normative Semeiotic,

is,” Peirce claims, “brought to a close” (2.111). But the discipline with which Peirce’s logic culminates is, in his judgment, apparently akin to that with which Hegel’s system commences, as he makes immediately clear.

But now we have to examine whether there be a doctrine of signs corresponding to Hegel’s objective logic; that is to say, whether there be a life in Signs, so that – the requisite vehicle being present – they will go through a certain order of development, and if so, whether this development be merely of such a nature that the same round of changes of form is described over and over again whatever be the matter of the thought or whether, in addition to such a repetitive order, there be also a greater life-history that every symbol furnished with a vehicle of life goes through, and what is the nature of it. There are minds who will pooh-pooh an idea of this sort, much as they would pooh-pooh a theory involving fairies. I have no objection to the pooh-pooh-ing of fairies, provided it be critical pooh-pooh-ing; but I wish I had the leisure to place before those gentlemen a work to be entitled *The History of Pooh-pooh-ing*. I think it would do them good; and make room in their minds for an essay upon the *Logic of Pooh-pooh-ing*. (2.111)

- 22 The claims of both thinkers have been pooh-poohed, but they have a way of winning, time and again, the critical attention of responsible philosophers, so their facile dismissal seems to be an intellectual injustice. When competent inquirers genuinely disagree, real doubt is present.

4. An Unabashed Commitment to Unbounded Intelligibility

- 23 Hegel *identifies* philosophy with idealism in one fundamental sense of this ambiguous term. In this sense, idealism is not one among other approaches to philosophy. It is philosophy. Accordingly, to abandon the principle of idealism involves nothing less than destroying philosophy itself.²⁸ While the empiricist might be content to take the actual world to be at bottom a brute fact, simply to be accepted in its opacity, the idealist in its most basic Hegelian sense cannot do so. For finite minds, there may be absolutely inexplicable facts but the universe (or totality of things) is to some extent a cosmos and, in turn, this cosmos is not itself such a brute or inexplicable fact. It is intelligible and, as it turns out, it is intelligible because it is *self-luminous*. In all of its defining facets (e.g., nature and the life of “mind” or *Geist*) reality renders itself intelligible by its own *inherent* drive toward ever more adequate articulation of what it actually is (and what it actually is, because *actually* means *finitely*, must be seen as what it inadequately is).²⁹ Finite actuality (cf. Miller; Colapietro 2003) is unintelligible apart from infinite ideality. This is as much (if not more) an ontological claim as it is an epistemological one. On this account, finite actuality, often taken to be the most concrete form of reality, is ontologically deficient. It is indeed an impoverished mode of being, because it is an utterly dependent mode. That which is self-dependent and that which is self-explanatory are one and the same. Finite actuality depends on what is other than itself: its actuality is inseparably tied to its finitude and the finitude of anything is the result of that thing being determined by the limits imposed on it by other finite beings. Finite actuality is, thus, definition by others. Beyond this, it depends on an infinite network of irreducible otherness. To make sense out of any concrete instance of finite actuality (e.g., a species of animals or a form of governance), we need to situate it in a context, that is, a network of relationships in

which what the thing is can only be ascertained by reference to what is other than that thing (say, in the case of a species of animals, the environment and other species).

- 24 On at least some occasions, the cosmos certainly confronts us as that which transcends our understanding, yet contains countless and seductive intimations of intelligibility. It is often felt to be our home, a habitat in which our being, including our being here, is not an anomaly). This is central to Hegel and Peirce's vision. But being exiled from one habitat after another is no less central to their account of our relationship to the world.³⁰
- 25 Hegel was in some respects quite unfair to any number of his predecessors, not least of all Kant, while Peirce was in important respects unjust to some of *his* predecessors, above all Hegel.³¹ Hegel hardly ignored the Outward Clash. Of greater importance, he (as it were) attended with greater care than did Peirce himself to the complex relationship between Secondness and Thirdness as defining features of the Outward Clash.³² More fully, Hegel attended with more painstaking care than Peirce to both genuine and degenerate Secondness as well as to the three forms of Thirdness (the two degenerate modes and the genuine one). While a degenerate form of Secondness, the *clash* of one categorical framework with another is hardly an unimportant or negligible phenomenon. The clash exemplified by the familiar phenomena in which truly genuine Secondness is predominant is indeed one in which the secondness exhibits its force and brutality against the backdrop of Thirdness. Take one of Peirce's favorite examples of genuine Secondness (one is struck violently in the back of the head as one is walking down a street). The physical blow is, in this illustration, tied to its utter unexpectedness and, of course, expectation is an instance of Thirdness. There is, to be sure, the physical blow in its purely brute force (a paradigm of genuine Secondness). But the example betrays how, in our experience, Secondness is tied to Thirdness, how rupture is linked to continuity. We and, indeed "all things [...] swim in continua" (Peirce, CP 1.171), including in the objective continua of space and time (or that of space-time). The unconscious expectation of moving safely through the world is shattered in the experience of unanticipated pain.
- 26 The completely unexpected frustration of a largely unconscious intention is a phenomenon in which the Secondness is experienced as startling and disconcerting, precisely because we had no inkling of anything about to oppose our exertions. While this is true in all contexts of our endeavors, it is dramatically evident in social and political contexts. Also in the history of science, anomalies arise and, in the course of that history, they often gather strength and salience, so much so that they eventually prompt a revision, perhaps a radical revision, of the regnant framework of scientific explanation (cf. Kuhn 2012). The experiential clash of this framework with this or that aspect of the world, as this or that aspect so forcefully asserts itself in experience, tends to generate an *agon* between rival frameworks (e.g., the Ptolemaic and the Copernican or the Newtonian and the Einsteinian). And, in the history of such conflicts, more adequate frameworks emerge, ones incorporating the insights of their rivals while avoiding the limitations and distortions of these alternative schemes. Though I am far from confident that this is the case, the clash of one framework with another might be taken as an instance of the *Secondness of Thirdness* (however degenerate an instance of such Secondness). In turn, the overcoming of this opposition might be taken as the *Thirdness of Thirdness*. (The almost wholly implicit but deeply felt sense of intelligibility by which we move through the world might, finally, be taken as the *Firstness of Thirdness*.)
- 27 Of course, there is great danger and indeed inevitable distortions whenever we translate one thinker into the categories of another. But, as a result of our attempts at such

translation, there can also be insight and illumination. Just as something inevitably is lost in translation, other things *might be* gained. Accordingly, I formally propose to do what I have actually been doing just now – translating facets of Hegel’s project into Peirce’s categories.

- 28 What, then, is my provisional conclusion? Far from being a just criticism of Hegel, Peirce’s repeated charge that his predecessor overlooked the Outward Clash borders on philosophical slander. After all, does not Hegel insist, the Absolute “contains within itself the highest degree of opposition” (SL 824; WL 6: 548; quoted by Zambrana 2010: 212)?³³ A careful reader of Hegel’s often obscure writings can only conclude that nothing is more central to his philosophical project than inescapable, irreducible conflict, operating at various levels (including the experiential level of direct conflict between consciousness and what it encounters) and assuming distinct guises. The question of whether these conflicts are truly irreducible is, however, a fair and important one. There is, in my judgment a warrant, for taking Hegel to be close to Peirce on this point.
- 29 In sum, Hegel did *not* ignore the Outward Clash between the finite mind and the experiential world in which the concrete actualization of any finite mind takes place. Much like Peirce, he situated this clash in a broader context in order to render it more fully intelligible. He carefully attended to the *various* aspects of irreducible, but (in a sense) not invincible opposition (or Secondness). What Peirce would call actuality, in itself, is not only unintelligible but also anti-intelligible. Actual things and events, as familiar, complex phenomena of universal human experience, are, however, *not* pure seconds: they are shot through with Thirdness. This implies that these objects and occurrences are bound up with ideality, infinity, and history (history is the scene in which the Thirdness of Thirdness might yet triumph, in a more adequate and hence less violent form than anything yet realized).
- 30 What unites Hegel and Peirce is, above all else, a robust commitment to unbounded intelligibility. Inseparably connected to this, their kinship is nowhere deeper than in their subtle, nuanced, painstaking accounts of the complex interplay among immediacy, opposition, and mediation. For our purpose, at least on this occasion, the interplay between opposition and mediation needs to be thrust into the foreground. For the most part, we must let Firstness go unexplored, while attending to Secondness and Thirdness in their interplay. Peirce was brilliant in bringing certain facets of this interplay into sharpest focus. But Hegel was, at least, equally brilliant in exhibiting not only the centrality of fateful conflict but also just how the conflict of rival frameworks is the driving force of human history. What is however easy to miss is that these frameworks are inseparable from the worlds in which they emerge. The medieval outlook is, for example, one with the *medieval* world. It makes sense only *in* that world, though ultimately it cannot make sense *of* that world and, as a result, it drives toward its own transcendence. But this is because, given its defining contradictions, that world drives toward its own dissolution. It becomes far more intelligible *after* its dissolution than during its duration.
- 31 But Hegel no less than Peirce is a midwife, assisting the birth of a world struggling to emerge from the womb of history. The dramatic birth of such a world is always a novel bid for intelligibility. It is an attempt to make wider, deeper sense out of the world than has ever yet been achieved. It involves summing up the past, for the purposes of the present, and inaugurating the present, for the possibility of a future beyond anything yet imagined. There is no better example of the Thirdness of Thirdness than the birth of a

world in which the self-luminosity of the world manifests itself to rational agents, hence a world in which the artistic, philosophical, and religiousness consciousness of such agents actualizes itself in the evolved and indeed evolving forms of *concrete reasonableness* (e.g., artworks, modes of worship, and forms of explanation). Concrete reasonableness is concrete by virtue of being embodied and it is embodied, first and foremost, in the habits and artifacts of rational agents in the actual circumstances of their historical time (CP 6.476).

- 32 Philosophy is an attempt to come to adequate terms with the actual world in its irreducibly concreteness, to comprehend as fully and finely as possible the concrete, infinite totality in which finite, fallible minds are rooted (hence, the totality out of which such minds not only grow in their inherited forms but also evolve toward ever novel ones). No appeal to immediacy can instantly secure concreteness; no such appeal or sequence of such appeals can do much, if anything, to render thought concrete. An intricate process of reflexive mediation alone can render philosophy concrete. Hegel's dialectical approach and Peirce's pragmatist orientation are thus allied in their shared aspiration – to render reason concrete, more concrete than it has proven itself to be up to this point. But this involves participating in historical processes and shared practices. That is by standing apart from the world we do not render it rational, and thereby intelligible; rather the world itself in its irrepressible tendencies and undying restlessness *renders itself* rational and, insofar as we participate thoughtfully in the processes and practices by which this is accomplished, we render ourselves more concretely reasonable. Of course, we can no more conceive ourselves apart from the world than we can conceive the world apart from the possibility of beings who are in principle capable of knowing it. Both Hegel and Peirce unabashedly affirm the objectivity of the categories, without denying their status as integral features of cognitive agents. The world renders itself rational and intelligible *through* agents such as us, while we render ourselves human and actual through an ongoing process of radical self-alteration.
- 33 There is no Thirdness without Secondness. There is in principle Secondness without Thirdness, but there is in practice hardly a trace of Secondness utterly apart from Thirdness. One irony is that Hegel was in effect endeavoring to grasp not pure Secondness but Secondness in its complex relationships to Thirdness, the degenerate and genuine forms of Secondness in conjunction with the degenerate forms of Thirdness but above all the genuine form (i.e., the Thirdness of Thirdness). He appreciated not only the outward clash between self and other but also the various levels and forms of *agon* in and through which older forms of intelligibility implode and, out of the ruins, newer forms are assembled. So, far from ignoring Secondness, Hegel makes it central to his project, at least as central as Peirce makes it to *his*. “And this notion, of being such as other things make them, is,” Peirce suggests, “such a prominent feature of our life that we conceive other things also to exist by virtue of their reactions against each other. The idea of other, of *not*, becomes a very pivot of thought” (1.324; cf. Bowman 2015). It is a notion around which arguably everything turns. The actual determinations resulting from such finite actuality (finite beings acquiring differential form in their drive to crowd out a place for themselves in the actual world) must be a central part of any adequate story of the enveloping universe. But, by itself, it is, for Hegel and Peirce, inadequate. The ideality of finitude, the infinity of ideality, and finally the actualization of ideality (insofar as this is possible) in natural and historical processes need to be invoked in order to show how the self-luminous intelligibility of a self-evolving universe is not a fanciful idea but at

least a reasonable conjecture. Whether it is more than this, in particular, whether it is a dialectical necessity, cannot be considered on this occasion. Substantively, Hegel and Peirce are making equally strong claims. Methodologically, however, Peirce is making a much weaker one than Hegel. His claim about such intelligibility is avowedly nothing more than a guess, albeit one for which rather strong arguments may be made. But, in the end, it remains a guess. It is a *might*, rather than a *must*, *be*. Thus, the very point where Hegel's thought and Peirce's so dramatically converge is the point where one of their most fundamental differences comes into sharpest focus. Dialectical necessity stands in marked contrast to heuristic possibility. But note that this difference is, for the most part, not the one underscored by Peirce, though he did occasionally try to distinguish himself from Hegel in terms of necessity.

5. Conclusion

- ³⁴ Let me conclude as I began – with several questions. To what extent can Peirce's conception of experimental intelligence be made compatible with Hegel's notion of dialectical reason? Does Hegel's understanding of dialectical necessity truly stand opposed to Peirce's conception of what *would* take place (an outcome he does not hesitate to describe as *destined*)? Is the kind of necessity on which Hegel insisted opposed to the freedom that Peirce and indeed the other pragmatists, especially James, were so anxious to safeguard?³⁴ For the most part, the importance of a philosopher is, contra Peirce, not what significant truth that individual has proven,³⁵ but rather what questions they have shown to be pivotal. The very importance of their questions however can only be ascertained by juxtaposing them with other questions in some respects overlapping while in other respects divergent. One of the most illuminating ways to do this is to draw subtle, suggestive, and systematic thinkers, who are above all defined by their questions, into dialogue with one another. G. W. F. Hegel and C. S. Peirce lend themselves to being juxtaposed in this manner.³⁶ When we do so, the secondness of thirdness, the clash of ideals of intelligibility, will result.
- ³⁵ The clash between them is, however, not nearly as simple or straightforward as Peirce imagined. Above it, it is not reducible to Hegel's "trifling" failure to appreciate the Outward Clash. But, then, Peirce's pragmatism might assist Hegel's idealism in becoming a more truly living logic in which the ineliminable *agon* of rational ideals works itself out in the minute details and overarching aspirations of human history. The portrait of either Hegel's vision of dialectic reason or Peirce's conception of experimental intelligence can only be drawn in explicit, detailed reference to the seemingly contingent events of an ongoing history. We discover at the center of this history not only the often violent clash of rival ideals but also the inevitable inadequacy of even the most powerful forms of human conceptualization to do justice to the unanticipated demands of our ineluctable experience.
- ³⁶ The writings of G. W. F. Hegel and C. S. Peirce are sites in which such clashes are dramatically displayed and such inadequacies are tellingly revealed. Beyond this, they provide resources for understanding the drama of thought rescuing itself from the darkness of despair. Finally, these writings throw us toward the future in a manner in which our distance from, yet entanglement with, the past is a defining feature of the dramatic present.³⁷ In other words, these two philosophers are nothing less than dramatists of reason's self-renewals and self-revisions (cf. MacIntyre 2006a). Whatever

differences divide them (and these differences are numerous and deep), this kinship conjoins them. Peirce sensed this kinship³⁸ even if he tended to place mistaken emphasis on the most telling difference between himself and Hegel. The clash between them does not so much concern the outward clash between experience and reason³⁹ as that between somewhat different visions of the intricate relationship between rational ideals and experiential compulsion. Exploring the relationship between Hegel and Peirce can be an invaluable aid in illuminating the relationship between reason and experience. My modest hope is to have rendered in this essay a bold claim somewhat plausible. With each of these thinkers, one is thrown back anew on the most fundamental questions and forced to think over them, once again. The question of the relationship between experience and reason is one such question. The positions to which Hegel and Peirce were driven by their unblinking confrontation with the dramatic disclosures of ineluctable experience and also by their unabashed commitment to unbounded intelligibility provide more than an optimal basis of philosophical comparison. They provide insights into the matter at hand.⁴⁰

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NOTES

1. "Dr. Royce and his school, I am well aware," Peirce stresses, "consider inductive reasoning to be radically vicious; so that we unhappily cannot carry them along with us. (They often deny this, by the way, and say they rest entirely on experience. This is because they so overlook the Outward Clash, that they do not know what experience is. They are like Roger Bacon, who after stating in eloquent terms that all knowledge comes from experience, goes on to mention spiritual

illumination from on high as one of the most valuable kinds of experiences.) But they will not succeed in exploding the method of modern science [...]” (8.43).

2. “My whole method will be found,” Peirce at one point declared, “to be in profound contrast with that of Hegel; I reject his philosophy *in toto*. Nevertheless, I have a certain sympathy with it, and fancy that if its author had only noticed a very few circumstances he would himself have been led to revolutionize his system. One of these is the double division or dichotomy of the second idea of the triad. He has usually overlooked external Secondness, altogether. In other words, he has committed the trifling oversight of forgetting that there is a real world with real actions and reactions. Rather a serious oversight that” (1.368).

3. “The most familiar instances of the mental process known as Comparison seem, at first sight, to consist,” Josiah Royce (1968: 170) observes, “of a consciousness of certain familiar dyadic relations – relations of similarity and difference. Red contrasts with green; sound breaks in upon silence; one sensory quality collides [...] with another.” This however is deceiving. The Hegelian Royce draws explicitly upon the pragmatist Peirce to make his point: “Now Peirce’s view of the nature of comparison depends upon noticing that, familiar as such observations of similarity and dissimilarity may be, no one of them constitutes the whole of any complete act of comparison. Comparison, in the fuller sense of the word, takes place when one asks or answers the question: ‘What constitutes the difference between A and B?’ ‘Wherein does A resemble B?’ ‘Wherein consists their distinction?’” (*Ibid.*: 171). The basis or ground of the comparison (to use one of Royce’s own examples) between, say, Shakespeare and Dante (*ibid.*: 176-7) delimits the scope of the comparison and, thereby, enhances the possibility of the juxtaposition being instructive or illuminating. It is noteworthy that, in this context, Royce goes on to claim: “Peirce’s theory of comparison, and of the mediating idea or ‘third’ which interprets, is, historically speaking, a theory not derived from Hegel, by whom at the time he wrote these early logical papers [“On a New List of Categories” and the cognition series in *JSP*], Peirce had been in no notable way influenced” (*ibid.*: 185; cf. Fisch, 1986: 261). Royce makes bold to assert: “Peirce’s conception of interpretation [or, even more broadly, semiosis, i.e., sign-activity] defines an extremely general process, of which the Hegelian dialectical triadic process is a very special case” (*ibid.*: 185). This essay is nothing less than an exemplification of the process to which the logician Peirce and the dialectician Hegel sought to exhibit in its most abstract form and to illustrate in its concrete instances. It is, for both Hegel and Peirce, a process in which the “idea of other, of *not*, becomes the very pivot of thought” (1.324). Peirce however missed the extent to which irreducible otherness played, for Hegel no less than for himself, this pivotal role. Such, at least, is what I want to show in this essay.

4. Cf. James (1977: 48-9).

5. In his *Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1951) writes: “In the present treatise on the soul we find, first, an Introduction: in which the author does the three things that should be done in any Introduction. For in writing an Introduction one has three objects in view: first, to gain the reader’s good will; secondly, to dispose him to learn; thirdly, to win his attention. The first object one achieves by showing the reader the value of the knowledge in question; the second by explaining the plan and divisions of the treatise; the third by warning him of its difficulties.”

6. Everything is similar to everything else, in some respect. Hence, pointing out similarities between even very different thinkers does not involve great ingenuity or insight. What we might call the pragmatics of comparison needs above all to be borne in mind: What is the purpose of drawing any specific comparison? In order to honor the spirit of these two philosophers, our purpose ought to be philosophical: it should concern some important methodological or substantive issue. I have tried to do just this in my efforts here to draw a comparison between Hegel and Peirce, for my principal purpose is becoming clearer about the relationship between experience and reason. My secondary one is becoming clearer about the relationship between

Hegel and Peirce. In philosophically dealing with philosophers, hermeneutic and historical questions must ultimately be subordinated to strictly philosophical ones.

7. While I take Peirce to be a radical experimentalist, there are passages in his writings, especially pertaining to his derivation of categories, that seem to be instances of a priori reasoning. For the most part, these texts however can be rendered consistent with his experimentalism and, hence, are not what they seem (evidence of recourse to a priori reasoning). Even so, they give the appearance that he was guilty of what he condemned in others.

8. Joseph Esposito rightfully points to the importance of Peirce's "The Logic of Mathematics: An Attempt to Develop My Categories from Within" (Esposito, 1980: 179ff.). It is significant that he discusses this text in a chapter entitled "Objective Logic," thereby underscoring the affinity between Peirce's attempt to develop his categories in this manner and Hegel's Logic.

9. In his *Novum Organon*, Francis Bacon (2000) highlights the way we anticipate experience and, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant (1933) modifies this notion for his purpose.

10. "The highest symbol is," Peirce insists, "one which signifies a growth, or self-development, of thought, and it is of that alone that a moving representation is possible" (4.9; see 5.). He adds: "A fallacy is, for me, a supposititious thinking, a thinking that parades as a self-development of thought but it is in fact begotten by some other sire than reason. [...] For reasoning ceases to be Reason when it is no longer reasonable: thinking ceases to be Thought when true thought disowns it. A self-development of Thought takes the course that thinking will take that is sufficiently deliberate, and is not truly a self-development if it slips from being the thought of one object-thought to being the thought of another object-thought. It is, in a geological sense, a 'fault' - and unconformability in the strata of thinking" (4.10).

11. The demands and interests of reason need to be taken as seriously as the disclosures and compulsions of experience.

12. It is certainly ironic that the "rationale for Hegel's presuppositionless inquiry is thus one with which the pragmatist can safely sympathize" (*ibid.*), since the sort of logic championed in Hegel's *Logic* was so suspect in the judgment of the classical pragmatists and, inseparably connected to this, the philosophical ideal of a presuppositionless inquiry was no less dubious. But what softens this apparent opposition is just the crucial point being stressed here: Hegel's science of pure thought *presupposes* the experience of heuristic despair (or radical doubt).

13. "The hand that inflicts the wound is," Hegel claims, "also the hand which heals it" (*Lesser Logic*, 1975: 43).

14. Here, too, it is instructive to consult Stern's "Hegel and Pragmatism."

15. It is ironic that James, even though he found Hegel's overarching rationalism even more unacceptable than did Peirce, appreciated the extent to which Hegel acknowledged - indeed, highlighted - the centrality of what Peirce would call secondness, in conjunction with what Hegel christens negation. "There is," James himself emphasizes in *A Pluralistic Universe*, "a dialectical movement in things, if such it please you to call it." What Hegelian or monistic rationalism highlights is also what pluralistic empiricism highlights: "everything is in an environment," there is "a surrounding world of other things, and [...] if you leave it to work there [in that world] it will inevitably meet with friction and opposition from its neighbors. Its rivals and enemies will destroy it unless it can buy them off by compromising some part of its original pretensions" (James, 1977: 45).

16. Quite apart from thought, this is often the sequence in which Peirce begins his presentation of the categories. That is, he begins with secondness and then moves to firstness and, finally, to thirdness.

17. This roughly - but only roughly - corresponds to Hegel's much misunderstood notion of Absolute Knowledge.

18. In this sense, consciousness is not anything invincibly inner, private, or subjective. It is embodied in institutions, practices, and discourses.

19. An interesting question, though one I cannot pursue here, is how Peirce's critique of Cartesian rationalism and Lockean empiricism are related to Kant's "Refutation of Idealism." There can be no question that his early engagement with Kant equipped him with motives and resources to carry out this critique. But there is hardly any less question that he, perhaps quite early in his intellectual life, moved beyond Kant and toward Hegel. While Kant's refutation reinscribes the dualisms Hegel and Peirce were contesting, their own intensely critical approach to Kant's "critical philosophy" makes of his "Refutation of Idealism" only a waystation on a journey landing them quite far from Königsberg.

20. "Most of us, such is the depravity of the human heart," Peirce claims in one place, "look askance at the notion that ideas have any [inherent] power; although some power they have we cannot but admit" (2.149). In another place, he observes: "It is astonishing how human minds seem naturally to *pervert* the interrelations of these three categories of fact. The triadic fact takes place in thought. I do not say in anybody's thinking [i.e., necessarily in any finite mind's cogitation], but in pure abstract thought; while the dyadic thought is existential. With that comparison plainly before them, our minds *perversely* regard the dyadic fact [or secondness] as superior in reality to the 'mere' relation of thought which is the triadic fact [or thirdness]. We forget that thinking implies existential action [i.e., that thirdness is inseparable from secondness], though it does not consist in that [...]" (6.324; emphasis added). Such passages suggest to me that humans are not only finite and fallible but also (in a sense) "fallen."

21. The experience of error and ignorance is itself gained by our efforts to diminish our ignorance or correct our errors. This is a somewhat subtle point. Experience (at least our experience of our ignorance and errors) is, in a sense, not simply *had* (cf. John Dewey on experience as *had* versus *known*). We come to have this experience as a result of our efforts to counteract the disclosure, often quite painful, of these limitations and defects. Closer to Kant and Hegel, more distant from Locke and Hume, Peirce stresses the active role of human agents in the very constitution of even those experiences in which what is other than the self forces itself brutally upon the self. To recall Hegel's brilliant insight, the fear of truth, masquerading as the fear of error, needs to be exposed for what it is. Peirce would pragmatically clarify the fear of truth to be at bottom the fear of experience, specifically the power of experience to force us to transform, on occasion even profoundly, our understanding of, and our relationship to, the world.

22. In the chapter in *A Pluralistic Universe* devoted to Hegel, William James famously wrote: "Any author is easy if you can catch the centre of his vision." Specifically regarding Hegel, he proposes a twofold vision. "The first part is," James suggests, "that reason is all-inclusive, the second was that things are 'dialectical'" (James, 1977: 164).

23. This expression is, of course, pleonastic, at least from Peirce's perspective. Experience is by its very nature compulsive.

24. For alerting me to my tendency to allow the destructive facet to eclipse the positive one, I am indebted to Paul Giladi. Indeed, he has offered many helpful comments and suggestions, too many to explicitly acknowledge.

25. In "The Sentiment of Rationality" in *The Will to Believe* (1956), William James asserts: "The germinal question concerning things brought for the first time before consciousness is not the theoretic 'What is that?' but the practical 'Who goes there?' or rather [...] 'What is to be done'" (*ibid.*: 84). My suggestion is that thought emerges first and foremost in the form of a *question*, not a statement or imperative.

26. In Ballie's translation, this is rendered: "The common view discovers that the statement is intended in another sense than it is thinking of, and this correction of its opinion compels knowledge to go back to the proposition and take it now in some other sense" (Hegel, 1967: 122). Note, regardless of translation: we are compelled to revise the meaning and, in our effort to do

so, we are compelled to go back to our original stance (“the proposition”) and modify it so that it more adequately accords with what we mean, fully considered.

27. It is almost certainly the case that Peirce judges Hegel to have rationalized Secondness and, hence, to have destroyed it. But he himself considers Secondness in conjunction with Thirdness, underscoring the crucial role played by arbitrary force in the continuous growth of concrete reasonableness. Moreover, he insists, “there is Thirdness in experience, an element of Reasonableness to which we can train *our* reason to conform more and more” (*EP* 2: 212; emphasis added). While human experience is a phenomenon in which brute compulsion is the predominant element, immanent reasonableness is also characteristic of this complex phenomenon. Thus, it is far from clear wherein lies the difference between Peirce and Hegel regarding Secondness in its irreducibility. Also, Peirce’s concluding emphasis on “rational necessity and necessitation,” in 6.342, make it hard to see how his position deviates fundamentally from Hegel’s (the latter being accused of necessitarianism).

28. It is worth recalling in full a passage from Hegel’s *Logic*. It makes clear not only his identification of philosophy with idealism but also that an embrace of finitude (an acknowledgment of actuality) does not preclude a thoroughgoing commitment to infinity, properly understood. “The proposition that the finite is ideal constitutes idealism. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in recognizing that the finite has no veritable being. Every philosophy is essentially an idealism, or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is how far this principle is actually carried out. This is as true of philosophy as of religion; for religion equally does not recognize finitude as a veritable being, as something ultimate and absolute or as something underived, uncreated, eternal. Consequently, the opposition of idealistic and realistic philosophy has no significance. A philosophy which ascribed veritable, ultimate, absolute being to finite existences as such, would not deserve the name of philosophy; the principles of ancient or modern philosophies, water, or matter, or atoms are thoughts, universals, ideal entities, not things as they immediately present themselves to us, that is, in their sensuous individuality – not even the water of Thales. For although this is also empirical water, it is at the same time also the in-itself or essence of all other things, too, and these other things are not self-subsistent or grounded in themselves, but are posited by, are derived from, another, from water, that is, they are idealized” (Hegel, 2010: 154-5).

29. This argument is close to one put forth by Paul Giladi (2014).

30. The experimental inquirer “will live in quite a different world – quite a different aggregate of experience – than unscientific world” (CP 1.236). The scientific revolution has ushered in nothing less than the modern *world* or, more accurately, is one of the revolutions by which this world was brought into being.

31. But, especially in his maturity, Peirce became increasingly appreciative of Hegel’s genius and accomplishments. One might say that his engagement with his predecessor points toward the achievement of ambivalence (Segal 1992). If it began in a one-sided antipathy, it evolved into a nuanced, qualified attraction and repulsion.

32. Peirce no less than Hegel was committed to rescuing universality (or generality) from abstractness; that is, he was in his way committed to the concrete universal. One text in which this is evident is his reflections on art in the 19th century: After stressing how art, specifically music, in this century has valorized objectivity, he quickly notes: “It may be said that the romanticism of our literature is a contrary tendency to replace the universal and abstract by the personal and idiosyncratic. But such an objection is based on a comparison that has been cleared up in the early years of the century by Hegel, and which exact logic has rendered still more patent. Namely, the universal is not necessarily the abstracted. The abstractly universal is only the lowest kind of universal. Whatever is true is universal in a better [or higher] sense, and the personality of romantic literature is, in that sense, more truly universal than the labels of classification” (Wiener (ed.) 1958: 264). The secondness of thirdness (embodied Thirds in process

of development) encompasses what Hegel identified as concrete universals. This is more than implicit in Peirce's writings. There are passages, such as the one just quoted, wherein this point is made quite explicitly.

33. Of course, Peirce or one of his champions might respond by suggesting that what Hegel means by opposition here is altogether different from what Peirce designates as Secondness. I however am dubious that this is altogether accurate.

34. See especially John E. Smith's (1987: 51-64). It is possible, even likely, that Peirce's self-identification of his cosmology ("a Schelling-fashioned idealism" [CP 6.102]) is accurate. That is, he is regarding the question of freedom closer to Schelling than Hegel. Even so, he did note how his mature philosophy seemed *to him* to evolve in the direction of a position akin to Hegel's (see, e.g., Fisch, 1986: 276).

35. "When philosophy becomes an adult science, as it will before the twentieth century is half over, the first question to be asked in weighing the importance of any philosopher will be," Peirce asserts, "what important truth did he *prove*, in the sense in which truths in philosophy can be proved" (MS 470, 38; quoted by Fisch, 1986: 362). In my judgment, however, the first and likely most important question to pose for this purpose is, What fruitful questions did this or that philosopher pose? Heuristic fecundity is more telling than putative proof.

36. Peirce in effect invites us to do just this. As Fisch notes in "Hegel and Peirce," with the practical experience of triangulation acquired from his work at the Coast Geodetic Survey, "it was natural for him [Peirce] to locate his own changing positions in relation to the nearest eminent landmarks. And the most eminent of the nearest was Hegel" (Fisch, 1986: 279-89).

37. As Alasdair MacIntyre (2006b: 85) notes: "the self-knowledge of a self-conscious rational agent has always to be cast in a historical form. The past is present in the self in so many ways and so important ways that, lacking historical knowledge, our self-knowledge will be fatally limited."

38. The second epigram at the outset of this paper indicates just this.

39. I am not asserting that Peirce is simply wrong on this score, only that he exaggerates the extent to which Hegel fails to see human experience as a *majeure force* capable of overthrowing the putative necessities of absolute Reason. In Hegel's account, experience is far more forceful and central, reason far more fragile and precarious, than Peirce typically seems to appreciate.

40. Richard J. Bernstein in "Why Hegel Now?" (1986: 175) wrote of Charles Taylor: "[He] approaches Hegel not primarily as a self-effacing commentator, but rather as a philosopher engaged in dialogue with another philosopher – seeking to show what we may learn from him in our attempts to understand the world." This is precisely how Peirce also engaged Hegel's writings. The work of comparative philosophy ought, in my judgment, be that of facilitating a philosophical dialogue, for the sake of learning from the exchange. If it fails to enhance our understanding of the world, it is an idle exercise.

ABSTRACTS

Expressed in terms of his categories, Peirce criticized Hegel for having overlooked secondness, "not mere twoness [or duality] but active oppugnancy" (CP 8.291; emphasis omitted), "the sense of shock," surprise, and especially struggle and conflict (CP 5.45). In particular, he judged his predecessor harshly for having neglected or, at least, downplayed the role secondness, especially in the form of experience, plays in the growth of knowledge. In Peirce's judgment, then, Hegel's

emphasis on thirdness (mediation, conciliation, integration, and the overcoming of estrangement) tended to eclipse secondness (otherness, opposition, conflict, clash, and direct encounters with irreducible otherness). If one considers what Hegel actually wrote about both experience vis-à-vis reason and, more generally, the role of conflict in the generation of knowledge and indeed of much else, Peirce's criticism hardly seems fair. My proximate purpose is, however, not so much to defend Hegel's thought against Peirce's charge as to show how close Hegel and Peirce are in their understanding of the relationship between experience and reason. Beyond this, my ultimate objective is to illuminate this relationship, by consideration of the nuanced, subtle manner in which these thinkers construe this relationship. That is, my main purpose is not hermeneutic or historical but philosophical. Becoming clearer about how Peirce stands to Hegel is not nearly as important as becoming clearer about how experience stands to reason. As it turns out, however, a philological comparison facilitates our philosophical task.

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