

CHAPTER 10

The Dilemma of Aristotle's Dialectic

Aristotle's conclusion is that per se motion of action is impossible. In summing up the question he refers back to the threefold division given at the beginning of Book V of the ways a thing can be said to move, that is, per accidens, secundum partem, and per se ipsum. In only one of these ways can there be action of motion, that is, per accidens, as when a man who is recovering from a sickness runs or learns.¹ The change from sickness to health is accompanied or followed by running or learning only per accidens, that is, only because the subject in which it happens to run or to learn. Aristotle does not mean here either to affirm or deny a causal connection between getting well and running or learning, for as we saw, what is related per accidens may have some causal connection with the other term even to the point where the other term follows necessarily or it may not. Letting go of a rock certainly has something to do with the

¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, Book V, 226 a 19-23

rock's fall, but dropping a dish has nothing to do with earthquakes. Still both are per accidens inasmuch as though essentially unrelated in themselves they happen concomitantly to the same subject or even at the same time, though this last use of per accidens in which only the time is common is less proper.

It may be noted that there is a slight discrepancy between the division of action of motion here in the conclusion and the one that is assumed in the proofs. The proofs give only a twofold division of action of motion, namely, into action per se and action per accidens. Here, in the conclusion Aristotle re-introduces the possibility of action of motion according to part to exclude it. On what grounds does he exclude this possibility?

The answer is that according to part can be considered in two ways: from the viewpoint of the part and from that of the whole. From the viewpoint of the part, that which in according to part can be reduced to what is per accidens, inasmuch as what is per se with respect to the part, is, in this regard, per accidens with respect to its whole. It is per accidens to Socrates's throat that the whole Socrates feel better when his throat is healed. But from the viewpoint of the whole, the case is different, because although the part can be without the whole, the whole is composed of its parts and cannot be without them. In other words, the good of the part is essential to the per se

good of the whole. Secundum ad inferna agere: saltem ex intentione
defectus. Hence a change in one of the parts renders the whole
different simpliciter, that is, without qualification. Thus the
expression per accidens is itself equivocal.² But the viewpoint
of the whole being most proper,³ secundum partem should in this
respect be considered as a special case of per se. As such it
must be referred to the general proof against the change of change
given in the first argument. In this proof we saw that the ob-
jections must be those opposed in the same genus; a specific change
is not opposed to its genus, just as rational is not opposed to
animal, nor triangle to isosceles; hence change of change
secundum partem is impossible as an example of change of change
per se.

— It may be argued, though, that action of action does
exist in reality. A change in the temperature of water ends
in a change in the state of water when water crumens into steam,
boiling an egg culminates in the destruction of the egg, for a
boiled egg no longer has the capacity for life. The substance
of a boiled egg has changed, in the sense of action terminating

² St. Thomas, In VII Physic. lect. 1, n. 687

³ St. Thomas, De Divina Verbi Incarnati. c. 1, art. 3

in motion there is certainly motion of motion in reality. Likewise in the sense of motion as subject to motion there is motion of motion. Expansion is concomitant with heating in metals. In fact, motion of motion is necessary if any evolutionary or developmental process is to come about and Aristotle's philosophy as well as Hegel's is an evolutionary philosophy, though not necessarily in Darwin's sense. To this we answer that Aristotle is not denying motion of motion altogether, but merely the hypothesis that there is motion of motion per se. One motion does end in another kind of change. But this is per accidens in the sense just described. Indeed, so it must be, else true development would be impossible. Development implies a breaking of the narrowness of the per se where further development is required, a going beyond the bounds of the simply repetitions to draw out more and newer forms. Development would be stifled were motion of motion always per se. For example, sawing wood is per accidens to making a chair, were it not, a carpenter would never be able to make tables. Heating is per accidens to boiling water, inasmuch as heating may have many other purposes. If boiling water were the only thing that warmth can produce, eggs could not be hatched, nor life proceed from a non-life; heat would never produce another of heat, such as melting iron or burning wood. Evolution requires a relative

instrumentary by which one and the same cause, subordinated to a higher one, produces different effects in different substances, which are nonetheless *per se* related to the latter. Sawing considered in itself is *per se* related to making chairs, but sawing is an instrumental cause subordinated to the carpenter. The carpenter is the principal cause and making chairs is *per se* to him. Due to this subordination of causes, instrumental causes can be related to their effects *per accidens*, in so far as the *per se* effect of the instrumental cause is adapted to another ulterior effect. For example, cutting wood is *per se* to the saw, but that a chair result from this cutting is *per accidens* to the saw. But the production of the chair is *per se* to the carpenter who is the principal cause. The viewpoint of the principal cause is predominant because effects must be compared to their causes proportionately, that is, principal effects must be compared to principal causes, and subordinate effects to subordinate causes.⁴ Thus sawing is ordained by the carpenter to an ultimate effect which goes beyond the powers of the saw itself and to which it is related only *per accidens*. Nor should this offend us, because the instrumental cause is precisely that which works in view of another's purpose. Among themselves the

⁴ St. Thomas, in 11 Physic., lect. 6, n. 197

motions are completely contingent and haphazard; sawing is per accidens to making chairs, so that if a regularity bespeaking purposiveness is noticed among the motions, it can come only from the principal cause. In the case of the chairs, it is the carpenter who knowingly orders the motion of sawing to the change of wood into chairs. But only an intelligent being can order things related per accidens to a determinate effect. Hence, when a hen sits on an egg and thereby heats it to the degree required for a chicken's embryonic development, the hen is not the principal agent, since the hen is not aware of the purpose of her action. The principal cause of any evolutionary process is, for Aristotle, an intelligent being, either man in the case of art or God in the case of nature, because man does not make natural things. But the motions which are ordered by the intelligent being depend also on a determined nature. Heating a rock will not cause it to hatch as an egg, no matter how long the hen sits on it.

Nor do we say that heating water is per accidens to a change of water into steam. There are several ways of saying per accidens all of which significations are related among themselves analogously, that is, according to the order of posteriority. For as and per accidens when said of causes are said differently than when said of propositions and both of these ways of saying per se and per accidens are different from the way per se and

~~per accidens~~ are said of motions and what moves. ~~per accidens~~ commonly means what goes along with. When transferred to the philosophical order it can first mean what goes along with by being in the same individual substance but the one is not in the notion or definition of the other, as white and musical when said of Socrates. The changing of water into steam is contained in the notion of heating water, else we could not attempt to boil water by heating it. Heating water is therefore related ~~per se~~ to the change of water into steam, but heating and water is a ~~per accidens~~ composite; neither heating is contained in the notion of water nor water in that of heating. Hence, heating considered by itself is related to a change of water into steam ~~per accidens~~. From the viewpoint of what moves, heating is followed by a change of water into steam only by reason of the subject of heating which in this case happens to be water. Heating as a motion is ~~per accidens~~ to the motion or change which follows upon it in the particular substance in which it happens to be. From the viewpoint of the cause, heating by itself is ~~per accidens~~ to boiling water just as sewing is ~~per accidens~~ to making chairs, but as related to the principal cause, man or God, it is ~~per se~~. The proper viewpoint here is that of what moves; thus one motion is ~~per accidens~~ to another. But this does not rule out the possibility that from another point of view the

phenomena under consideration might be taken as related per se. In the case of motion, that moves per accidens which is in that which moves per se. Thus the soul moves because it is in the body, but this does not make the soul and the body a per accidens composite. It is absolutely necessary for a body to have a soul if the body is to walk. In saying that there is motion of motion only per accidens Aristotle is not taking away the determinacy of nature. Nor does he consider strict determinism as the only alternative to complete indeterminacy. There is a contingency and a determinacy in the motion of motion found in nature. The contingency arises from the motions considered in themselves, the determinacy from the particular nature which is subject to these motions and the intelligent agent which orders them determinately to the end he chooses. For Aristotle there is a true evolutionary process, new forms do come out of old ones. There is also a coincidence of determinacy and contingency, though this does not involve a contradiction because contingency and determinacy are referred to different causes.

But for Hegel there is only a pure determinacy. The motion of motion can only be per se. The reason is that Hegel denies the thing-in-itself, so that motion is not of something

other than the action itself; there is no mobile, no subject that is not motion. The heating in metals is that which expands and because it does so determinately, heating must, on Hegel's account of the matter, be said to expand not metals, but just expand itself. Likewise, heating must for Hegel be related not so to change of water into steam in the sense that heating is followed not by a change in the state of water, as he says in illustrating his category of Being.⁵ Were Hegel not to interpret this succession of actions in nature as motion of motion not by, he would be forced by his denial of the being-subject to say that they are "contingent" which, in his language, means "hazardous".

Hegel thought that by deducing the consequences of a denial of the Being-subject he could show that the universe as well as our knowledge of it was completely necessary, i. e., interconnected, and one in the strictest sense of the word, like Spinoza's Substantia or God. In this way Hegel thought he could regain Aristotle's conception of God which had been placed in jeopardy by Kant's philosophy. Actually, however, by interpreting the notion of motion as being a not by succession of actions determined in themselves, he destroyed all need of reference to

⁵ cf., Encyclopedia, 107

an intelligent being outside of the motions. God in Hegel is not the God of Aristotle though the same words are used to describe him. Even if he were the same God he would be a completely unnecessary appearance in Hegel's philosophy, because no transcendent intelligent being is needed. There is no need to posit an intelligent agent to order that which is in itself already ordered.

Our criticism of Hegel cannot limit itself to merely outlining the consequences of a notion of motion per se in relation to the conception of God on the one hand and to certain phenomena such as the transformation of water into steam on the other. The reason is that the consequences of his theory in relation to the conception of God are extrinsic to our subject, though not unimportant. Furthermore, Hegel would admit that for illustrating, or representation, Aristotle's interpretation is the correct one. What he maintains is that when viewed from the dialectic, and he means his dialectic, the exceptions which we have in illustrating merely illustrate the categories in the dialectic. They neither prove nor disprove his dialectical deduction, as he calls it. He would simply grant every thing we have said and claim a higher point of view for himself. And if the Hegelian dialectic is to be studied seriously at all, we must take it from Hegel's viewpoint, else we would run the risk

of being dismissed for attacking it only on the level of Verstand and not on the level of the Dialectic. It is also the Dialectic which is supposed by Hegelians themselves to be the one thing of real and lasting value which he discovered. Thus, Hegel's Dialectic as a whole being our study and not one or two of his particular conceptions we must begin again to consider the notion of action in Hegel's Dialectic as he sees it himself. This necessarily involves the license which we have permitted ourselves of becoming for the time being commentators on Hegel's text ourselves. This does not, however, imply that we agree with Hegel.

We limit our commentary to the succession of Verstand and Verstandlung so that we might be able to disengage the mechanism of the Dialectic without becoming too involved in the too concrete categories, as was pointed out in the third chapter. Our question is: Is Verstandlung related to Verden per se or per accidens? In seeking our answer to this question, we do not need to pass in review all of the proofs given by Aristotle. His treatment of the question is exhaustive and gives a wider distribution of possibilities than we need here. We do not have to consider, for the present, whether action can be the per se subject of a action, nor the infinite regress involved in the generation of generation. Motion as the subject of action is clearly not implied at all in the passage from Verden to Verstandlung, and the infinite regress involved in the generation

of generation treats the question rather from an extrinsic point of view. We need only concentrate on what happens when one motion or change is believed to terminate per se in another action.

Motion which terminates per se in action as well as generation which terminates per se in generation both involve, as we saw, a contradiction. Either getting sick was simultaneous in the same subject with getting well and those two actions terminated in the subject being simultaneously both sick and well, or generation ended in the production of substance and in the destruction of substance--in other words, substance, for several different reasons, at the same time both was and was not.

If generation and corruption are per se, and to comply with Hegel's general promise of what the Dialectic is, they must be. Again, the result of generation is and is not at the same time. It is, because it is produced by generation and it is not, because it is corrupted by corruption. (Corruption, as a special case of generation, obeys the general law stating that generation and corruption are simultaneous.) It is to be noted that the generation and corruption which take place simultaneously in the generation of generation per se take place in regards to the same substance, whereas ordinary generation

involves corruption in a much different way. In ordinary generation it is one thing which is destroyed, so that the term of the generation or generation is the simultaneous existence of contradictories in the same subject.

Thus if Werden terminates per se in Ungewordenheit, Sein is both being and non-being in act. This interpretation involves Hegel in a violation of the principle of contradiction. Above we showed that he could be interpreted in such a way so as not to have violated the principle of contradiction. Here, too, another interpretation comes to mind in which Sein is not being and non-being explicitly, but only being explicitly and non-being implicitly. As soon as one of the contradictories is not said in the same respect or way as the other there is no violation of the principle of contradiction.

Moreover, this second interpretation of Hegel seems to be the correct one, at least as far as Hegel's own mind on the subject is concerned, for he says that Sein is being explicitly, but the non-being in Sein is only hidden (eingehüllt).⁶ As such Sein is not an explicit contradiction nor an explicit action. It is not immediately Veränderung, but a moment of transition and non-change between Werden and

⁶ cf. Encyclopaedia, 91 -- note 12 infra

Termination

We can grant this interpretation quite willingly, but its consequence for Hegel's Dialectic is hardly less devastating, for in positing Hegelin as a moment of rest between the two changes, Jorden and Vergendern become per accidens. Hegelin terminates in Vergendern only because Hegelin, the per se term of Jorden subsequently passes into Vergendern. If motion is to end, per se is motion, we saw that the motions must first be opposites and secondly that they must be simultaneous in the same subject. Only as such can motions be determinate terms of a motion. Motions which merely follow each other are per accidens.

It is clear therefore that Hegel is faced with a dilemma. Either Jorden and Vergendern are per se, and he is forced to posit an explicit contradiction in Hegelin, or he can escape violating the principle of contradiction as we understand it and separate the motions of Jorden and Vergendern by a non-moving, stable subject, Hegelin. But in this last interpretation, Jorden is per accidens to Vergendern. The Dialectic either ends in an explicit contradiction, or the Dialectic is contingent.

We showed above in treating the basic triad of the Dialectic that Hegel can be so interpreted that he escapes violating the true principle of contradiction. Here likewise it is our

position that Hegel does not violate the true principle of contradiction in Hegelin. Hegelin is a concept of stability between being and non-being.

That this interpretation is correct, no one doubts, but that Hegelin is both the necessary deduction from being and necessary to the Dialectic is a point that has been challenged.

The objection comes from Stace in his commentary on the Encyclopedia.⁷ Notionless, he says, is necessary to the concept of Hegelin, but in deducing Hegelin precisely as notionless, Hegel violates a principle of the Dialectic. The principle supposedly violated is that if we go on in our deduction of the categories in the Dialectic, nothing is lost, nothing is left out. But Hegel has just deduced from the categories of being and of non-being the category of Hegelin which is change, so that if we deduce Hegelin as expressly non-notionless, we have violated the above principle of the Dialectic.

Stace further manifests his disapproval of Hegelin by saying that its deduction is shaky and founded on an equivocation

⁷ J. E. Stace, The Philosophy of Hegel (Dover Publications, 1955) p. 139-140

between "determinate" and "definite". But I do not agree with Stace here. The words, "finite", "determined", and "definite" all mean a being in act as opposed to a being in potency, and hence exclude motion which is not without potentiality. Dasein is furthermore the necessary issue of Werden, for, as Aristotle said, the per se terminus ad quem of generation must be a definite being in act, and not motion or generation.⁸ Dasein is immediately implied in the concept of Werden, both on the level of Vorstellung and on the abstract level.

Furthermore, and this is a more universal argument, the thesis of each triad is always taken from the point of view of Understanding.⁶ Understanding, if we are to keep to the traditional meanings of the words assumed by Hegel, is a motionless vision or simple apprehension. Reason is the process or motion.¹⁰ In each triad therefore there is a moment of stability

⁸ Aristotle, Physics, Book V, 226 a 14

⁹ Enzyklopedie, 79: "Das Logische hat der Form nach drei Seiten: A) die abstrakt oder verstandige, b) die dialektische oder negativ vernunftige, c) die spekulative oder positiv-vernunftige."

¹⁰ Cf. the definition of reason given by Isaac of Alexandria and current among the Scholastics, "ratio est cursus currens causam in causatum."

or a current of thesis. This is necessary, for if on arriving at being, mind were not held fast to a simple vision of being as predominant over non-being, that is, if the non-being in being were immediately evident we would at once be at the term of the process of being, which is being. Likewise, were the proper negation of being at once explicit we would be over in quantity and so forth. All the categories of the logic would lapse into confusion. A denial of the principle of contradiction implies a denial of distinction, as Aristotle said in regards to Parmenides and Heraclitus.¹¹ It seems identifying everything with everything and reducing all to a single entity. The result of such a violation of the principle of contradiction could only be a night in which all cows are black, and Hegel would be found guilty of that same universal indistinction of which he accused Fichte.

It is for this reason that Hegel cannot go as far as to violate the principle of contradiction. This is also the reason that understanding and distinction come first for Hegel. Not having at his disposition any other unity than that of abstract formal identity, unity in difference either presupposes difference or does not attain to difference and distinction at all.

¹¹ Aristotle, Physics, Book 1, 185 b 19-25

Hence, Werden and Veränderung are per accidens and contingent because neither Werden is implied in the concept of Veränderung nor vice-versa, as is evident. They are joined by a subject which is not motion, namely, Dasein.

This can be granted for the above reasons, but an objection immediately comes to mind. For, Werden is the dynamic coincidence of being and non-being, so that the result of Werden cannot be mere being. It is determined being, and hence, as the result of Werden, Dasein must contain non-being, and so involve the simultaneous co-existence of contradictories.

The answer to this difficulty is that Dasein does contain non-being, but it is not therefore an explicit contradiction. Its non-being is hidden (eingehüllt) in the Dasein, and it is non-being in the Dasein only in the sense that non-being is taken in itself, an sich; but Dasein itself is not explicitly both being and non-being, although Dasein does, at first, appear to be the coincidence of opposites in act, for determined being is such by a negation: omnis determinatio est negatio.¹²

The difference between being explicit or für sich and

¹² Enzyklopedie, 91: "Uebrigens liegt in der hier erwähnten Verwechselung des Daseins, als des bestimmten Seins, mit dem abstrak-Sein das Nichtige, dass im Dasein allerdings das Moment der Negation gleichsam nur erst als eingehüllt enthalten ist, welches Moment der Negation dann erst im Für-sich-sein frei hervortritt und zu seinem Rechte gelangt."

being implicit in an sich for Hegel can be understood by comparing the two demonstrations with Aristotle's potentia sibi contraria.¹³ A thing can be subject to opposites in potency, for instance, I can both sit and stand, not in the sense that both of these potencies will be actualized at once, but that while I am standing, I retain the potency to sit and viceversa. Thus Dasein is being an sich or being in act, and non-being an sich or in potency.¹³ In other words, something that is in act can, while in act, be in potentia not to be. Now, to us, this being and non-being are of the very nature of the contingent, namely, what can be when it is not and what cannot be when it is. This non-being that is intrinsic to contingent beings is much the same as Hegel's non-being that is inherent to what he calls first act and changeableness. For Hegel, this inherent non-being, which constitutes the finitude and the changeableness (Veränderlichkeit) of Dasein presents only the possibility of change for Verfallung. But from the point of view of Reason which reflects over the object of Verfallung this possibility of change becomes

¹³ This comparison is not original here. Hegel speaks of it in this connection (op. cit., p. 23 seq.), although he does not apply it in exactly the same way that I have here.

of itself actual change.¹⁴ The reason is that in looking over being, reflection finds that it is what it is, i. e., being, only by the determination imposed on it by non-being. Of course, this is not abstract non-being, but determined non-being or what we call anderesein (being other). Hence, just as pure being was undetermined in itself and therefore nothing, so being or determined being is in itself really other. But being other is itself a being, and being is being other, so that being immediately shows itself as contradictory and this is what Hegel means when he says it shows itself as dialectical. The swinging back and forth which caused being is repeated on a lower, more concrete level giving us Veränderung.

14. Encyclopaedia, §2 Zusatz: "In der Veränderung zeigt sich der innere Widerspruch, mit welchem das Dasein von Raum aus befaßt ist, und welcher dasselbe über sich hinaus treibt. Für die Vorstellung erscheint das Dasein zunächst als einfach positiv und zugleich als innerhalb seiner Gränze ruhig beharrnd; wir wissen denn zwar auch, dass alles Endliche (und ein solches ist das Dasein) der Veränderung unterworfen ist. Allein diese Veranlassung des Daseins erscheint der Vorstellung als eine bloße Möglichkeit, deren Realisierung nicht in ihm selbst begründet ist. In der That aber liegt es im Begriff des Daseins sich zu verändern, und die Manifestation dessen, was das Dasein an sich ist. Das Lebendige stirbt, und zwar einfach um deswillen, weil es als solches dem Reize des Todes in sich selbst trägt.--"

22. also, Ibid., 104 Zusatz 1: "Wollte man zur Beantwortung dieser Frage sich einfach auf die Befragung berufen, so würde diese um deswillen nicht genügen, weil, abgesehen davon, dass wir denn bloss die Vorstellung und nicht den Gedanken der Organe hatten, diese sich bloss als eine Möglichkeit (des Verzehrt- und Verändertwordens) erweisen, und uns die Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit dieses sich so Verhaltens fehlen würde. Schlingegen hat sich auf dem Wege unserer logischen Entwicklung nicht nur die Manifestation als eine Stufe des sich selbst deutenden Denkens ergeben, sondern es hat sich auch gezeigt, dass es im Begriff der Identität liegt, schliesslich über sich hinauszuschreiten, und dass es nicht bloss die einer Möglichkeit, sondern die einer

But if we consider the Dialectic from Hegel's point of view, as we agreed to do from the start, it seems that Verfallung does issue forth from Being necessarily and the contingency which we, from Aristotle's point of view, supposedly find in the Dialectic threatens to disappear. The reason for this involves Hegel's doctrine of "Meining" or meaning (cf. our chapter 2 above).

Verfallung, argues Hegel, claims that we can rest by Being, but Hegel retorts that this is a bloßes Meining, a mere, unfounded intimation.¹⁶ It is unfounded because we cannot say what we mean or want to say, namely, what the difference between Being and Anderssein is. Verfallung would divide Being and Anderssein between different individuals. But what is the difference between them? What can only be intimated can only be a subjective feeling, never an objective thought; it must remain forever undetermined. But in Hegel's view something

¹⁶ Encyclopedie 91: "Das gedankenlose Sein betrachtet die bestimmten Dinge als nur positiv und halt dieselben unter der Form des Seins fest. Mit dem blossen Sein ist es indess nicht abgetan, denn dieses ist, wie wir früher gesehen haben, das schlechthin Leere und gleich haltlose."

which is undetermined in itself is nothing, as we saw in the case of das reine Sein. Now, two things which do not differ among themselves are the same in kind: Sein is formally identical with Anderssein, just as being was formally identical with non-being. Now, it must be remembered, admits of only one kind of sameness, sameness in species, whereas Aristotle admits of sameness in genus, in species, numerical sameness, and sameness according to a proportion. As such, Sein is the result of Werdn as "it appears in one of the moments of Werdn, namely, being."¹⁷ Sein contains everything that is in Werdn, so that first non-being, which at first is hidden, comes forth, and from the contradiction implied in saying "this being" and "that other being" simultaneously of the same thing under the same respect there issues the particular Sein of Sein, Veränderung. Thus, change is not completely forgotten as Stück changed; it is hidden in Sein, just as non-being itself

¹⁷ Ibid. 39: "41. es (d.h., Sein) ist das Werdn in der Form des einen seiner Momente, des Seins, gesetzt."

is hidden in Being.

In this light the Dialectic seems to escape from the dilemma. It neither contradicts the principle of contradiction nor does the interjection of Being render the Dialectic contingent. Indeed, were it not for Being, Nothing and Veränderung would be completely disconnected and this is Hegel's precise notion of contingent, namely, things that are disconnected and outside each other.

But this is precisely where Hegel's concept of contingent is deficient. Just because any two things are connected by an intermediary does not make those things necessary as when one is implied in the concept of the other. But, as we saw, Nothing and Veränderung are completely outside each other and contingent. Their contingency is not lessened nor removed in the least by the fact that through the intermediary of Being their succession becomes determined, no more so than the heating of water to a hundred degrees centigrade per se (that is, taking the heating without its particular subject, water) changes water into steam, although we do observe a constant between heat and steam. The succession of changes may even be strictly necessary, as when we push locomotives over the edge of a cliff, he necessarily falls, but pushing in itself is related to falling only per accidens.

There is no room for equivocation. Contingent here means what is outside the concept of another and joined to the other only through the subject, whether determinately or it is possible or it is singularly possible. Being outside each other in concept is a common notion of contingent, whereas Aristotle's contingency is much wider than the merely generic. However, Hegel's definition of contingent can be equated with one meaning of per accidens.¹³ But even things which are contingent in this sense must be joined in some way, such as by two things being in the same subject or at the same time with no per se connection between them, as in "mutuals accident", or in so far as some good or harm happens along unintended, else we would have two merely unrelated things to the point of being neither contingent nor necessary. Thus the dilemma stands. Hegel allows himself no choice between a falsely constructed disjunctive: either things must all be perfectly interconnected; Veränderung as a notion must terminate per se in Veränderung, or the connection between the things turns out to be merely contingent. If Veränderung is related to Veränderung per se, he violates the principle of contradiction; if it is related to Veränderung per accidens, the Dialectic fails.

¹³ cf. St. Thomas, In 11 Physic. lect. 3

Dilemma: The Limitation of the Dialectic

The conclusion we have arrived at opens a deeper question in Hegel. First, we saw that unless Being is a thesis, the Dialectic falls into utter indistinction; so that Being as an moving substance or subject must be given in order to unify one triad with another triad and at the same time keep them apart. But the question arises as to what substance itself does its own-is-ness? Why is Being as thesis being Not-Being and Not-Being no more than Not-Being?

The answer comes quite readily if we consider what is at the bottom of Hegel's "Seinung". The stability of Being or being comes from excluding the non-being which appears as soon as it becomes the object of reflection. This exclusion can rest, Hegel says, only on a Being, that is, on something "undetermined," unbestimmt. The "undetermined", of course, is not nor can it ever be truly objective. Objectivity here is conceptual clarity, as the clear and distinct ideas of Descartes. Truth is no more than this objectivity. Subjectivity is error; it is obscurity, incommunicable intuition, something that cannot be truly conveyed.

But if we ask what this "undetermined" is, the only

answer is that it is matter. Matter is undetermined substance. Hegel's position might be more readily understood if we consider, by way of an example, the ancients' grammatical analysis of the pronoun. The pronoun signifies substance and qualities, that is, indeterminately, or without saying what the thing is that it stands for. This is like signifying substance ad modum materiae.¹⁹ Being is being and not non-being because this is being. What is this? A this something (hoc aliquid) is first of all, as to us, something that is in fact material, it implies a matter. But matter unqualified is just pure matter, that is, something in itself quite indeterminate, but still something in some sense of "something", and therefore not absolute non-being. Now, for Hegel, unless we can qualify, stating just what a thing is, that is, unless a thing is determined, it is nothing

19 cf. Grammatica Speculativa Jacobi Hugo Jacobi (Louvain, really by Thomas of Erft), chapter III: "Modus significandi essentialis generalissimus Pronominis est modus significandi per modum artis, et indeterminatae apprehensionis. Materia artis prima in se, extra indeterminata est, respectu cuiuslibet forme naturalis, quae inest de se, ita quod nec includit formam, nec determinationem formae. Ab ista ergo proprietate materiae primae, quae est proprietates de se indeterminata, determinabilis tamen per formam, existit modus significandi per modum indeterminati, qui est modus significandi essentialis generalissimus Pronominis; non quod Pronomen materiam primam significet tantum, sed ex modo essentiali reperto in materia prima, intellectus movetur ad considerandum aliquam essentiam sic indeterminatam, et ad determinandum illi vocem sub modo significandi, per modum indeterminati." Compare to the dialectical process of the "this" given by Hegel in the first chapter of the Phenomenology of the Spirit. See Grundgesetze der Logik.

at all.

In other words, Hegel rejects the "undetermined". The reason is that the "undetermined" is unknowable in itself. This is indeed Aristotle's doctrine. Prime matter contains no act at all, and hence can cause no act of knowledge, because to act upon something, the agent must be something in act, and there is no such thing as an indeterminate act. All action proceeds according to a form, that is, according to some determined process or mode. To commit, like the legendary general, jump on a horse and ride off in all directions. We must go in some determinate direction. Form and act mean determination, the undetermined, whether relatively or absolutely so, means matter or potency. For this reason prime matter is unknowable in and by itself.

But, says Hegel, what is undetermined in itself and hence unknowable is merely non-mind not over and against mind. This non-mind or unknowable is, as we saw in the second chapter, the Thing-in-itself, which was assumed to be both existent and unknowable. But to Hegel, whatever is unknowable is non-existent, so that when we consider the Thing-in-itself precisely in this sense as the unknowable, it becomes apparent that it is not Aristotle's substantia prima at all which is being in act and hence knowable, but something more like Aristotle's prime

at all.

In other words, Hegel rejects the "undetermined". The reason is that the "undetermined" is unknowable in itself. This is indeed Aristotle's doctrine. Prima materia contains no act at all, and hence can cause no act of knowledge, because to act upon something, the agent must be something in act, and there is no such thing as an indeterminate act. All action proceeds according to a form, that is, according to some determined process or mode. A cannon, like the legendary general, jump on a horse and ride off in all directions. He must go in some determinate direction. Form and act with determination, the undetermined, whether relatively or absolutely so, means matter or potency. For this reason prima materia is unknowable in and by itself.

But, now as Hegel, what is undetermined in itself and hence unknowable is merely non-being not over and against being. This non-being or unknowable is, as we saw in the second chapter, the lingua-franca, which was assumed to be both existent and unknowable. But as Hegel, whatever is unknowable is non-existent, or that when we consider the lingua-franca positively in this sense of the unknowable, it becomes apparent that it is not Aristotle's apostrophic prima at all which is being in act and hence knowable, but something more like Aristotle's prima

matter.²⁰

Thus Berkeley, assuming the materialists' concept of matter as that which is determined by space and time, argued that space and time do not exist unless they are known, and so he reduced all being to perception, i. e., the actuality of being is the actuality of its being known. Kant, in order to save reality, took space and time out of reality and put them in the mind as conditions of experience. Space and time, then, do not belong to matter. But matter is still supposed to exist, and to be substance. Clearly this is absurd, if we take matter as that which cannot exist without form.²¹

But if this is true, is not the Dialectic itself based on a sophism? The sophism consists in taking substance as prime matter and supposing that the completely undetermined matter exists the way substance does. Since the completely undetermined does not so exist, neither can the substance, the Ding-an-sich exist at all. Thus since a separation of being from a not-being and Sein from Indeterminat rests on the indeterminate, there can

²⁰ Encyclopedia, 128: "Diese Dinge, bestimmungslose Materie ist a priori denkbar, was das Ding-an-sich, nur classes als in sich ganz abstraktes, jene als an sich auch als anderes, zunächst aber die Form sciences."

²¹ cf. G. E. Moore, A Study of Hegel's Logic, pp. 133

be no separation of these contradictories. They fall together in identity and indistinction. But distinction there must be according to Hegel. If we are to save this vital distinction for Hegel, we can do so only by a surreptitious re-introduction of the undetermined at the stage of thesis and understanding. But Hegel cannot have it both ways, he cannot have his cake and eat it too; either the "undetermined" must either be rejected once and for all or taken as real, but not the way substance is real.

The sophism is all the more unacceptable because Hegel himself gives the correct interpretation of Aristotle's prime matter in an important footnote to 123 in the Encyclopedia. He is talking about Matter.

Es ist somit nur der abstrahierende Verstand, welcher die Materie in ihrer Isolierung und als an sich formlos fixiert, wohingegen in der Tat der Gedanke der Materie das Prinzip der Form & rebus in sich schließt und darum auch in der Einführung nirgends eine formlose Materie als existierend vorkommt. Die Auffassung der Materie als ursprünglich vorhanden und als an sich formlos ist übrigens sehr alt und begegnet uns schon bei den Griechen, zunächst in der mythischen Gestalt des Chaos, welches als die formlose Grundlage der existierenden Welt vorgestellt wird. In der Konsequenz dieser Vorstellung liegt es dann, Gott nicht als den Erschaffer der Welt, sondern als blossen Weltbildner, als Demiurgen, zu betrachten. Die tiefere Anschauung ist dagegen diese, dass Gott die Welt aus Nichts erschaffen habe, worin dann überhaupt ausgesprochen ist, einerseits, dass die Materie als solcher keine Selbstständigkeit subsumiert, und andererseits, dass die Form nicht von aussen an die Materie gelangt, sondern, als Totalität, das Prinzip der Materie in sich selbst

Wort, welche freie und unbedingte Form sich aus dem Inhalt
als das Werk ergeben wird.

It is only Understanding, Verstand, which takes
matter as existing without form. Understanding is not the
intelligence of Aristotle, but the idealist Understanding which
we described at the beginning of our work when we spoke of the
idealist theory of abstraction, the Understanding which negates
in abstracting and which takes the unabstractable residue of
abstraction for a thing-in-itself.

The mystery of the Dialectic begins to unfold itself.

It is now clear how Hegel can consider the Wesen as a half-truth,
for indeed it is. It is now clear how Hegel can say that the
Dialectic arises from the false view of the world, but shifting
the blame does not relieve Hegel himself of error, nor does it
relieve those who, following Hegel, have resumed this false
Understanding under the title of Materialismus (a meaning initiated
by Hegel himself) and pretended, this time perhaps with success,
to destroy all former thought and supplant it with "Dialectical
Philosophy" and the practical political consequences thereof,
especially when Hegel himself says that "Kein Tag kein solcher
Materialismus und Aristotelismus noch weniger. Sondern man
muss das Gegentheil glauben."²²

Our conclusion is clear. The dilemma of the dialectic forces us to either admit explicit contradiction which leads us to a night in which all cows are black, or admit that no world is contingent on another, both major ~~inconveniences~~ for Hegel. Or if we accept a last ditch effort to save necessity in the second possibility offered by the dilemma, we indeed obtain a determined, though still contingent, progress, but we must content ourselves with the compound nihilism involved in modern idealism. Naturally those who can reconcile themselves with a nihilism in the name of objectivity, an objectivity which in reality is limited to the naive imaginative view of things in themselves, first in positing prime matter as existing, and then ^{rejecting} ~~denoting~~ it because it is as "unclear" or "unobjective" existent, will find no difficulty at all in dialectical philosophy.

1. εἰ δὲ τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, δηλονότι πλεοναχὲς τὸ μὴ ὄν· καὶ γὰρ τὸ οὐ λευκὸν μὴ ὄν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἀνθρώπος μὴ ὄν· λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὸ γεῦσθαι μὴ ὄν· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ἀφείσθαι· περὶ λόγου γὰρ ἔστι συνθεσις ἢ διαίρεσις τῶν δὲ προειρημένων οὐκ ἔστι πᾶν ἂν κινεῖσθαι μέγοιτο; ἐγὼ δὲ φημι τὸ οὕτως μὴ ὄν ὡς τὸ μὴ λευκόν, ὡς τὸ μὴ ἀγαθόν; οὐκ ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ μὴ λευκὸν κινεῖται καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ μὴ ἀγαθόν· πᾶς γάρ ἂν ὁ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως κινεῖσθαι δύναται; ἀλλὰ καμῖας ὁ μὴ λευκὸς καὶ καμῖας ὁ μὴ ἀγαθός κινεῖται; οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ ἀλλῶς τὰ τοιαῦτα κινεῖσθαι λέγω; ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ὅτι τοῖς κινουμένοις συμβέβηκεν,
2. τὸ γὰρ ἅμα μεταβάλλειν ἐκ ὑγείας εἰς νόσον, καὶ ἐκ αὐτῆς ταύτης τῆς μεταβολῆς εἰς ἄλλην, ὅπερ ὡς ἄτοπον ἐπήραγε, τοῦτω ἐπεται πᾶν τὴν κίνησιν κινεῖσθαι· τὸ γὰρ κινούμενον ὑπομένον ὅπερ ἔστι κινεῖται. εἰ οὖν τὸ νοσῶν κινεῖται μένον ὅπερ ἔστιν εἰς τὸ ἀντικείμενον τὸ ὑγιάζεσθαι μεταβάλλει; ὥστε τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα ἀννοσῶν καὶ ὑγιᾶν· τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἄτοπον τῇ γενέσει οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ· οὐ γὰρ μένον τι ὅπερ ἔστι γίνεται, ὅπερ μένον ὅπερ ἔστι κινεῖται· οὐ γὰρ ἐκ ὄντος εἰς ὄν, ἀλλ' ἐκ μὴ ὄντος εἰς ὄν καὶ ἐκ πῶς ὑποκειμένου εἰς ὑποκείμενον. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος εἰς ὄν ἢ γένεσις; ἐὰν τὴν μεταβολὴν ταύτην μεταβάλλειν τις εἴπῃ, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλον ἐκ ἀντικείμενου εἰς ἀντικείμενον μεταβάλλει, ἅμα ἐκ μὴ ὄντος εἰς ὄν καὶ ἐκ ὄντος εἰς μὴ ὄν μεταβάλλει, ὥστε καθὼ γίνεται φθείρεται.
3. ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐκ ἦν ὁρισμένον τὸ εἰς ὅποιον, διὰ τοῦτο δταν νοσήσῃ φησί, μεταβεβηκός ἐστι εἰς ὁποιοῦν· ἐνδέχεται γὰρ καὶ μεταβαλεῖν τὸ μεταβάλλον καὶ ἡρεμῆσαι παυσάμενον τῆς μεταβολῆς. δταν μὲντοι ἐκ κινήσεως εἰς κίνησιν κινεῖσθαι λέγεται, ἀνάγκη εἰς ὁποιοῦν κίνησιν μεταβεβηκέναι καὶ οὐκέτι εἰς ἡρεμίαν. τὸ οὖν ἐκ κινήσεως εἰς κίνησιν μεταβάλλον, δηλονότι κινούμενον ἔτι τὴν κίνησιν ἐκείνην, ἐκ τῆς λέγεται μεταβάλλειν, ἔστι καὶ ἄλλην κινούμενον, εἰς ἣν λέγεται ἐκ ταύτης μεταβάλλειν· ὡς γὰρ τὸ ἐκ λευκοῦ εἰς μέλαν μεταβάλλον ἔτι πᾶς ὁνὲν πᾶ λευκῷ ἐκ αὐτοῦ μεταβάλλει καὶ ἔχει τι αὐτοῦ, ὥς ἂν τελὲς μεταβάλλῃ ἐκ αὐτοῦ, οὕτως εἰ καὶ ἐκ κινήσεως τι εἰς κίνησιν μεταβάλλει, ἔτι ὄν ἐν τῇ κινήσει ἐκ τῆς λέγεται μεταβάλλειν καὶ κινούμενον κατ' αὐτήν, ἅμα καὶ κατ' ἐκείνην κινῆσθαι εἰς ἡμεταβάλλει. καὶ ἔτι δταν ἢ εἰς τὸ ἕτερον μεταβεβηκός, ὅπερ εἶπεν αὐτὸς δταν νοσήσῃ, τότε καὶ εἰς ἕτερον ὁποιοῦν ἔστι μεταβεβηκός. ὥστε πρῶτον μὲν ἄτοπον τὸ ἐπὶ πλεῶν ἅμα καὶ διαφέροντα κινεῖσθαι, ἔπειτα τὸ ἐν πλείοσιν ἅμα εἶναι, τῶτον δὲ εἰ ἢ κίνησις μεταβολὴ ἔστιν ἐκ ἐναντίου εἰς ἐναντίον καὶ μεταβάλλει τι ἐκ κινήσεως εἰς κίνησιν, δηλονότι ἐκ τῆς ἐκ ἐναντίου εἰς ἐναντίον μεταβάλλοι ἂν εἰς τὴν ἐκ ἐναντίου εἰς ἐναντίον· αὗται γὰρ ἐναντίαι κινήσεις.
4. καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἄλλο τι ἄτοπον προσαναφαίνεται κατὰ ταύτην τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τὸ μὴ οὐσαν τὴν γένεσιν ἤδη εἶναι.

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