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Identity in Difference – Wittgenstein's Hegel

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Abstract: We can say with some certainty that Wittgenstein never read any of Hegel's works, yet he was able to talk about Hegel and even at several points to describe the relation between his own philosophy and that of Hegel. In this chapter, I present two major moments in Wittgenstein's philosophical career where he was explicitly taught about Hegel's philosophy, and attempt to evaluate Wittgenstein's statements about Hegel and what they show about the influence Wittgenstein's knowledge of Hegel may have had on his own philosophy. In conclusion it seems that there was indeed such an influence, and that the aforementioned two moments of contact with Hegel were of distinct importance to the specific development of Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy.

Keywords: identity, difference, pun, language-game, monism, pluralism, holism

In autumn 1948, Wittgenstein is taking a walk in Phoenix Park, Dublin, with his friend and colleague Maurice O'Connor Drury. They are talking about the great historical philosophers and the value of studying them.¹ In this moment of reflection, Wittgenstein thinks about his relation to these philosophers and his own place as a philosopher in the long history of philosophy. His thoughts turn to G. W. F. Hegel, one of the most influential thinkers in that tradition, and he tries to determine the relation between his own philosophical thinking and the philosophy of Hegel. These thoughts culminate in the famous remark:

Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different. (MDC: p.157)²

Considering this famous yet enigmatic remark, I will try to answer two pressing questions. First: how was Wittgenstein able to talk about Hegel? (Did he even have any knowledge about Hegel's philosophy? And if so: how did he get this knowledge, and what exactly did he know?) And second: following on from that, what could be the deeper meaning of Wittgenstein's words in Phoenix Park?

To answer these questions, I shall investigate two important events in Wittgenstein's philosophical career where he learnt important things about Hegel's philosophy from other major philosophers. Wittgenstein's first contact with Hegel came right at the beginning of his philosophical studies in Cambridge, through his first philosophy tutor Bertrand Russell. The second contact came years later, when Wittgenstein came back to Cambridge and started to teach philosophy himself, through his colleague and fellow philosophy tutor Charlie D. Broad, who at the time was giving lectures about Hegel's philosophy at the university.

I.

To consider the case of Bertrand Russell, we have to go even further back in time to a point before Wittgenstein arrived in Cambridge, namely to the moment in 1890 when the young Bertrand Russell himself arrived there to start his philosophical career.

The young Russell came to Cambridge with some pre-existing philosophical beliefs that he had developed during his private home-schooling. He instantly made friends with John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, a philosopher already established in Cambridge philosophy, from whom he learnt that the empiricist philosophy Russell had favoured up until that point was now (1890) considered to be “almost laughably old-fashioned” (cf. Monk 1996: p.44). McTaggart – already working on his *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (McTaggart 1896) – introduced Russell to his own form of Hegelianism, which stood mainly on Bradleyan shoulders, and by 1894 had completely won him over to his “semi-Hegelian metaphysic”³.

At that time, Russell even developed the foundations for a complete research programme modelled on Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia*. This programme was based on the idea of a “synthesis” of theoretical and practical philosophy. In the literature, it is now called the “Tiergarten programme” because the main idea came to Russell during a walk in the Tiergarten park in Berlin (possibly inspired by Hegel’s walks in the same park earlier that century):

I remember a spring morning when I walked in the Tiergarten, and planned to write a series of books in the philosophy of the sciences, growing gradually more concrete as I passed from mathematics to biology; I thought I would also write a series of books on social and political questions, growing gradually more abstract. At last I would achieve a Hegelian synthesis in an *encyclopaedic work* dealing equally with theory and practice. The scheme was inspired by Hegel [...]. (Russell 2009: p.15)

And in some ways Russell held on to this Tiergarten programme until the end of his life. But there was still one problem with this form of Hegelianism. At that point in time, Russell’s Hegelianism mainly came from his discussions with McTaggart about the *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* and his reading of Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality* (Bradley 1893; cf. Hylton 2005; Candlish 2007). It was not until the spring of 1897 that Russell attempted to form his own opinion of Hegel’s writings. But he had to read Hegel’s *Science of Logic* in German, because the first English translation was only published 15 years later.

For Russell, this reading was deeply surprising. Until then he had thought he was a Hegelian himself, but now he was forced to realise he was not. He could not even understand the content of what he read in Hegel’s *Logic*. He attributed this lack of understanding not, as one might expect, to his own possibly imperfect reading of Hegel, but to the quality of Hegel’s writing itself.

Years later (1951), he described this surprising experience and concluded that Hegel’s philosophy is mere *nonsense*: “I read Hegel’s Greater Logic [an alternative title for the *Science of Logic*], and thought, as I still do, that all he says about mathematics is muddle-headed *nonsense*.” (Russell 2009: p.15, my emphasis) Ironically, at the time Russell said much the same thing about Wittgenstein’s later philosophy: “The [later Wittgenstein] remains to me completely unintelligible.” (Russell 1959: p.216)⁴ And even Wittgenstein himself openly stated that his writings should be seen as a form of *nonsense*, but of course – in contrast to Russell’s

incomprehension of Hegel – this Wittgensteinian nonsense requires a deeper level of understanding: “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: *anyone who understands me* eventually recognizes them as nonsensical [*unsinnig*]” (TLP: 6.54, my emphasis).

As an effect of the surprising experience of finding himself to be a Hegelian who could not understand Hegel, Russell made an effort to find what lay at the roots of the *nonsense* of Hegelian philosophy. His answer to that question is first documented on 6 April 1897 in a private letter to his then-wife Alys that he wrote while reading Hegel’s *Science of Logic*: according to the letter, the Hegelian philosophy consists “mainly of puns” (Monk 1996: p.114)⁵ in the German language.

Throughout his life Russell held on to this characterisation of Hegel’s philosophy as *built on puns*, and it is important to note here that the German translation of *pun* as *Wortspiel* somehow translates back into English as *language-game*. In the following, I will try to develop the argument that Wittgenstein’s later description of his own philosophy as *consisting of language-games* (“I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the ‘language-game’” PI: §7) is in some way rooted in Russell’s description of Hegel’s philosophy as consisting “mainly of puns” – but without Russell’s pejorative assumptions against those “puns” or “language-games”.

But back to Russell in 1897. After reading Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, Russell was supposedly cured of his early Hegelianism. But it seems he could never fully recover, because Hegel was too important as a background and “jumping-off place” for Russell’s new project of developing a new, analytic philosophy. Richard Watson describes the complicated dependence of Russell’s new ambitions on his former Hegelianism as follows:

Russell’s Hegel made some obvious errors that the developing philosophy of the day could correct. The shadow Hegel is the rock that logical atomism could take as a jumping-off place [...]. The shadow Hegel’s system authenticates the philosophy that casts off from and corrects it. (Watson 1993: p.99)

The important role that this early Hegelianism played in the development of analytic philosophy is illustrated by the fact that, one year later, G. E. Moore’s paper “The Nature of Judgment” (to this day still widely regarded as one of the founding papers in the analytic philosophy tradition) referred 13 times to the aforementioned British Hegelian Francis H. Bradley and once to Hegel himself.⁶

Other close colleagues of Russell at the University of Cambridge also engaged intensively with Hegel’s philosophy: there was of course McTaggart and his *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, as well as Alfred North Whitehead, Russell’s former tutor and now co-author of the *Principia Mathematica*, who was working in parallel on his deeply Hegelian process philosophy,⁷ and several ongoing projects by Hegel scholars who were translating Hegel into English (see below).

In his autobiographical writings, Russell tells the story of his early Hegelianism and how he turned away from it forever under the influence of Moore.⁸ But real life is often more complex, and so even after 1898 Russell made significant contact with Hegel’s philosophy on several occasions. For example, in his 1910 work *A Commentary on Hegel’s Logic* McTaggart expressed

his gratitude to Russell for his help and their discussions about Hegel's philosophy (McTaggart 1910: preface). And in 1912, after Henry Stuart Macran published his translation of certain chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic* (SL: 1912), Russell wrote a review of it (Russell 1912, 1992) in which he discussed Hegel's treatment of formal logic. These two events respectively took place shortly before and around the same time that Wittgenstein came to Cambridge and began studying philosophy with Russell.

Consequently, Hegel is very much present in the background at the time when Wittgenstein had the closest contact with his teacher Russell. During this period, he acquired most of his philosophical knowledge through nightlong private lessons in Russell's rooms. The importance of this special educational situation should not be underestimated, given that at the time Wittgenstein had barely any other philosophical influences: his idiosyncratic learning strategy involved reading almost no philosophical books other than Frege's *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (1893, 1903) and Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) and, additionally, attending barely any lectures other than those of Russell and Moore.

In these important private lessons, Russell very likely conveyed to Wittgenstein his particular attitude towards Hegel. This is probable in part because of the extraordinary importance that Russell's "shadow Hegel" had as a jumping-off place for his own philosophy. But also because at precisely this time he was reading Hegel again and discussing Hegel's philosophy (specifically in the form in which it appeared in Macran's new translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* as well as in Macran's long explanatory introduction to it).

Russell's review of Macran's translation and his manuscripts of lectures from the time are very enlightening because they give hints at what Wittgenstein learnt about Hegel from Russell during this period. As one might expect, in both cases Russell maintains his critical attitude towards Hegel and describes his philosophy as essentially built "upon a pun" in the German language, a joke that Macran "presumably" has forgotten to explain to the readers of his translation:

Hegel's argument depends upon a *pun*, one could wish for a note to explain the joke; but presumably Mr. Macran thought that the difficulties of Hegel were great enough without the attempt to understand his humour. (Russell 1912: pp.739–740; Russell 1992: p.364, my emphasis)

Russell also upheld his critical view of Hegel and the *puns* of Hegelian philosophy in his lectures from the period:

This is an example of how, for want of care at the start, vast and imposing systems of philosophy are built upon *stupid and trivial confusions*, which, but for the almost incredible fact that they are unintentional, one would be tempted to characterise as *puns*. (Russell 1915: p.39, fn.5, my emphasis)⁹

Considering the deep connection between Wittgenstein and his teacher Russell, it is no surprise that at the same time Wittgenstein shared Russell's view about the surprising "mistakes" of some of *the great historical philosophers*. On this point, Wittgenstein's friend David Pinsent (who had just met Wittgenstein at one of the parties in Russell's private rooms) made the following remark on 30 May 1912 about Wittgenstein's surprise at what he had learnt from Russell:

he [Wittgenstein] is reading philosophy up here [in Cambridge], but has only just started systematic reading; and he expresses the most naive *surprise* that all the philosophers he once worshipped in ignorance are after all stupid and dishonest and make disgusting *mistakes*! (Pinsent 1990: pp.4–5, my emphasis)¹⁰

In his lectures, Russell explained what exactly these *mistakes* of Hegel's philosophy consist in:

Hegel's argument in this portion of his "Logic" depends throughout upon confusing the "is" of predication, as in "Socrates is mortal", with the "is" of identity, as in "Socrates is the philosopher who drank the hemlock". Owing to this confusion, he thinks that "Socrates" and "mortal" must be identical. Seeing that they are different, he does not infer, as others would, that there is a mistake somewhere, but that they exhibit "*identity in difference*" (ibid., my emphasis).

To understand how much the early Wittgenstein was influenced by this explanation, it is worth noting that he took this argument of Russell's against Hegel's *mistaken* logic and made it a prominent argument in his own *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (3.323):

Thus the word "is" appears as the copula, as the sign of equality, and as the expression of existence; "to exist" as an intransitive verb like "to go"; "identical" as an adjective; we speak of *something* but also of the fact of *something* happening.

(In the proposition "Green is green"—where the first word is a proper name as the last an adjective—these words have not merely different meanings but they are *different symbols*.)

And like Russell, Wittgenstein too sees these mistakes as contributing to the confusions of some of *the great historical philosophers*, concluding: "Thus there easily arise the most fundamental confusions (of which the whole of philosophy is full)." But it is also important to note that, unlike Russell, in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein already attributes this problem not just to Hegel's peculiar treatment of formal logic and his *puns in the German language*, but to the structure of the *language of everyday life*:

In the language of everyday life it very often happens that the same word signifies in two different ways—and therefore belongs to two different symbols—or that two words, which signify in different ways, are apparently applied in the same way in the proposition. (ibid.)

And because we already know how the later Wittgenstein rehabilitates the language of everyday life for philosophical logic and even calls "the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the 'language-game'" (PI: §7), we can assume that he also rehabilitates Russell's pejorative judgement of these (initially considered mistaken) *puns* of Hegelian logic i.e. *Sprachspiele* in the German language.

Moreover, in Russell's explanation the *puns* or *language-games* of Hegel's logic arise from the mistaken treatment of the difference between the *is* of identity and the *is* of predication and he believed this confusion needed to be cured using the symbolic system of his own logical atomism. Russell further remarked that Hegel's different way of treating this issue was due to his concept of "identity in difference". This remark is strongly reminiscent of the first half of the comment Wittgenstein later made in Phoenix Park ("Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same"). It would appear that in this comment, not just Wittgenstein's characterisation of Hegel's philosophy but also the

relation of his own (difference) philosophy to that of Hegel's (identity) philosophy were built on a concept of Hegel's as taught by Russell under the heading "identity in difference".

With regard to the concept of language-games in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the catalyst for changing his mind concerning the "confusions" in the *language of everyday life* or Hegel's "puns" in the German language might have arisen during the collaborative process of translating the German *Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung* into the English *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In 1921, Wittgenstein discussed with Charles Kay Ogden the difficulties involved in translating his German thoughts into English. Like Russell, he referred to the special role that "puns" play in the German language:

I do not know how to translate this. The German "Wir können uns ein Bild von ihm Machen" is a phrase commonly used. I have rendered it by "we can imagine it" because "imagine" comes from "image" and this is something like picture. In German it is a sort of pun you see. (LO: p.24, my emphasis)

Wittgenstein's discussions with Ogden about how to correctly translate the *Tractatus* show how important he saw language as being for the German original. They also suggest that the structure of the German language plays a critical role with respect to the logical meaning. And it is equally significant that this special role of the German language, with its *games* and *puns*, first becomes obvious in the attempt to translate it into English.

II.

I shall now introduce the second important source of Wittgenstein's knowledge about Hegel's philosophy, namely Charlie Dunbar Broad. Broad was about the same age as Wittgenstein, had studied under the same philosophy tutors (Russell, Whitehead and McTaggart) and therefore pursued similar philosophical interests to Wittgenstein. When McTaggart unexpectedly died prematurely in 1925, Broad took responsibility for completing McTaggart's final unfinished work *The Nature of Existence* (McTaggart 1921–1927), dedicated a "full-scale book" to an *examination of McTaggart's philosophy* and taught generations of students in Cambridge about McTaggart's work.¹¹

McTaggart's Hegelianism had a further influence on philosophy in Cambridge. It was some of McTaggart's former students who published the first complete English translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* (SL 1929). This difficult project, which took many years, was completed by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers just in time for Wittgenstein's return to Cambridge. And around the time Wittgenstein was awarded his doctorate for the *Tractatus*, Broad wrote a review of Hegel's newly translated *Science of Logic* (SL 1929) that made reference to the already-familiar characterisation in terms of puns, which at the time seems to have been regarded as common sense in Cambridge:

The plausibility of some of Hegel's arguments appears to depend largely on *puns in the German language*, and, to this extent, his work must suffer by translation. (Broad 1929: p.393, my emphasis)

Regarding Wittgenstein's acquaintance with Broad, the literature often gives the impression that the two avoided each other in Cambridge, if possible "even in print".¹² In his autobiography, Broad did indeed describe how he felt intimidated by Wittgenstein's

philosophical charisma, especially in the lively discussions at the Moral Sciences Club.¹³ But at the same time, Broad also attested to his high regard for Wittgenstein's philosophy. His respect for Wittgenstein's achievement was such that he made an intervention on Wittgenstein's behalf to the commission responsible for appointing a successor to G. E. Moore's chair that could hardly have expressed greater regard: "To refuse the chair to Wittgenstein would be like refusing Einstein a chair of physics." (MDC: p.141) And conversely, in a remark to Drury Wittgenstein praised Broad both as a *very just man* and for his philosophical work: "Broad is a very just man. I have been reading *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. I thought he wrote it very well." (MDC: p.142)

When Wittgenstein began teaching philosophy at Cambridge from 1930 onwards, he and his students explicitly discussed Broad's philosophy and – this is where Hegel comes into play – Broad's reconstruction of Hegelian philosophy. Wittgenstein's fortunately preserved "Comments on Broad" (LWL: p.72f.) show that Wittgenstein was familiar with the "Elements of Philosophy"¹⁴ lectures that Broad held at that time in Cambridge, and also that he thought Broad's ideas through, commented on them and discussed them with his students.

The notes of Wittgenstein's students taken in his seminars follow the same chronology in terms of content as the lectures that Broad was holding in parallel. Taking together all circumstantial evidence, one could convincingly argue that both Wittgenstein and his students attended Broad's lectures on Hegel's philosophy in Cambridge (cf. Berg 2019: §27). This assumption does at least seem to offer the best explanation for how Wittgenstein was able in his "Comments on Broad" to discuss the content of these lectures so precisely. In any case, Wittgenstein was very familiar with the content of Broad's lectures, and this is important because they covered Hegel's philosophy extensively. Just as in his later remark on Hegel in Phoenix Park, Wittgenstein emphasises in the "Comments on Broad" the deep similarities between his own philosophical practice and the "Hegelian method of examining contradictions, their relations and resolution",¹⁵ combined with an attempt to identify differences:

the dialectical method [of Hegel's speculative philosophy] is very sound and a way in which we do work. But it should not try to find, from two propositions, a. and b., a further more complex proposition, as Broad's description implied. Its object should be to find out where the ambiguities in our language are. (LWL: pp.74f.)

And just as his remark in Phoenix Park, cautiously introduced with the qualifier "Hegel seems to me ...", acknowledges that he is very much aware that he only knows of Hegel's philosophy at second hand, here too Wittgenstein acknowledges that he is only able to judge Hegel's philosophy on the basis of Broad's (possibly imperfect) description of it when he qualifies his cautious judgement with the reservation "as Broad's description implied".

Also of interest to the present investigation of the connection between Wittgenstein's thinking and the philosophy of Hegel, with his "puns in the German language", is another remark made by Broad in his lectures, this time (presumably) in the presence of Wittgenstein, in which he again referred explicitly to Hegelian philosophy being based on *language-games*: "[I]n [Hegelian] dialectic we are simply *playing a game*." (Broad C2/5: 34, my emphasis)

With this in mind, it no longer appears to be just a coincidence that on 1 March 1932, shortly after Broad's lecture (in Michaelmas term 1931) and Wittgenstein's "Comments on Broad", Wittgenstein used the term "language-game" for the first time in his private notes (MS 113: 45r.). This connection between Hegel's philosophy with its *puns*, introduced to Cambridge philosophy by McTaggart and Russell, and Wittgenstein's language-games, an idea which he took up and integrated into his later philosophy, was in a certain sense even recognised at the time. At least, in his biographical reflections Broad himself links together the *puns* of McTaggart's Hegelianism and the *language-games* of the later Wittgenstein school by classing them both as *nugae*,¹⁶ a Latin term in philosophical rhetoric:

If some of my younger friends and colleagues of the "common language school" [of Wittgenstein] were to twit me with the accusation that it [McTaggart's Hegelianism] consists largely of *difficiles nugae*, I should heartily agree. But I should be inclined to retort that the writings of their school consist largely of *faciles nugae*. (Broad 1959: p.60)¹⁷

III.

In summary, Russell and Broad were the main sources of Wittgenstein's knowledge of Hegel. It appears that these two teachers each had a distinct impact on the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy, Russell on the "early-" and Broad on the "later Wittgenstein". Furthermore, it seems that these two different impacts are related in Wittgenstein's remark in Phoenix Park. The first way of interpreting the remark is more ontological, rooted in Wittgenstein's early acquaintance with Russell and his shadow Hegel. The second, more logical interpretation is rooted in Wittgenstein's later acquaintance with Broad's lectures about Hegel and the role that contradictions and language-games play in Hegelian logic.

The first interpretation is the Hegelian concept of *identity in difference*, which the young Wittgenstein learnt about from Russell during his early philosophical studies in Cambridge and which in Phoenix Park he transposed onto the relation between Hegel's *philosophy of identity* and his own *philosophy of differences*. (He even considered making differences a motto for the *Philosophical Investigations*, after the dictum in *King Lear* spoken by the Earl of Kent: "I'll teach you differences." (MDC: p.157))¹⁸

And with respect to this concept of *identity in difference*, it is noteworthy that in this case, Russell's teaching about Hegel is not actually wrong, and that the concept touches on an essential part of Hegel's philosophy: the idea of *the identity of identity and non-identity*, or as Hegel puts it, "the Absolute itself is *the identity of identity and non-identity*; being opposed and being one are both together in it."¹⁹ Furthermore, this "identity in difference" corresponds to an important point of contention in a contemporary dispute between British Hegelianism and Russell's logical-analytical empiricism, namely the dispute between Bradley's monism and Russell's and Moore's pluralism.

Wittgenstein's first major philosophical work appeared right at the height of this dispute, and occupied an intermediate position (namely, holism) in this conflict of opposites (monism vs. pluralism). It was especially through this concept of *identity in difference* that Wittgenstein became acquainted with an element of Hegel's holism. In Bradley's thought, this element became one-sidedly monistic, and this one-sidedness prompted a countermovement in Russell

and Moore with an equally one-sided pluralism. In retrospect, Russell described this one-sidedness of Bradley's idealistic view and his and Moore's *reversion to the opposite extreme* as follows:

Bradley argued that everything common sense believes in is *mere appearance*; we reverted to the *opposite extreme*, and thought that everything is real that common sense, uninfluenced by philosophy or theology, supposes real. With a sense of *escaping from prison*, we allowed ourselves to think [...] that there is a *pluralistic* timeless world of Platonic ideas. (Russell 2009: pp.15–16, my emphasis)

Hegel himself never shared Bradley's monism. When he says in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that "the True is the whole", he does not mean – like Bradley – that only the Absolute is real, as is made clear by his subsequent remark: "However, the whole [*das Ganze*] is only the essence completing itself through its own development." (PS 2018: §20) That is, the whole comprises only the complete development of singular facts, through the process of *phenomenology*. Wittgenstein can be understood in a similarly holistic manner when he starts the *Tractatus* with the fundamental claim that the world ought to be understood as the totality (*Gesamtheit*) of all singular facts: "The world is the *totality of facts*" (TLP: 1.1, my emphasis); "The world is determined by the facts, and by these being *all* the facts." (TLP: 1.11, my emphasis)

The ontological interpretation becomes even more manifest if one considers the discourse surrounding the dispute between Bradley's monism and Russell's pluralism, which was raging in the background at the time when Wittgenstein was starting to develop his early philosophical views. This dispute started with Moore's "The Nature of Judgment" and continued with great intensity at Cambridge (and Oxford), until it slowly died down in the late 1920s.²⁰

But the transition to Wittgenstein's later philosophy and its language-games seems to have already started around 1917, when Wittgenstein introduced with sentences 6.54 and 7 the idea of a somehow nonsensical reading of the *Tractatus*: a *nonsense* (6.54) if properly understood helps to "see the world aright" (ibid.). This paradoxical conclusion stood in sharp contrast to Russell, who had built his own project of logical symbolism on the need for sharp differences, and explicitly opposed the *nonsense* and *puns* of Hegel's logic, which seem to blur these sharp differences into soft transitions.

So the development of the later Wittgenstein can be regarded as a radicalisation of this view not just that the whole of the logic of language is somehow nonsensical, but also that every single sentence receives its meaning only from a language-game that combines difference with unity or sharp distinctions with soft transitions in a paradoxical, contradictory way.

With his notion of language-games, Wittgenstein now claims the opposite to what Russell does when he criticises Hegelian logic for its puns, and so his position is very deeply connected through the complex web of actual philosophical history to Hegel's dialectical logic. Moreover, Wittgenstein also states this openly when he comments on Broad's reconstruction of "the Hegelian method of examining contradictions, their relations and resolution" and refers to the similarities to his own philosophical practice: "the dialectical method [of Hegel] is very sound and a way in which we do work."

One could argue even further that Wittgenstein was not only right about the similarities to Hegel's philosophy when he made his remark in Phoenix Park regarding the connection between identity and difference, but also about the differences between them, except that these differences set in much later than is normally assumed and rest on the basis of a largely shared holistic view.

These later differences consist in the fact that, whereas Hegel wants to understand the relation of identity and non-identity as also being a form of identity, Wittgenstein is more interested in the moment of difference within that identity, that is, the difference between identity and non-identity, or as he himself said: "[the Hegelian method] should not try to find, from two propositions, a. and b., a further more complex proposition [...] Its object should be to find out where the ambiguities in our language are."

An idea that Hegel might have reformulated to Drury in his own words, if he had been in Wittgenstein's place in Phoenix Park, by referring to his *Doctrine of the Concept* and its distinction between the Concept's three moments, namely *Universality* (Allgemeinheit), *Particularity* (Besonderheit) and *Singularity* (Einzelheit):²¹

Wittgenstein seems to think that I always want to say that *singular* things only get their meaning from *Universality*. Whereas he himself is interested in showing that we can say this only in *particular* situations.

Notes

- 1 "Walking in Phoenix Park one afternoon: Drury: I sometimes regret the amount of time I spent in reading *the great historical philosophers*, at a time when I couldn't understand them. Wittgenstein: I don't regret that you did all that reading." (MDC: p.157)
- 2 For more detail cf. Berg 2019.
- 3 "McTaggart had Hegelian answers to the rather crude empiricism which had previously satisfied me. [...] I stood out against his influence with gradually diminishing resistance until just before my Moral Sciences Tripos in 1894, when I went over completely to a semi-Kantian, semi-Hegelian metaphysic." (Russell 1959: p.38)
- 4 "The [later work of Wittgenstein] remains to me completely unintelligible. Its positive doctrines seem to me trivial and its negative doctrines unfounded. I have not found in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* anything that seemed to me interesting and I do not understand why a whole school finds important wisdom in its pages."
- 5 Ray Monk was able to study Russell's unpublished letters to his first wife Alys courtesy of the current owner, Camellia Investments in London (p.613).
- 6 Moore first discussed the paper on 21 October 1898 at the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club and on 9 December the same year at the Aristotelian Society, and published it in *Mind* in early 1899 (Moore 1899: pp.176–193).
- 7 Whitehead's later major work *Process and Reality* is considered to be based on Hegel's philosophy (cf. Apel 1973). Moreover, according to Whitehead his later work can be understood as a transformation of key tenets of absolute idealism to a "realistic basis": "Finally, though throughout the main body of the work I am in sharp disagreement with Bradley, the final outcome is after all not so greatly different. I am particularly indebted to his chapter on the nature of experience, which appears in his *Essays on Truth and Reality*. [...] Indeed, if this cosmology be deemed successful, it becomes natural at this point to ask

whether the type of thought involved be not a transformation of some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism onto a realistic basis." (Whitehead 1978: pp.xii–xiii)

- 8 "In the year 1898 [...] I was at this time beginning to emerge from the bath of German idealism in which I had been plunged by McTaggart and Stout. I was very much assisted in this process by Moore, of whom at that time I saw a great deal. [...] I found occasion to exemplify the new views on logic to which, largely under Moore's guidance, I had been led." (Russell 2009: p.125) For an overview of Moore's influence on Russell, see Griffin 1991.
- 9 Russell held this lecture in Boston in March 1914, with the title "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy".
- 10 Speaking of *philosophical surprises*, after making his remark about Hegel in Phoenix Park, Wittgenstein reflected that "You'd be surprised" might make a good motto for his *Philosophical Investigations*.
- 11 "In the course of editing McTaggart's posthumous work I came to the decision to devote a full-scale book to a really careful and thorough estimate of the extraordinarily elaborate and ingenious system which he had excogitated. [...] I thus wrote and delivered the lectures which formed the basis of my book *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*. [...] I think it contains about the best work of which I am capable in philosophy." (Broad 1959: pp.58f.; Broad 1933, 1938)
- 12 "Between Wittgenstein and Broad, contemporaries at Cambridge, there was apparently such incompatibility, both of temperament and thought, that Wittgenstein avoided a meeting even in print." (Hallett 1977: p.762)
- 13 "I was not prepared to spend hours every week in a thick atmosphere of cigarette-smoke, while Wittgenstein punctually went through his hoops: and the faithful as punctually 'wondered with a foolish look of praise.'" (Broad 1959: p.61)
- 14 The original of the typescript is held in the archives of Wren Library, Cambridge, and has the written title "Elements of Metaphysics". The scholarly literature usually refers to the lectures as "Elements of Philosophy" (Monk 1991: p.322).
- 15 Wittgenstein: "Broad said that Speculative Philosophy had two methods. The deductive which started with certain fundamental self-evident propositions and proceeded to deduce further propositions about reality, and the dialectical which he describes as *the Hegelian method of examining contradictions, their relations and resolution*." (LWL: p.74f., my emphasis)
- 16 Latin for *poetical nonsense*. Translated into German: *poetische (Sprach-) Spielerei* (see the article "nūgae" in Hau 2001: p.345).
- 17 Broad probably took the term *nugae* from Kant, who insisted on the difference for philosophical purposes between subtle examinations ("Subtilitäten") which are difficult but useful, and difficult examinations which are *difficult but not useful* ("difficiles nugae") (cf. Kant 1800: p.80).
- 18 *King Lear*, act I, scene 4.
- 19 "Philosophy must give the separation into subject and object its due. By making both separation and the identity, which is opposed to it, equally absolute, however, philosophy has only posited separation conditionally, in the same way that such an identity – conditioned as it is by the nullification of its opposite – is also only relative. Hence, the Absolute itself is *the identity of identity and non-identity*; being opposed and being one are both together in it." (D: p.156; cf. JS: pp.96, 134, 136, my emphasis).
- 20 Bradley argued against pluralism in 1904 (Bradley 1904: pp.308–335, esp. pp.330f.). The arguments for philosophical pluralism were discussed in 1909 by John Henry Muirhead, Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller and Alfred Edward Taylor (Muirhead 1909: pp.183–225). In the same year, William James deliberately argued for pluralism, having himself converted from monism to pluralism in 1870 (James 1909). James Ward argued for the (holistic) unity of monism and pluralism in 1911, especially in reference to his reading of Hegel (Ward 1911: pp.138–180). And as late as 1926, John Alexander Smith attempted to renew the discussion between monism and pluralism by pointing to the as-yet unsolved metaphysical

problem (Smith 1925/26: pp.1–24). Abraham Edel responded in 1934 by arguing that this problem could not be solved, since there was no way to formulate it in a meaningful way (Edel 1934: pp.561–571).

- 21 The translations of *Allgemeinheit*, *Besonderheit* and *Einzelheit* are taken from George di Giovanni's translation of the *Science of Logic* (cf. SL 2010: p.507f.).

Abbreviations

- D** – G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, transl. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.
- JS** – G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Schriften 1801–1807* (Werke 2), Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- LO** – Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letters to C. K. Ogden*, ed. G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Blackwell / London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.
- LWL** – *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1932. From the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee*, ed. Desmond Lee, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.
- MDC** – M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in: Rush Rhees (ed.), *Recollections of Wittgenstein*.
- MS** – Ludwig Wittgenstein, manuscript in the Nachlass (numbering after G. H. von Wright).
- PI** – Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*.
- PS** – G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, transl. Terry Pinkard, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- SL** – G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*: SL 1912 = *Hegel's Doctrine of Formal Logic*, transl. H. S. Macran, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912; SL 1929 = *Hegel's Science of Logic*, transl. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, London: Allen & Unwin, 1929; SL 2010 = *The Science of Logic*, transl. George di Giovanni, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- TLP** – Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, quoted from the translations by C. K. Ogden (1922) and by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (1961).

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Corrections in this version

- Note 20 and references: "On Truth and Practice" (*Mind* 13, 1904) is by F. H. Bradley, not by C. D. Broad.
- Note 20: Edel's reply appeared in 1934 (previously: 1931), as in the references.
- Section III: the phrase "see the world aright" is from TLP 6.54 (previously attributed to TLP 7).

- Broad 1959 is his “Autobiography” (previously: “biography”); “Moral Sciences Club” (previously: “Moral Science Club”).
- Titles: McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* and *A Commentary on Hegel’s Logic*; Moore, “The Nature of Judgment”.
- Russell’s phrase is quoted as “semi-Hegelian metaphysic”, as in note 3.
- References: author names in the Muirhead/Schiller/Taylor symposium; Berg 2019 has since been published as *Wittgensteins Hegel* (Fink 2021).
- Minor typographical corrections. The list of abbreviations has been added for this version.