

MIND

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.



I.—HEGEL'S TREATMENT OF THE CATEGORIES OF THE IDEA.

BY J. ELLIS McTAGGART.

THE Idea occupies, in Hegel's *Logic*, the third division of the Doctrine of the Notion, and concludes the dialectic process. It is divided into stages entitled Life, Cognition and the Absolute Idea. The first two of these are again subdivided. I shall, however, endeavour to show that the subdivisions which Hegel makes in the category of Life are unnecessary, and, indeed, unjustifiable.

The Idea is, of course, the Synthesis of the Subjective and Objective Notions. But this Synthesis is not new to us, since it has already taken shape in Teleology, the last category of the Objective Notion. That this should be the case is in conformity with the general notion of the dialectic process, since the Thesis of each triad is only a restatement, in a more "immediate" form, of the Synthesis of the triad preceding. The conception which we reached in the category of Teleology was that reality was a unity differentiated into a plurality (or a plurality combined into a unity) in such a way that the whole meaning and significance of the unity lies in its being differentiated into that plurality, and that the whole meaning and significance of the parts of the plurality lies in their being combined into that unity.

LIFE.

The new category—that of Life—has exactly this meaning over again. Indeed it would be difficult to find a transition

in the dialectic in which the identity between the Synthesis and the new Thesis is more evident. In dealing with this category we must, of course, bear in mind, as in the case of other categories named from concrete phenomena, the relation between those phenomena and the category. The logical category of Life does not apply only to what are commonly called living beings, but is equally true of all reality. Nor does it involve any attempt to deduce by pure thought all the empirical characteristics of biological life. The choice of the name is due to the fact that this is the category of pure thought which is most usually and naturally employed in dealing with the phenomena of life.

This is manifestly the case. The most remarkable peculiarity of a living being is that, while it is really a unity, it is only a unity on condition of being differentiated, and that, in so far as we regard it as a living being, the only meaning of the parts is that they are united, while the only meaning of the whole is that it is differentiated. In the case of Life Hegel makes it more explicit, than he does when dealing with other categories with concrete names, that he *intends* to keep strictly to pure thought, and avoid all empirical intermixture. For he expressly cautions us against supposing the Life of the dialectic to be identical with the life of concrete experience, whether the latter be taken by itself, or as a manifestation of Spirit (*Werke*, vol. v., pp. 245-246). But we shall, I think, see later on, that his intentions were not realised, and that his treatment of the category included some empirical details which were unjustifiable and confusing.

We have now to consider the transition from the category of Life to that of Cognition, postponing for the present our attempt to demonstrate that Hegel's subdivisions of Life are useless. We may briefly anticipate the argument by saying that the unity required by the category of Life will prove fatal to the plurality which is no less essential to it, unless that plurality is of a peculiar nature, and that it is this peculiarity which takes us into the category of Cognition.

The unity which connects the different individuals is not, we must first observe, anything outside them, for it has no reality distinct from them. The unity has, therefore, to be somehow *in* the individuals which it unites. Now in what sense can the unity be *in* the individuals?

It is clear, in the first place, that it is not in each of them taken separately. Such an expression is obviously contradictory; since, if the unity was in each of them taken

separately, it could not connect one of them with another, and, therefore, would not be a unity at all.

The common-sense solution of the question would seem to be that it is not in each of them when taken separately, but that it is in all of them when taken together. But, if we attempt to escape in this way, we fall into a fatal difficulty. That things can be taken together implies that they can be taken separately. For, if there were no means of separating them, they would not be an aggregate at all, but a mere undifferentiated unity. Now, if the unity is only in the individuals taken as an aggregate, it is not in the individuals taken separately. And, by the definition of the category from which we started, the individuals have no existence at all, except in so far as they embody the unity. Therefore the individuals, taken separately, do not exist at all; and, therefore, they do not exist as an aggregate.

In the case of less perfect unities, there would be no difficulty in saying that they resided in the aggregate of the individuals, and not in the individuals taken separately. A regiment, for example, is not a reality apart from the soldiers, neither is it anything in each individual soldier, but it is a unity which is found in them all when taken together. But here the differentiations are not entirely dependent on the unity. Each man would exist, and would be distinguishable from the others, if the regiment had never been formed. In the category of Life, however, no differentiations can exist independent of the unity. And therefore the unity must be found in them, not only in so far as they are not taken as differentiated, but also in respect of their differentiation. The unity cannot, indeed, as we saw above, be in each individual as a *merely* separated individual. But it must, in some less crude way, be found in *each* of the united individuals, and not merely in the sum of them. For those separate characteristics which differentiate the individuals can have no existence at all unless the unity is manifested in them.

It might be suggested that we could overcome this difficulty by the idea of mutual determination. If each individual is in relation with all the rest, then its character is determined by these relations, that is by the unity of which the individuals are parts. Thus, it may be said, the unity will be manifested in the separate nature of each individual, since that nature will be what it is by reason of the unity of all the individuals.

But this is only going back to the category of Mechanism, and the same difficulties which compelled us to regard

that category as inadequate will recur here. Are we to regard the individuals as possessing any element of individuality which is not identical with their unity in the system? To answer this question in the affirmative is impossible. Such an inner reality, different from the external relations of the individual, though affected by them, would take us back to the categories of Essence, which the dialectic has already been compelled to transcend. And, in particular, it would be quite incompatible with our present category. For that demands, not only that the individuals shall not be independent of their unity, but they shall have no meaning at all but their unity. And therefore there cannot be any distinct element of individuality.¹

On the other hand, if we answer our question in the negative, our difficulties will be as severe as before. The individuals are now not to possess any elements of individuality which are not identical with their unity in the system. But this, while it is no doubt the true view, is incompatible with the conception that the unity is simply the unity of the mutual determination of the individuals. As we saw when Absolute Mechanism transformed itself into Chemism, "the whole nature of each Object lies in the relations between it and other Objects. But each of these relations does not belong exclusively, *ex hypothesi*, to the one Object but shares it with the others. The nature of wax consists, for example, partly in the fact that it is melted by fire. But this melting is just as much part of the nature of the fire. The fact is shared between the wax and the fire, and cannot be said to belong to one of them more than the other. It belongs to both of them jointly. . . . The only subject of which the relation can be predicated will be the system which these two Objects form. The qualities will belong to the system, and it will be the true" individual. "But again, two Objects cannot form a closed system, since all Objects in the universe are in mutual connexion. Our system of two Objects will have relations with others, and will be merged with them, in the same way that the original Objects were merged in it—since the relations, which alone give individuality, are found to be common property, and so merge their parts, instead of keeping them distinct.

¹ To avoid misconceptions, I will so far anticipate points which must be treated later as to remark that this does not mean that the individuality is subordinated to the unity, but that both moments are completely united in the concrete conception of reality, from which they are both abstractions.

The system in which all the Objects, and all their relations, are contained, becomes the reality—the only true Object, of which all the relations contained in the system are adjectives. The individual Objects disappear.”¹

This explanation also, therefore, must be rejected. For it destroys the individuals in favour of the unity, while our category asserts that the individuality and the unity are equally essential. And such a victory would be fatal to the unity also, since it converts it into a mere undifferentiated blank, and therefore into a nonentity.

The impossibility of taking the connexion required by the category of Life as one of mutual determination of individuals comes, it will be seen, from the high degree to which the notion of unity has now been developed. Any individuality not identical with the unity is incompatible with it. And in mutual determination the individuality is not identical with the unity, since it does not express the whole of that unity, but merely a part of it. For the whole unity is only expressed by the mutual determinations of all the individuals, and these, of course, are not all to be found within each single individual.

We are forced back to the conclusion that it is necessary that in some way or another the whole of the unity shall be in each individual, and that in no other way can the individuals have the requisite reality. Yet, as we saw above, to suppose that the unity exists in the individuals *as isolated*, is to destroy the unity. The unity must be complete in each individual. Yet it must also be the bond which unites them. How is this to be? How is it possible that the whole can be in each of its parts, and yet be the whole of which they are parts?

The solution can only be found by the introduction of a new and higher idea. The conception which, according to Hegel, will overcome the difficulties of the category of Life, is that of a unity which is not only *in* the individuals, but also *for* the individuals. (I am here using “in” and “for” rather in their customary English meanings, than as the equivalents of Hegel's technical terms, “*an*” and “*für*”.) What is meant by a unity being for the individuals which are its parts? There is only one example of such a category known to us in experience, and that is a system of conscious individuals.

Accordingly Hegel calls his next category, to which the transition from Life takes us, Cognition (*Erkennen*). This

¹ MIND, 1899, p. 47.

does not seem a very fortunate name. For the category, as we shall see, is subdivided into Cognition Proper and Volition, and Cognition is scarcely a word of sufficient generality to cover Volition as a subspecies. If the category was to be named from its concrete example at all, perhaps Consciousness might have been more suitable.

If we take all reality, for the sake of convenience, as limited to three individuals, A, B and C, and suppose them to be conscious, then the whole will be reproduced in each of them. A will, as conscious, be aware of himself, of B, and of C, and of the unity which joins them in a system. And thus the unity is within each individual.

At the same time, the unity is not in the individuals as isolated. For the whole point of saying that the unity is for A, is that it exists both out of him and in him. To recur to our example, the essence of consciousness is that the contents of consciousness purport to be a representation of something else than itself. (In cases of error, indeed, the contents of consciousness have no external counterpart. But then, as we shall see later on, it is only in so far as consciousness is not erroneous that it is an example of this category.)

Thus the unity is at once the whole of which are parts the individuals, and also completely present in each individual. Of course it is not in the individuals in the same manner as the individuals are in it. But this is not to be expected. The dialectic cannot prove that contradictions are not contradictory; and, if it did, it would destroy all thought. Its work is to remove contradictions, and this it accomplishes, when it meets the demand that the unity shall be in the individuals and the individuals in the unity, by showing that both are true, though in different ways.

The unity is now, as it is required by the category to be, the whole nature of each individual. In so far as we regard an individual as merely cognitive, and in so far as his cognition is perfect (and both these conditions would be realised when we were judging him under the category of Cognition), his whole nature would consist in the conscious reproduction of the system of which he is a part. This does not involve the adoption of the view that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, and that it only receives passively impressions from outside. However the cognition may be produced, and however active the part which the mind itself may take in its production, the fact remains that the cognition, when produced and in so far as perfect, is nothing but a representation of reality outside the cognitive mind.

We must, of course, remember with Cognition, as with Mechanism, Chemism and Life, that the dialectic does not profess to deduce all the empirical characteristics of the concrete state whose name is given to the category, but merely to deduce that pure idea which is most characteristic of that particular state. But in the case of Cognition there is a special feature to be noticed. We can recall and imagine instances of the categories of Mechanism and Life outside the spheres of Mechanics and Biology, and this helps us to realise the difference between the concrete state and the category which Hegel names after it. But of the category of Cognition there is no example known to us, and, as far as I can see, no example imaginable by us, except the concrete state of Cognition. We cannot, I think, conceive any way in which a unity should be for each of the individuals which compose it except by the individuals being conscious. This renders it more likely, than with the other categories of Mechanism, Chemism and Life, that we shall suppose that we have demonstrated more of the characteristics of Cognition by pure thought than in fact we have demonstrated. And great caution will be necessary, therefore, if we attempt to apply the conclusions gained in this part of the dialectic to theological or cosmological problems.

The pure idea of Cognition, to which the process of the dialectic has now conducted us, is free from any empirical taint either in its nature or its demonstration. It is true that it is suggested to us by the fact that there is part of our experience—namely our own possession of consciousness—in which the category comes prominently forward. It is possible that the human mind might never have thought of such a category at all, if it had not had such an example of it so clearly offered to it. But this does not affect the validity of the transition as an act of pure thought. The manner in which the solution of a problem has been suggested is immaterial if, when it has been suggested, it can be demonstrated.

Is the transition from Life to Cognition validly demonstrated? It will have been noticed, no doubt, that, although these two categories form the Thesis and Antithesis of a triad, the passage from one to the other has about it a great deal of the nature of a transition to a Synthesis. Certain difficulties and contradictions arise in the category of Life, which forbid us to consider it as ultimately valid, and the claim of the category of Cognition to validity lies in the fact that it can transcend and remove these contradictions.

But this gradual subordination of the triadic form to a more direct movement is a characteristic to be found throughout the Logic, and one which by no means impairs its validity.¹

The transition must therefore be judged as a transition to a Synthesis. Now the evidence for such a transition is always to some degree negative only. We have reached a category to which the dialectic inevitably leads us, and which we cannot therefore give up, but which presents a contradiction, and which we cannot therefore accept as it stands. The contradiction must be removed. Now the necessity of the proposed Synthesis lies in the fact that it can do this, and that no other idea can, so that our choice lies between accepting the Synthesis in question, and asserting a contradiction. So far, therefore, the proof of the validity of the Synthesis is in a sense incomplete. For it is never possible to prove that *no* other idea could be proposed which could remove the contradiction. All that can be done is to consider any particular idea which may be put forward for that purpose.

So, in this case, our justification in asserting the claim of Cognition to be a category of the Logic lies in our belief that no other solution can be found for the difficulties of the category of Life. But, until some other solution *has* been found, or at least suggested, it would be futile to doubt the validity of the transition because of such a bare possibility. It is abstractly possible that there is some simple logical fallacy in the fifth proposition of Euclid, which has escaped the attention of every person who has ever read it, but will be found out some day. But possibilities of this sort are meaningless.²

We must remember, too, that any idea which involves any of the previous categories of the Logic, except in a transcended form, can be pronounced beforehand inadequate to solve the problems offered by the category of Life, since all such have themselves been transcended by that category. And this confines the field in which an alternative solution could appear to very narrow limits.

The unity, then, is *for* each of the individuals. Such is the conclusion which we have so far reached. But is it also true that the individuals are *for* the unity? At first sight this would seem the most probable view, when we consider

¹ I have endeavoured to prove this in my *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, chap. iv.

² Cp. Mr. Bradley's *Logic*, book 1, chap. vii.

how strictly reciprocal the dependence is which exists between the unity and the individuals. I believe, however, that this view is mistaken, and that, while the unity is for the individuals, the individuals are not for the unity. In more concrete language, we cannot *imagine* the individuals except as conscious (because consciousness is the only example of the existence of A for B that we know or can imagine). On the other hand, the Logic does not *compel* us to imagine the unity as conscious. I shall endeavour to show farther on that the Logic, *taken by itself*, cannot *forbid* us to think of the unity as conscious.

In the first place, there is no necessity of thought which compels us to regard the individuals as existing for the unity. We were driven to regard the unity as existing for the individuals, because we found it to be necessary that the unity should be in each individual. Now, in the ordinary sense of inclusion, it was clearly impossible for the unity to be in each of the individuals which are parts of it, and the only alternative was that it should be in each of them, in the sense of being for each of them.

It is as necessary, no doubt, to regard the individuals as being in the unity, as to regard the unity as being in the individuals. But then there is no difficulty in regarding the individuals as being in the unity in the ordinary sense of inclusion. So far from this being difficult it is part of the definition of a unity of individuals that it includes them. And therefore we have no right to say that the individuals are for the unity. They are in it—that is proved. But the further step—that they can only be in it by being for it—is wanting.

And I think we may go farther than this, and say that it is impossible that the individuals should be for the unity in the sense in which we are using the phrase in this category. For the whole significance of one being for the other was that there was some difference between them. If there was no difference, the one would *be* the other, and the whole conception (as we have got it in this category) of one being for the other would collapse. All the meaning we gave to the expression that A was for B was that the content of the one was also the content of the other. If A and B are different, this means something. But if A and B are identical, then it would only mean that a thing's content was its content—which is not a new category, but a useless tautology.

Let us apply this. The unity and the individuals are identical—the unity has no nature except to be the indi-

viduals, and the individuals have no nature except to be the unity. This we learned in the category of Teleology. But the unity is something different from *each* of the individuals; and, therefore, if the content of the unity is found in each of the individuals, there is a meaning in saying that it is for each of the individuals. On the other hand, the unity is not different from all the individuals together. (It is, of course, not equivalent to a mere sum or aggregate of the individuals, because it is their real unity. But then they exist as a real unity, and not as a mere sum or aggregate, so that the unity is identical with the individuals as they really are.) If therefore the content of the unity is identical with that of the individuals, this merely means that its content is identical with itself—not that it is identical with the content of anything else. And so the conception of the individuals being for the unity becomes unmeaning.

Since, then, the individuals cannot be for the unity, the dialectic gives us no reason to suppose that the unity is either a conscious being, or possesses any quality analogous to consciousness. But the dialectic does not by this give us any reason to *deny* consciousness to the unity. To suppose that it did would be to confound unjustifiably the category of pure thought, which Hegel calls Cognition, with the concrete fact after which it is named. To avoid such confusion altogether is very difficult. We have seen that Hegel himself did not always succeed in doing so, either in the details of the Subjective Notion, or in Chemism, and we shall see that the same criticism is applicable to the details of his treatment of Life. And this constitutes the chief objection to his practice of naming categories after the concrete subject-matter which best illustrates them. Such a plan is no doubt very convenient for an author whose penetration had discovered many more stages in thought than there were abstract names for in existing terminology. And it was also stimulating to the learner, assisting him to call up a vivid picture of the category, and suggesting its practical application and importance.

But these advantages are more than counterbalanced by the perplexities of such a nomenclature. One of these concerns the Logic itself, and we have seen examples of it in the Subjective Notion and Chemism. Any concrete state contains many abstract ideas as its moments, and if we call one of the abstract ideas by the name of the concrete state, we shall run considerable risk of mixing it up with the others, and of supposing that we have deduced by pure thought far more than we have really done.

And there is another objection, arising from a question which is logically previous to this. Is the abstract idea, which is named after the concrete state, really an essential element of that state at all? This is a question which cannot be settled by the dialectic process, which only deals with such abstract ideas as can be reached by pure thought, and cannot discuss the question whether a particular pure thought can be found by analysis in a particular empirical fact. By giving such a name to the category, the dialectic assumes that the answer to the question is in the affirmative, but does not prove it. Should it be mistaken in this assumption, the only injury done to the dialectic itself will be that the category has an inappropriate name, which may be misleading. But if, in the applications of the dialectic, we assume that such a category is always true of the part of experience after which it is named, we may be led hopelessly wrong.

In the case before us it is clear, as I have endeavoured to show above, that, according to Hegel's category of Cognition, nothing can cognise unless it has something outside itself to be cognised, and that consequently it is impossible that the unity, which has nothing outside itself, should cognise anything. But it by no means follows from this that we cannot attribute cognition or consciousness to that unity. For such a step would imply that Hegel's category of Cognition was the essential characteristic of what is ordinarily called thought, and, whether this is true or false, it is certainly not proved. All the thought indeed of which we are immediately conscious is of this sort, for we know no thought but our own directly, and we are finite beings, but supposing that Lotze was right in asserting that an all-embracing unity could be conscious of itself, then we should have to admit that it was not an essential characteristic of thought to be for the thinker in the way in which the unity is for the individual in Hegel's category. Of course this would not involve any inaccuracy in the dialectic. The dialectic asserts that the individuals are not for the unity in a specified sense. There is nothing incompatible with this in the assertion that the unity is nevertheless conscious. (I may remark in passing that the attempt to regard the unity as in any sense conscious or personal seems to me to be absolutely unjustifiable. But the arguments on this question belong to the Philosophy of Spirit, and not to the Logic.)

The unity then is for the individuals, but the individuals are not for the unity. The correctness of this conclusion may be challenged on the ground of its atomism. If each of the

many individuals has this quality which is denied to the single unity, this, it may be said, reduces the unity to a comparative unreality. All the reality is transferred to the separate individuals, who are each centres of cognition, and the unity falls back into the position of a mere aggregate, or, at the most, of a mechanically determined whole.

If this were the case, we should certainly have gone wrong. We learnt in the category of Life (or indeed, before that, in Teleology) that the unity must be as real as the individuals. And, so far from dropping this in reaching Cognition, the reason that we passed on to Cognition was that in no other way could the full reality of the unity be made compatible with the full reality of the individuals.

If, therefore, the denial that the individuals existed for the unity, subordinated the unity to the individuals, and involved an atomistic view, the position would have to be changed somehow. But I believe that it does nothing of the sort, and that, on the contrary, it is the objection to it which implies an atomistic theory, and is therefore invalid.

A system of individuals of which each is conscious of the other (to go back to a concrete example of the category) is of course differentiated. Each of the conscious beings is an individual, and stands out, by that, separate from the others. But they are just as much united as they are separated. For A can only be conscious of B in so far as they are united, and it is only, in such a system, by being conscious of B that A is an individual, or, indeed, exists at all. Common sense, however, clings by preference to the categories of Essence, and is consequently atomistic. To common sense, therefore, such a system is more thoroughly differentiated than it is united. But the dialectic has proved this to be a mistake. It has shown that in such a system the unity is as real as the differentiation, and it is only to an objector who ignores this that a system bound together by the mutual knowledge of its parts can be reproached with being atomistic.

To think that the unity of the system would be intensified by the individuals being for that unity is a mistake. It is true that each individual is also, in one sense of the word, a unity, and that the unity of the system is for each individual. But the sense in which an individual, that gets all differentiation from without, is a unity, is entirely different from the unity of the system. This has nothing outside to which it can be related, and it gets all its differentiation from within—from the individuals composing it. Such a difference in the nature of the two unities prevents us from arguing that they ought to unify their differentiations in the same way.

Indeed, if the system unified its internal differentiations in the same way that the individual unifies its external differentiations—by having them *for itself*, it seems difficult to deny that it would be an individual too. And if it were an individual, it would stand side by side with the other individuals, and could not be their unity—which is just what we set out by declaring that it was. And this supports our previous conclusion—that the two relations, though equally real, are not similar, and that, while the individuals are in the unity, the unity is for each individual.

In passing from Life to Cognition we are making a step in the Logic which is of exceptional importance to the Philosophy of Spirit. If we are able to arrive at any definite conclusions as to our own ultimate importance in the universe, and our own relations to the unity of the Absolute, they must be based on the results at which we have now arrived, since here, for the first time, we have a category put forward as the adequate expression of reality—the only example of which, that we either know or can imagine, is a unity of conscious beings.

We may sum up the argument as follows, putting it into concrete terms, and ignoring, for the sake of simplicity of expression, the possibility of the category of Cognition having other examples than consciousness—examples at present unknown and unimagined by us. The Absolute must be differentiated into persons, because no other differentiations have vitality to stand against a perfect unity, and because a unity which was undifferentiated would not exist.

Any philosophical system which rejected this view would have to adopt one of three alternatives. It might regard reality as ultimately consisting, partly of spirit and partly of matter. It might take a materialistic position, and regard matter as the only reality. Or, holding that spirit was the only reality, it might deny that spirit was necessarily, and entirely differentiated into persons. Of each of these positions it might, I believe, be shown that it could be forced into one of two untenable extremes. It might not be in earnest with the differentiation of the unity. In that case it could be driven into an Oriental pantheism, referring everything to an undifferentiated unity, which could neither account for experience nor have any meaning in itself. Or else—and this is the more probable case at the present time—it would have to preserve the differentiation by asserting the existence, in each member of the plurality, of some element which was fundamentally isolated from the rest of experience, and only externally connected with it. In this

case it would have fallen back on the categories of Essence, which the dialectic has already shown to be untenable.

Lotze, also, holds the view that the differentiations of the Absolute cannot be conceived except as conscious beings. His reason, indeed, for this conclusion is that only conscious beings could give the necessary combination of unity with change,¹ which would not appeal to Hegel. But he also points out² that we can attach no meaning to the existence of anything as apart from the existence of God unless we conceive that thing as a conscious being. Here, it seems to me, we have the idea that consciousness is the only differentiation which is able to resist the force of the unity of the Absolute. Lotze, however, destroys the Hegelian character of his position (and, incidentally, contradicts the fundamental doctrines of his own *Metaphysic*) by treating the individuality of the conscious beings as something which tends to separate them from God, instead of as the expression of their unity with him.

In this way, I believe, the transition from the category of Life to that of Cognition must be regarded, if we are to consider it as valid. Is this the way in which Hegel himself considered it? It seems that the fundamental idea in his treatment of the transition was the one I have been expounding—that the unity in Life is so strong that it will crush out the individuals, and destroy itself, unless each of the individuals finds the unity within itself. Unfortunately, in spite of his own warning to the contrary, he dragged into his treatment of the category of Life several considerations which unquestionably belonged to the life of biological science, but which had nothing to do with his category of pure thought. And this very greatly mutilates the course of his argument.

His fundamental error here seems to me to be in taking the category to imply a plurality of living beings. We saw, when dealing with the Objective Notion, that, by the category of Teleology, all reality must be combined in a single teleological system. And as the category of Life is merely the immediate version of Teleology, it is equally clear that, by that category, all reality must be combined in a single unity. But in biology we have to deal with a multitude of living beings, each of which is an organic unity, but which together do not form an organic unity, but only an assembly which reciprocally and mechanically determine

¹ *Metaphysic*, section 96.

² *Microcosmos*, book 9, chap. iii. (trans. vol. ii, p. 644).

one another. Now it is this idea which Hegel illegitimately introduces into the category of Life. According to his statement that category regards reality as a plurality of details combined into a smaller plurality of organic unities, which unities again, as combined form a *Gattung*, or species.

This admission of a plurality of living unities wrecks the whole transition. The line that Hegel takes is that the individual is inadequate to the species, that the species breaks through it, therefore, and destroys it, incarnating itself in a fresh individual whose inadequacy again destroys it, and that the contradiction produced by the infinite process thus begun must be remedied by Cognition.

But why is the individual inadequate to the species, and why must it break down under the attempt to manifest it? We have seen that an organic unity is so close and strong that it does break down and destroy its parts unless they gain that extra strength which can only be given them by the category of Cognition. But a species is not an organic unity. It is a collection of individuals, each of which is an organic unity of its parts, but, for itself, it is merely a collection of objects in reciprocal determination. There is no reason to assert that such a unity as this has any tendency to crush the individuality of its members. For such a unity does not demand that there shall be nothing in the individuals which is not a manifestation of the unity. On the contrary, each individual has many peculiarities which have nothing to do with the idea of the species, and it has therefore a separate element which is quite independent of the idea of the species, and could not be crushed by it. Indeed it is difficult to see what right the idea of a species could have to be found any higher in the dialectic than the Subjective Notion.

Again, Hegel, at any rate in the *Smaller Logic*, explains death as due to the inadequacy of the individual to manifest the species. Now, even if such an inadequacy had been proved, death could not be its manifestation. For nothing can die till it has lived, and we should thus be forced to the conclusion that the individual was for a time adequate to manifest the species, but that, after a time it ceased to be so. This would be useless for the purposes of the Logic. We cannot proceed from the idea of Life to that of Cognition unless we can find the former to be contradictory. And if it is contradictory, it can never be true of anything, and so never cease to be true. It will always have the limited truth which an imperfect category has. It will

never be completely true. And thus its contradiction can never take the form of its cessation in time.

Hegel's treatment of Life reminds us of his treatment of Chemism. In Chemism also he endeavoured to demonstrate the inadequacy of the category by showing that it could not permanently hold of anything, instead of showing, as the dialectic requires, that it could never hold of anything. In both cases he was, it seems probable, misled by the name that he had taken for the category into introducing an empirical element which should have had no place in the Logic. And it is to be remarked that in each case he did not help, but hinder, his argument by doing so. It is asserted by some of his critics that he would never have been able to make any of the transitions of the dialectic without the illegitimate introduction of empirical elements. It would be more correct to make exactly the opposite statement. When he does, as in these two categories, mix up the Logic with empirical elements, he fails to demonstrate the transitions, while in each case a valid transition could have been made, if he had only kept, as he proposed to keep, to pure thought.

It will be unnecessary to consider the subdivisions into which Hegel has divided the category of Life—namely, the Living Individual, the Life Process, and the Species. For the whole meaning of the divisions, and of Hegel's transitions from one to the other, depends on the assumption that there are a plurality of organic unities, and, therefore, if I have been correct in my view on this matter, is invalid. We can proceed at once to the consideration in detail of

COGNITION.

The Individual and the Unity may now be said to harmonise with one another. It may be noticed that this is the first time in the course of the dialectic that we have reached a real harmony, i.e., a similarity between the natures of the different things. Something which could be mistaken for a harmony appeared in Reciprocity—it is this that Hegel calls the transition from Necessity to Freedom. It appeared again in Absolute Mechanism, and once more in Teleology. But it was not a real harmony between the part and the whole which we found in any of these. It was a denial of any nature of its own to the part, the reduction of the part to a mere Mode, as Spinoza would have said, of the whole. In such a case there can be no want of harmony, any more than there can be any constraint in slavery which is carried so far that the slave has

not a desire or aspiration apart from his master's will. But the perfection of slavery is not true freedom. And true harmony between part and whole can only arise, when as in the category of Cognition, the part has a distinct and individual nature of its own, and finds that nature in accord with the nature of the whole.

We may remark, in passing, that, for this reason, this category is the first on which any distinctly optimistic view of the universe could be founded. Previous categories could give at best but a Stoical or Spinozistic resignation.

Since there is to be a harmony between the Individuals and the Unity, the question naturally arises, which side is active and which side passive? The question, as will be seen later, is not really exhaustive, and the answer to it will be unable to express the full reality. But it is the natural way to look at the matter to begin with. If we find two things necessarily agreeing with one another, the natural inference is that one is dependent on the other, or else both on a third. Now there is no third here, besides the individuals and the unity, and we seem bound therefore to conclude that the harmony is produced either by the unity reproducing the nature of the individuals, or by the individuals reproducing the nature of the unity.

Of these two alternatives we can, to begin with, only accept the latter. If the unity were to reproduce the nature of the individuals, we should have nothing to guarantee that the nature of each individual was not different. And as the nature of the unity is one and indivisible, it would find it impossible to reproduce these varying natures. On the other hand, there is no such difficulty about the supposition that the many individuals each reproduce the nature of the one unity. This gives us

COGNITION PROPER.

(In the *Greater Logic* Hegel calls this category *Die Idee des Wahren*. In the *Smaller Logic* he calls it simply *Das Erkennen*, which Prof. Wallace translates Cognition Proper to distinguish it from the more general category of which it is a subdivision.) If we try to find a distinction between knowledge and volition, we shall find that the object of each is to produce a harmony, and that they differ only in the fact that in the one the object, and in the other the subject, is the determining side of the harmony. This can be tested by looking at a case where the harmony is imperfect, or has broken down. In such a case, should it occur in know-

ledge, we condemn the knowledge as being incorrect; and we endeavour to amend it by altering our ideas till they accord with the objects outside them. But with volition it is just the reverse. Here we condemn the outside reality which does not accord with our desires, and we endeavour to restore harmony by altering the objects so that they may be as we desire them.

Thus in knowledge the aim of the knowing subject is to reproduce in itself the state of the world at large. Of course this does not imply that the mind is purely passive in the process, and has nothing to do but receive effects from outside. The question is not about the way the results are produced, but about the test of them when they are produced. However active the mind may be in producing knowledge, the fact that it is knowledge which is produced implies that there is a reality.

This being the case, it is natural that the first stage of Cognition should be held to find its only adequate example in knowledge, and should be called Cognition *par excellence*. We must, of course, remember here, as with the wider category, that we have not deduced, and have no right to assume all the concrete characteristics of knowledge, but only the abstract category of pure thought which knowledge exhibits.

Another point to be remembered is that only perfect knowledge could manifest this category. The whole nature of the unity has to be exhibited in the individual, and the whole nature of the individual has to consist in exhibiting this unity. Accordingly, if we look at an actual knowing individual—such as each of us is—we find that his nature differs from the pattern set by the category in two points. It is not large enough, and too large. On the one hand, none of us knows everything, and therefore none of us can know anything quite perfectly. And, on the other hand, none of us are merely knowing beings. Knowledge is but one side of our nature.

I shall venture to omit Hegel's division of Cognition Proper into analytic and synthetic knowledge. In the first place these divisions only apply to knowledge while it is yet imperfect. In perfect knowledge the distinction, as Hegel draws it, would cease to exist. And as the category which we are considering is only manifested in perfect knowledge, the distinction between analytic and synthetic appears inappropriate to the dialectic, however relevant it might be if we were discussing the nature of knowledge itself. And, in the second place, all Hegel's detailed treatment of these

divisions deals with questions which are, no doubt, of psychological and logical importance, but have nothing to do with the transition from Cognition Proper to the next category.

To this transition we now proceed. We have said that the nature of the individual reproduces that of the unity. But, if this is true, it must be equally true that the nature of the unity reproduces that of the individuals. For the unity depends on the individuals quite as much as the individuals depend on the unity. Their only meaning is to manifest it, but its only meaning is to unify them. And we have seen that such a unity can unify such individuals only on condition that the unity is for the individuals. And therefore it is just as essential for the unity that there should be the harmony, as it is for the individuals. The result of disharmony would not be more fatal to the individuals than it would be to the unity. And thus it may as well be said that the nature of the unity reproduces that of the individuals, as *vice-versâ*. Each is dependent on the other for its nature.

The same argument may be put in a different form. If a harmony is imperfect, if it is only accidentally perfect, or if the necessity of its perfection is due to some outside cause, there is some meaning in saying that B harmonises with A rather than A with B. For in all these three cases a want of perfect harmony is conceivable, and our assertion means that, in such a case, we should not condemn A for the disagreement but B. We say that the actions of a good citizen are in harmony with the law, and not that the law is in harmony with them. For we can conceive that the citizen should cease to be law-abiding; and, if he did, we should condemn his actions, and not the law, for the discrepancy.

But if a harmony is necessarily perfect, not from any external cause, but from the nature of the things which harmonise, it is meaningless to say that A harmonises with B more than B with A. For here disharmony is inconceivable, since the things only exist at all by virtue of their harmonising. And the dependence of one member of the harmony on the other is only intelligible when viewed in relation to actual or possible disharmony.

It is therefore *as* true to say that the unity reproduces the content of the individuals, as it would be to say the reverse. By this we come to the category of

VOLITION.

Volition must not be taken here as meaning the desire to change, or to resist change, which is the form in which it most usually shows itself. If this were the case there would be nothing appropriate in naming this category after it, since the category involves a perfect harmony, and also a necessary harmony, so that there can be no question of either desiring or fearing change. It is not this, however, that Hegel means by Volition here. He means that sense of approval of objective reality as in harmony with our desires and aspirations which, while it leads to action when imperfect, is incompatible, when perfect, with all change.¹ This comes out more clearly in the nomenclature of the *Greater Logic*, when he calls this category the Idea of the Good. Taken in this sense Volition is an appropriate name for a category which asserts that the unity reproduces the nature of the individual, since it is when objective reality confirms with the desires and aspirations of our own nature that we feel the approval which is the essence of perfect Volition.

Of course, as with Cognition Proper, so with Volition—it is only the perfect state which can be an example of the category. Our ordinary volition is not by any means a case of objective reality being nothing but a counterpart of our own nature. It is only when the harmony is perfect, and necessarily perfect, that the resemblance comes.

The order of these two categories—Cognition Proper and Volition—cannot be inverted for the reason given above. It is impossible that the unity should reproduce the nature of the individuals, unless the nature of the individuals is identical. And that has to be proved, before it can be asserted. The category of Cognition Proper does prove it, for if the nature of each of the individuals is a reproduction of the nature of the unity, then the nature of each of the individuals must be the same. And so we are entitled to go on to Volition.

The category of Volition, it may be remarked, is a wider category than that of Cognition Proper, and therefore a higher one. The idea of the unity reproducing the individuals is indeed no wider than that of the individuals reproducing the unity. But the category of Volition contains both of them, for we reached it by perceiving that it was as true to say the one, as to say the other—that both views are true. The course of the dialectic renders this the natural form

¹ Lotze also takes this view of the essence of Volition, cp. *Microcosmus*, book 9, chap. v. (trans. vol ii., p. 706).

of transition. As we approach the end of the process the Antithesis of each triad tends more and more to lose the position of a simple contrary, and to partake of the nature of a Synthesis, so as to be a definite advance on the category before it.

But we must remember that it is only because the category of Volition asserts equally both ideas that it is higher than the category of Cognition Proper, which asserts only one. The idea introduced for the first time in the category of Volition—the reproduction by the unity of the nature of the individual—has nothing in it higher than the previously gained idea of the reproduction by the individuals of the nature of the unity. The two ideas are strictly correlative, and neither of them has a right to be preferred to the other.

This has an important bearing on Hegel's consistency. For when we come to the applications of the Logic it is obvious beyond all doubt that Hegel has no sympathy with the doctrine which places will above knowledge, and which can see nothing in the universe so fine as virtue. He might almost have reversed Kant's saying, and declared that he found the moral ideal as trivial and unimportant as the starry heavens. This would perhaps have been an exaggeration, but there is no question that Hegel had very little admiration to spare for will, or any manifestation of will. If his Logic had placed the abstract nature of Volition above that of Cognition, he might have been fairly condemned as inconsistent for his more practical opinions. But there is nothing in those opinions inconsistent with the superiority of a category which recognises both Cognition and Volition over one which recognises Cognition only.

But the category of Volition, if it recognises both sides, does not succeed in reconciling them completely. And it is its failure to do this which supplies us with the transition to the next category. It cannot be strictly speaking the case that each side reproduces the other. One of two alternatives present themselves. Either we do not conceive the perfection of the harmony to be absolutely necessary. In that case either one of the two propositions might have an intelligible meaning, but not both. For we have seen that the only way in which we can distinguish between the reproducing and the reproduced side of the relation lies in the fact that, in case of disharmony, it is the reproducing side which ought to change, and is condemned if it does not. And this becomes unmeaning if it may be said of each side that it reproduces the other. Or on the other hand, if we take the other supposition, which is the correct one, that the perfection

of the harmony is absolutely necessary, the category breaks down in another way. It is as correct and no more to say that the unity reproduces the nature of the individuals, than it is to say the individuals reproduce the nature of the unity. But the truth requires us not to say both, but, on the contrary, to say neither. For if the possibility of disharmony is absolutely unmeaning, then the distinction between reproducing and reproduced becomes unmeaning too.

When the difficulty is put this way, the answer seems simple enough. Why trouble about which side reproduces which at all? That is a question which belongs only to the sphere of harmonies actually or possibly imperfect. Here, when the whole existence of the unity on one side and of the individuals on the other has been demonstrated to lie in their harmony, it is superfluous. Neither side needs to be in dependence on the other in order to secure harmony, when the harmony is the whole nature of each. We remove the difficulty by removing all terms which assert such a dependence. Let us say that the nature of the unity and the individuals is to have the same content—a content, it is to be remembered, possessed in different ways, in the unity, and for the individuals. This gives a harmony when the two sides—the unity and the individual, or, from another stand-point, the subject and objective reality—are absolutely equal. Neither is the pattern for the other. No pattern is needed, since there is no possibility of discrepancy. The harmony is the whole reality. This gives us a third stage of Cognition in the wider sense, which, after some analogies elsewhere in the dialectic, we may call

THE TRANSITION TO THE ABSOLUTE IDEA.

We have to find a name for this category, for it is not specially mentioned by Hegel at all. There is nothing very surprising in this, when we consider the matter attentively. As the synthesis of the triad of Cognition it would in the natural course of things be identical in substantial meaning with the thesis of the new triad. The Absolute Idea, however, which is the category succeeding Cognition, is not subdivided by Hegel at all, and it is therefore with the Absolute Idea as a whole that the synthesis of the Cognition triad will be identical. The only difference between them will be in the "collapse into immediacy" which constitutes the transition between them.

The collapse into immediacy, however, makes less and less difference between the two categories as we get farther on in

the dialectic. The distinction between an idea before and after such a transition is the distinction, one may say, between looking backwards and looking forwards. As a Synthesis the idea is regarded as the solution of the difficulties already surmounted, as the Thesis of a new triad it is regarded as a challenge to difficulties yet to come. In the earlier stages of the dialectic this may make a considerable difference. For there each individual category resists, so to speak, the progress of the dialectic, and has to be pushed on, by a negative and destructive line of argument, to the next category. But as we go on the nature of the advance changes. Each category begins to lead on to its successor rather positively—by containing implicitly what the next is to develop—than negatively, by breaking down, and requiring the aid of its successor to help it out. Each category, that is, exists less in isolation, and more in the passage onwards. This being so, the difference between the Synthesis and new Thesis will diminish in the later part of the dialectic, since it is the difference between the category as a result, and the category as a new starting-point. And here, as we are making the last transition of the whole dialectic, the difference will be at a minimum.

Since there is no perceptible distinction between this category and the Absolute Idea, it is not wonderful that Hegel should have omitted to mention it separately. It is perhaps better, for the sake of clearness, to insert it. Its identity with the Absolute Idea renders it unnecessary, however, for us to treat it separately. It can be discussed when we reach that final term in the whole process. I have not ventured to suggest any name for it which would raise any controversial questions. If a descriptive name were given to it, it must be the name of some form of consciousness. For the unity is still for the individuals, and this idea can be found embodied in nothing else. And it would have to be some form of consciousness in which the distinction between the determining and determined sides of the harmony is overcome, and the harmony recognised as simple and ultimate.

It might be held that emotion could be taken as this complement—or rather this Synthesis of Cognition and Volition; that the harmony of emotion was one in which neither subject nor object was standard, but the agreement was absolute and ultimate—immediate, because it had transcended all mediation. But to give reasons in support of this would be a long and difficult matter. And it is, after all, scarcely a question for a paper on the dialectic, to consider in detail what concrete state is the best example of a given category.

There is another point to be considered before we pass to the Absolute Idea. Why, it may be asked, and asked with some reason, did we not proceed directly from Life to the third and final stage of Cognition, without passing through the two previous stages? We had already seen in Life that the unity and plurality had no meaning separate from each other—that all the meaning of each was in the other, the plurality having no meaning but to express the unity, nor the unity but to unify the plurality. By the transition into Cognition we gained the further step that this plurality could only be a plurality of individuals, for each of which the unity existed. Could we not then, without pausing at Cognition Proper and Volition, at once have reached the conclusion that the harmony between the unity and the individuals was immediate and ultimate?

In a sense I believe that we could. I believe that a valid logical transition could have been made direct from Life to the third stage of Cognition. But I believe that Hegel was wise in leading us first through the other two stages. And this for two reasons.

The first of these is that the introduction and refutation of Cognition Proper and Volition saves us from a mistake into which it might otherwise have been easy to fall. In the imperfect harmonies which we see in every-day life it is necessary that one side should be determining and one determined. For in these the harmonised things have an existence apart from their harmony. Some other reason than their existence is therefore required to account for the harmony, and this can only be the dependence of one on the other.

The influence of this is strengthened by another circumstance. The only example which we can find of the general category of Cognition is our own consciousness. But only perfect consciousness could be an example of the category in its highest form. And consciousness, as we know it, is never perfect. The knowledge and volition of which it is made up are never even perfect of their kind. And, if they were perfect of their kind, still they would not be adequate examples of the perfect category, since they each imply, as we have seen, that one side should be determining, and the other determined. Even supposing that emotion stands higher in this respect, still we never come across a state of consciousness which is pure emotion, or one which connects us completely with the whole universe.

Since, therefore, in all analogies, and in all actual examples of the category the harmony is never seen to be

immediate and ultimate, there would be great danger that readers of the dialectic should forget that this immediate and ultimate harmony is what the category means, and that they should take one side as determining the other. Hegel guards against this danger by expressly stating this view, and showing that it is inadequate and must be transcended.

And there is also a second reason for the introduction of Cognition Proper and Volition. It is true that the primary object of the dialectic is to get to the end of its process, and to reach the Absolute Idea—the only really true category. But this is not the only object which it has. Another is to enable us to judge properly of the lower categories when we find them, as we always do find them, prominent in our ordinary experience. The dialectic, while it proves that none of these are absolutely true, has also to prove that they possess relative truth, and has to enable us to judge of their comparative adequacy for the expression of reality.

Now the two categories of Cognition Proper and Volition are, as their names imply, the categories which we use when we consider our actual knowledge and will. (Our knowledge and will, indeed, are not perfect examples of these categories, but they can be expressed by no others.) The exact relation, in which our knowledge and will stand to absolute reality, must always be a subject of deep interest both for life and for philosophy. And it was well worth while to make three steps when one might logically have carried us over the ground, for the purpose of showing, so far as it can be done by abstract thought, what that relation is.

To give such reasons as these in defence of steps in the dialectic involves, no doubt, that those steps have not the full objective significance which Hegel himself almost certainly assigned to them. The Absolute Idea has most emphatically objective reality. The lower categories are valid steps in the demonstration of the Absolute Idea. And, more than this, they are moments which may be discovered in the Absolute Idea by abstraction. But we cannot ascribe objective reality, even of a timeless nature, to the dialectic process itself, as Hegel exhibits it, if the end of the process could have been reached with equal validity, though with less convenience, by leaving out two stages. But the conclusion that the process itself cannot be properly allowed such reality is one which on many grounds seems to be inevitable.¹ It is a departure from

¹ I have discussed some of these in *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, chap. iv, B.

Hegel's own opinions, but one which he himself makes inevitable.

We now come to

THE ABSOLUTE IDEA,

the final category of the whole process. It is, as I mentioned above, identical with the third stage of Cognition in its meaning. Reality is a differentiated unity, in which the unity has no meaning but the differentiations, and the differentiations have no meaning but the unity. The differentiations are individuals for each of whom the unity exists, and whose whole nature consists in the fact that the unity is for them, as the whole nature of the unity consists in the fact that it is for the individuals. And, finally, is this harmony between the unity and the individuals neither side is subordinated to the other, but the harmony is an immediate and ultimate fact.

This, according to Hegel, is the absolute truth, so far as it can be reached by pure thought. There are, he asserts, no contradictions to be found in this conception which compel us to proceed to a higher category to remove them. There is, indeed, one contradiction, or rather imperfection, which reveals itself here, as in every other case where pure thought is taken in abstraction from the other elements of reality, and by means of which Hegel's philosophy is driven on from the Logic to the conception of nature, and from that to the final and supreme reality of Spirit. But with the Absolute Idea we reach the highest and final form of pure thought.

The proof that this is the final form of pure thought must always remain negative. The reason why each previous category of the Logic was pronounced not to be final was that some contradiction was discovered in it, which compelled us to go beyond it. The finality of this category rests on our inability to find such a contradiction. Hegel's assertion that it is the absolutely adequate expression of reality (in so far as pure thought can be an expression of reality) will hold good unless some more acute thinker shall discover some contradiction in it which requires and admits of removal by means of another category.

The Absolute Idea must now be considered in detail. The most interesting questions, however, which relate to it, are beyond our present purpose. These relate to the conclusions which we can draw from its nature with regard to the Philosophy of Religion. Such matters fall outside the sphere of

the Logic. For they relate to the application of the principles of the Logic to a subject-matter more or less empirical, and anything empirical must be excluded from the Logic proper. Any discussion of such questions, which aspires to be anything more than the merest *Schwärmeret*, must indeed be based upon the Logic. But it must go beyond the Logic, and the empirical element in its subject-matter will always prevent it from claiming that necessity of demonstration which is the ideal of the Logic. Let us take for examples the problems of our own immortality, and of the personality of God. Any serious discussion of these must, for any inquirer who accepts the dialectic, be based on the nature of the Absolute Idea. But the conceptions of immortality, of myself, of personality, and of God, contain more than pure thought, and require treatment less rigid, and yielding results less certain, than we find when we are dealing with the categories of the dialectic.

We may notice, to begin with, that we are entitled to say that the nature of each individual is that all individuals shall be for it, and, therefore, that it shall be in harmony with all those individuals. For we saw before the nature of each individual was that the unity should be for it. Now the unity is manifested, and completely manifested, in the individuals. And therefore we may substitute the individuals for the unity, and say that it is the individuals which are in harmony with each individual.

It may be objected to this substitution that it does not do justice to the unity. It is not, it may be said with truth, the case that the unity is equivalent to the individuals in isolation, or as a mere aggregate, or as a mechanically determined whole. It is not equivalent to the individuals when they are joined in precisely this vital and all-embracing unity. To say that the unity is equivalent to the individuals would be to ignore this.

To this objection, as to a previous one, I should reply that it is the objection itself, and not the theory which fails to do justice to the vitality of the unity, and falls into atomism. For the objection assumes that the individuals would have some existence, or one at any rate conceivable, if taken as isolated, or as aggregated, or as mechanically determined. Now this is just what the dialectic, if it has done anything at all, has disproved. It has shown, not only that the individuals are in fact connected in such an intimate unity, but that it is essential to their nature that they should be, and that if they were not connected in this particular way, they would not be individuals at all. To say

that each individual is in harmony with all the individuals is to say that it is in harmony with all the individuals conceived as united under the category of Cognition. And to maintain that the unity must be expressly mentioned is to confess that it is not involved in the individuality—in other words, to accept the fundamental position of atomism.

It will therefore be equally correct to say that the individuals are for each individual as to say that the unity is for each individual. Which expression we use will be merely a matter of convenience. Now philosophy, in selecting her terminology, is bound to think most, not of the convenience of philosophers, but of the convenience of that part of the outside world which is likely to become aware of the terms at all. The philosophical specialist will be able to learn, and to remember, whatever meaning it is decided that terms shall bear. But other people will insist on taking the philosophical terms which they hear in the senses in which the words are most commonly used; and, unless they are to be misled, it is the meaning which they will be disposed to attach to a phrase which we ought to consider when deciding on its use.

The chief sphere, in which metaphysical terms are important to others than professed metaphysicians, is the Philosophy of Religion. Now whether we say, in the phrase we are discussing, "individuals" or "unity," we may be misunderstood, and the misunderstanding may lead to erroneous conclusions. If the individuals are taken as meaning individuals apart from the unity, we might be led to suppose that the content which was for each individual was a crowd of disconnected other individuals, and so brought to an atomism entirely inconsistent with the Absolute Idea. If, on the other hand, we say that it is the unity which is for each individual, that may be misunderstood to mean the unity as something more than the union of the individuals. This might have in consequence the assertion, in the Philosophy of Religion, of an Absolute which, although the bond of all plurality, was also something beyond and in addition to that bond. And this would be quite as opposed to the dialectic as the opposite error is.

Which of these two mistakes requires to be most guarded against? I think the latter—the hypothesis of the unity. It is true that atomism is the philosophical error into which common-sense, as a rule, falls most easily. But, on the other hand, when idealism has been once accepted, there is considerably less danger of atomism than of the undue isolation of the unity from its manifestation. And as it is only

those who have accepted idealism who would be inclined to accept, either in a right or a wrong sense, any of the later categories of the dialectic, it would seem that it is safer to speak of the individuals than of the unity, if either expression is to be used exclusively.

If, however, we say that the individuals are for each individuals, the question arises whether we can properly say that each individual is for itself. We found reason to believe that nothing could be for the unity, because the unity had nothing outside it. And it would seem that, on the same principle, we ought to deny that an individual can be for itself, since it is not outside itself. But this, I think, is erroneous. Each individual is not isolated, but part of a complete unity with other individuals which are outside itself. Its whole nature lies in the fact that it is a part of the unity—that is its whole nature lies in something which is as much outside itself as in itself. And that being so there seems no difficulty in saying that for each individual there exist, not only other individuals, but also itself. An isolated individual could not be for itself, but then an isolated individual could not exist. All this would not apply to the unity, which is, by its definition, a self-contained unity, and has no relations with outside reality, since there is no reality outside it.

The nature of each individual is, then, that all individuals are for it. Its nature thus depends on their natures. But the nature of each of them is the same. Thus the ultimate nature of each is that its similarity to the others is present to itself—in more concrete form, that it is conscious of its harmony with each of the others.

The view we have here taken of the Absolute Idea appears to be borne out by Hegel's own language. He does not treat the positive nature of that idea at any great length, but he does give a definition of it. In the *Smaller Logic* the definition runs as follows: "Die Idee als Einheit der subjektiven und der objektiven Idee ist der Begriff der Idee, dem die Idee als solche der Gegenstand, dem das Objekt sie ist; ein Objekt in welches alle Bestimmungen zusammengegangen sind. Diese Einheit ist hiermit die *absolute und alle Wahrheit*, die sich selbst denkende Idee, und zwar hier *als denkende, als logische Idee*" (*Enc.*, section 236).

What Hegel means by saying that the Idea is the Notion of the Idea, I must confess myself unable to understand. The Idea is, according to him, itself a variety of the Notion. But that the Idea is *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* to itself (or to its own Notion), seems a clear indication that reality is for

itself, and that it is only consciousness which affords an adequate example of the final category.

It is true that there is no express recognition of any differentiation, nor of the fact that it is one part of reality which is for another part. But that reality is essentially differentiated, in Hegel's conception, becomes clear if we look back to the previous categories. It is impossible to doubt that, under the category of Life, he regarded it as differentiated. There was nothing in the transition to Cognition to remove this differentiation, and indeed the treatment of Cognition makes it obvious that this category, also, was differentiated. But, again, there is nothing in the transition from Cognition to the Absolute Idea which removed the differentiation, which, therefore, must be there still.

We have said that the nature of each individual consists in the fact that its similarity to the others is present to it—in other words, that its nature consists in certain relations to other individuals. This view must not be confounded with that suggested by Green that "for the only kind of consciousness for which there is reality, the conceived conditions are the reality".¹ For there is all the difference possible between attempting to reduce, as Green has done, one side of an opposition to the other, and asserting, as we have done, that the two sides are completely fused in a unity which is more than both of them.

Experience can be analysed into two abstract, and therefore imperfect, moments—the immediate centres of differentiation and the relations which unite and mediate them. The extreme atomistic view takes the immediate centres as real, and the mediating relations as unreal. Green's view, as extreme on the other side, takes the relations as real and the centres as unreal. The view of the dialectic, on the contrary, accepts both elements as real, but asserts that neither has any separate reality, because each is only a moment of the true reality. Reality consists of immediate centres which are mediated by relations. The imperfection of language compels us to state this proposition in a form which suggests that the immediacy and the mediator are different realities which only influence one another externally. But this is not the case. They are only two sides of the same reality. And thus we are entitled to say that the whole nature of the centres is to be found in their relations. But we are none the less entitled to say that the whole nature of the relations is to be found in the centres.

¹ *Works*, vol. ii., p. 191.

Our view, however, although free from this one-sidedness, may seem to involve a circle. That A's nature should consist in recognising B's nature, would present no difficulties, if B had an independent nature of its own. But if B's nature consisted merely in recognising A's nature, it is not very easy to see how they can either of them have any nature at all. Nor is the matter improved by the increase of the number of individuals. A's nature, it is true, will then consist in the recognition of the natures of a large number of individuals, and the nature of each of these will not consist exclusively in recognising A's nature. But in each case it will consist in the recognition of the nature of other individuals, and the difficulty recurs. If the nature of everything consists simply in reflecting others, what is there to be reflected? The word reflecting, indeed, would not be correct if it implied that the individual for which the content exists was passive. But, for our present purpose, it is sufficient that the individual has no other content, whether the content is produced actively or passively.

To demand that the Logic should give us a complete account of the nature of reality, indeed, would be unreasonable. Pure thought is only one element of reality—an element which is found in every part of the whole, but which still is not the whole, and the Logic can therefore only supply a skeleton. But still, the Logic is bound, in its own department, to supply an account which is not contradictory; and unless we are able to avoid the circle which has been indicated above, this will not have been done.

There is only one way in which such a circle can be avoided. Each individual must have a separate nature of its own, so that the others, when they recognise their own as similar to it, may have something to which they recognise themselves to be similar. At the same time, it is clear from the dialectic that the nature of the individuals lies wholly in their connexions with one another—that it is expressed nowhere else, and that there it is expressed fully. It follows that the separate and unique nature of each individual must be found only, and be found fully, in its connexions with other individuals—in the fact, that is, that all the other individuals are for it.

This must not be taken to mean that the connexion is the logical *prius* of the individual nature—that the latter is in any sense the consequent or result of the former. Nor does it mean that the individual natures could be explained or deduced from the fact of connexion. Such theories would,

in the first place, be quite invalid. For they would be attempts to get more in the conclusion than there was in the premisses—to proceed from the simple unity to a unity which was also differentiated. And any attempt to get more out of the premisses than there is in them, is necessarily invalid.

And, moreover, such an attempt would be quite contrary to Hegel's principles. His position is essentially that reality is a differentiated unity, and that either the differentiation or the unity by itself is a mere abstraction. And it would be contrary to all the lessons of the dialectic if we supposed that one moment of a concrete whole could be either caused or explained by the other moment. It is the whole which must be alike the ground and the explanation of the moments.

What we have to maintain here is not that the characters of the individuals are dependent on their connexions, but, on the contrary, that the characters and the connexions are completely united. The character of the individual is expressed completely in its connexions with others, and exists nowhere else. On the other hand the connexions are to be found in the nature of the individuals they connect, and nowhere else, and not merely in the common nature which the individuals share, but in that special and unique nature which distinguishes one individual from another.

This completes our definition of the Absolute Idea. Not only has the nature of each individual to be found in its recognition of its similarity with all the rest, but the nature which is to be found in this recognition must be something unique and distinguishing for each individual. The whole difference of each individual from the others has to be contained in the perception of its harmony with the others.

We need not be alarmed at the apparently paradoxical appearance of this definition. For all through the doctrine of the Notion, and especially in the Idea, our categories have been paradoxical to the ordinary understanding. Even if we could find nothing in experience which explicitly embodied this category, we should not have any right, on that ground, to doubt its validity. If the arguments which have conducted us to it are valid, we shall be compelled to believe that this, and this only, is the true nature of absolute reality. The only effect of the want of an example would be our inability to form a mental picture of what absolute reality would be like.

I believe, however, that we can find an example of this category in experience. It seems to me that emotion, con-

sidered as perfect, would give such an example, and we should thus find additional support for the conclusion which we reached when we were considering the Transition to the Absolute Idea—that in emotion, if anywhere, we can find a revelation of absolute reality.

It is clear, in the first place, that our example must be some form of consciousness. For the nature of the individual is still to have all reality for it, and of this idea, as we have seen, we can imagine no embodiment but consciousness.

Knowledge, however, will not be what is required. We want a state such that the individuals' recognition of their harmony with one another shall itself constitute the separate nature of each individual. In knowledge the individual recognises his harmony with others, but this is not sufficient to constitute his separate nature. It is true that knowledge not only permits, but requires, the differentiation of individuals. Nothing but an individual can have knowledge, and if the individuals were merged in an undifferentiated whole, the knowledge would vanish. Moreover, in proportion as the knowledge of a knowing being becomes wider and deeper, and links him more closely to the rest of reality, so does his individuality become greater. But although the individuality and the knowledge are so closely linked, they are not identical. The individuality cannot lie in the knowledge. Men may, no doubt, be distinguished from one another by what they know and how they know it. But such distinctions depend on the limitations and imperfections of knowledge. A knows X, and B knows Y. Or else A believes X₁ to be the truth, while B believes it to be X₂. But for an example of a category of the Idea we should have, as we have seen above, to take perfect cognition. Now if A and B both knew X as it really is, this would give no separate nature to A and B. And if we took, as we must, X to stand for all reality, and so came to the conclusion that the nature of A and B lay in knowing the same subject-matter, knowing it perfectly, and, therefore, knowing it in exactly the same way, we should have failed to find that separate nature for A and B which we have seen to be necessary.

Nor can our example be found in volition. Perfect volition would mean perfect acquiescence in everything. Now men can be easily differentiated by the fact that they acquiesce in different things. So they can be differentiated by the fact that they acquiesce in different sides of the same thing—in other words, approve of the same thing for different reasons. Thus one man may approve of an *auto da fe* on

the ground that it gives pain to the heretics who are burned, and another may approve of it on the ground that it gives pleasure to the orthodox who look on. But there can only be one way of acquiescing in the whole nature of any one thing, and only one way, therefore, of acquiescing in the whole nature of everything, and the ground of differentiation is wanting.

The only form of consciousness which remains is emotion. And if the consciousness of harmony takes this form, I do not see that the same objections apply as with the other two forms. Perfect knowledge of C must be the same in A and B. Perfect acquiescence in C must be the same in A and B. So much is sure. But I cannot find any reason why perfect love of C should not be different in A and B—should not be the differentiation required to make A and B perfect individuals. One might, perhaps, even go farther, and say that we find in emotion positive traces of this characteristic. But, since this is not a question for pure thought, I do not wish to consider it further here.

We are thus led by two converging lines of argument to the same conclusion. Any adequate example of the Absolute Idea had to be such that there was an absolute balance between the individual for which all reality existed, and the reality which was for it—neither being subordinated to the other, and the harmony being immediate. And, again, any adequate example of the Absolute Idea had to be such that each individual's separate and distinct nature had to be found in its connexion with other individuals. The example must be within consciousness, if it is anywhere. Cognition and Volition failed according to both tests. Emotion may be held to be more successful. This, at any rate, I think we are justified in concluding—either absolute reality becomes explicit for us in emotion, or it does not become explicit for us at all.

What Hegel's own opinion on this question was, seems rather doubtful. It is, I think, almost certain, for the reasons given above, that he regarded the Absolute Idea as realised in consciousness. And, if we confine ourselves to the *Logic*, there would be good reasons for supposing that the form of consciousness which did this was emotion. For the categories of Cognition and Volition are each demonstrated to be imperfect, and to require to be synthesised before the Absolute Idea is reached. This seems to show that it is not knowledge or Volition which can be taken as such an adequate manifestation, and what can remain but emotion?

But, on the other hand, when we are dealing, not with pure thought, but with concrete reality, it is to the *Philosophy of Spirit* rather than the *Logic* that we must turn for a decision. Now in the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel gives Philosophy as the supreme stage of Spirit. He may have been inconsistent in doing this, but that he did it is beyond question. And it seems impossible to take Philosophy as anything but a species of knowledge.¹

Having reached the end of the dialectic let us consider what it has taught us about the relations of unity and plurality. From some points of view this may be considered the fundamental question in the dialectic, and it is the one round which a large number of misconceptions of Hegel's meaning have gathered. The relation of unity to plurality is a phrase which may mean several things. It may mean the relation of the fact of the unity to (a) the fact that there is a plurality, (b) the fact that the plurality consists of the precise number of individuals of which it does consist, (c) the fact that those individuals have the precise nature which they do have.

As to the first of these questions, we have already given the answer. The unity is not the ground of the plurality. Nor can the plurality be explained from the unity. The relation that does exist between them is that, given the unity, we can infer the existence of the plurality, and, given the plurality, we can infer the existence of the unity. We can do this just because neither of them is logically prior to the other, and neither of them is an ultimate reality on which the other can be based. It is because each of them is a mere moment, and, therefore, taken in abstraction from the others is contradictory and impossible, that we are entitled to conclude from the existence of the one to the existence of the other. And there is no more serious, or more common, mistake in interpreting Hegel, than to suppose that the moment of plurality can be reached from the moment of unity in any way in which the moment of unity cannot be reached from the moment of plurality.

As to the second question—the relation between the unity and the precise number of individuals—it resolves itself into the third. For if the precise nature of the individuals is determined, their precise number is determined by that. This becomes clear as soon as we pass beyond the category of Quantity—one of the earliest and most

¹I have discussed this point at greater length in *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, chap. vi.

abstract in the dialectic. If we look on a collection of units — say seventeen apples — as a mere numerical aggregate, then no amount of knowledge of the nature of those apples will ever explain to us why the number was not eighteen or sixteen. But this is only because such a category abstracts from all the reciprocal influences of one thing or another. Directly we come to the conception of the things as mechanically determined we see that the nature determines the number. For if there was one less or more, all the relations would have to be different, and, consequently, all the things themselves. Still more patent is this in the case of such a unity as we have in the Absolute Idea. Since the whole nature of each individual lies in its connexions with all the others, it is obvious that no individual could be added to the whole, or subtracted from it, unless all the others were completely altered.

There remains, then, the question as to the relation between the fact of the unity and the special natures of the individuals which it unites. It is clear, in the first place, that, since the unity is not the ground or the explanation of the bare fact of the existence of some plurality, it can still less be the ground or the explanation of the fact that the plurality is precisely what it is. And again, it is clear that from the existence of this precise plurality we can infer the existence of the unity, since we can infer this from the existence of any plurality at all. But can we reverse the process, and, from the existence of the unity, infer the existence of this particular plurality?

So far as the present state of our knowledge goes this question must be answered in the negative. The nature of the unity is known to us by pure thought in the dialectic. But this knowledge will certainly not enable us to prove that the individuals, which form the plurality, must be precisely what they are, have (to put the thing in another form) the precise connexions that they have, and, consequently, be exactly the number that they are. If we were able to make such a proof then we could deduce all the particulars of Nature and Spirit from the Absolute Idea in the same way that we can deduce the existence of Nature and Spirit. We could demonstrate by pure thought, for example, that the sinking of the *Merrimac* or the precise shape of Cuba could not be otherwise if there was to be any experience or any reality at all. And our deductions could go beyond what is now empirically known. The philosopher could prove from the Absolute Idea how many times he should sneeze in his next cold, and the figure at which Consols would stand

next month. It is certain we cannot do this, and it is evident that Hegel never thought that we could. Whatever faults we may find in the applications of the dialectic, there is no trace of any attempt to deduce the facts of experience from the Absolute Idea.

There are thus, when the dialectic has reached its furthest point, two elements left in experience which are independent of one another in the sense that neither can be reduced to the other. There is, on the one hand, the element of pure thought, which tells us, within certain limits, what our experience must and must not be, and there is the other element, known to us by sensation or introspection, which informs us of what experience in fact is.

All human language has an unfortunate tendency to suggest the categories of Essence, even when those categories are entirely inappropriate. And therefore such a statement as was made in the last paragraph looks as if Hegel's philosophy ended, after all, in a dualism, and he had failed in his object of demonstrating the complete rationality of the universe. But this is a mistake. The two elements of our experience are not two separate spheres of reality, and they are not even two separate realities which act and react on one another. As separate, they are not real at all, as may easily be seen by any one who tries to think of a category without thinking at the same time of matter of sensation, or *vice versa*. The only reality is the concrete whole of experience, from which they are both abstractions. There is no dualism in saying that two moments may be detected in a reality, and that, while both of them are dependent on the whole, neither is dependent on the other.

Nor does the co-existence of these two moments in any way interfere with the complete rationality of the universe. There is no part of reality which is not completely penetrated with the Absolute Idea. So far as anything had any part of itself not penetrated with the Absolute Idea it would have no reality at all. Thus nothing can exist except in so far as it embodies reason, and is in harmony with reason. And this is all that is required. The real is more than abstract rationality, but the real is completely and utterly rational. This is surely all that any philosophy wants, however high its ambitions may be. At any rate it would be difficult to prove that Hegel ever wanted anything more.

A word of caution is necessary here. We have seen that we cannot from the fact of the unity infer the particular nature of the plurality—in other words that, for our present knowledge, the Absolute Idea and the matter of sensation

are to a certain extent contingent to one another. But this assertion of a limitation of our present knowledge, perhaps of all knowledge, must not be converted into an assertion about the facts. We must not say that it is possible that the Absolute Idea and the matter of sensation are really contingent to one another, and that it is possible that the Absolute Idea might have been combined with a different content. Such a statement would be unmeaning, as, indeed, in the long run, every statement must be which speaks of possible, but unreal, universes. If we look at anything by itself, there is no ground for saying that it could have been other than it was. For this only means that some other reality could not or would not have prevented it. The universe must be looked at by itself, for there is nothing outside it in whose company we can look at it. And thus to talk of the possibility of a different universe is meaningless. There is no reality on which such a possibility can be based. So long as the universe is taken as real, it cannot be different from what it is. If the universe is not taken as real, all possibilities and impossibilities have vanished with everything else.

The supposition that the Absolute Idea could possibly be combined with a different immediate element is due to the belief that the element of pure thought is the logical *prius* of the element of immediacy, and so forms a skeleton or framework, which could be filled up in different ways without any change in its own nature. But we have seen that this is an entirely mistaken view of the matter. It is the concrete whole of reality which is the logical *prius* of both its moments. Neither of these moments has any priority over the other, and still less over the whole. Thus we cannot take pure thought as a basis, and speculate on the possibility of its combination with a different immediate element. The only ultimate basis is the nature of reality as a whole. And to assert a possibility of any change in this would involve the idea of a possible, but unreal universe, which we considered in the last paragraph.

We have said that, for our present knowledge, there is a certain contingency between the two elements of reality. Whether this is a necessary characteristic of all knowledge, we cannot tell. It may not be so. It is possible that perfect knowledge of the universe would enable us to see that any variation in the details of its plurality would be incompatible with the completeness of unity and differentiation demanded by the Absolute Idea. If this were so, then, for a person who possessed such perfect knowledge, the precise

nature of the plurality would be in the same position as the abstract fact of plurality is for us, and could be inferred from the fact of the unity. In such a state of knowledge the only question left unanswered would be the question: Why is reality as a whole what it is? Such a question cannot be answered, for it ought not to be asked. If the cognitive mind still persists in asking it, as I fancy it does, that will discredit, not the complete rationality of reality, but rather the complete reality of cognition. It will be a fresh support for the view which I believe to be the ultimate fruit of the whole dialectic—that reality is nothing more than consciousness, but that consciousness is a great deal more than thought.