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THE PRAGMATISM OF PEIRCE AND HEGEL.*

“BY this time Whitman,” says his biographer, “is a full-fledged Hegelian—pragmatic, transcendental, and evolutionary.”¹ And was Hegel indeed ‘pragmatic’? And, if so, what does pragmatism mean?

The reader of Royce’s *The Problem of Christianity* finds an unconscious elaboration of this paradox in Royce’s complaint that he has been wrongly classified with the Hegelians. What has been taken by his critics for Hegelianism is not at all to be traced to Hegel but rather to C. S. Peirce.² My critics, he seems to say, cannot tell the difference between Hegel and Peirce. He does not tell us how to account for such a confusion except to drop the remark that Hegel furnishes a particular illustration of Peirce’s general logical position. While William James and the followers of Peirce generally were casting every sort of contempt upon Hegel, Royce was discovering that Hegel furnishes a particular illustration of Pragmaticism if not of Pragmatism.

The now familiar distinctions between the father and the sons of Pragmatism need hardly be recited, but in the light of such distinctions, and in view of Royce’s position cited above, the question as to whether the sons were in any sense legitimate heirs of C. S. Peirce is forced upon us. Their total rejection of Hegelianism may be attributed to the fact that Hegel and Peirce constructed mutually exclusive logical theories. This is the

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¹ Halloway, Emory, *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, Vol. I, p. lvii.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 185.