

## **The Demise of Formalism II: Part III**

### *The Rise of E M E R G E N C E*

#### **The Pragmatic Solution?**

Now, anyone can pick holes in anything! All of Mankind's invented methods are flawed, when it comes to assessing their results against the only true measure of Reality itself. But, such criticisms, *by themselves*, amount to irresponsibility. First, we must judge these methods Epistemologically. How do they measure up in developing Mankind's Knowledge and Understanding of Reality? We cannot plug directly into Truth. We have to develop methods to successively reveal it. All such methods must be judged in their relative *efficacy* first and foremost!

In teaching, for example, an excellent method is the use of Didactic Models, where an untruth is put forwards, NOT for any intrinsic merit in its content, but because it illuminates the most productive way forward. And so it must be also with the methods we are discussing here. It is pointless ONLY to pick holes in them. We must understand them, and put forward improvements. But, let us be clear, explaining Natural Selection to Cave Men, assuming you could, of course, would be emphatically rejected by them. Why? – because these things are not absolute. Our understanding is ALWAYS related to History, and our methods can only reflect this. They can do no other. Why was it that western explorers in Africa, for example, could not categorise who they found as anything other than savages, even though they were also US?

So, what must replace Formal Logic (and all its retinue of related methods), and how are we to cope with the seemingly unavoidable problems connected with Plurality?

As with all such difficulties, we cannot just dispense with them. We must merely cease to worship them! We will continue to use them, but we must always be aware of their limitations. We must, of course, develop new methodologies for dealing with Change, and these will be more accurate than our formalist methods of the past, so they must be used to correct formalism whenever we still use it. For as with all men individually, so with Mankind in general, any significant gain or discovery gets promoted into a World View, and it is precisely when such false tails wag the real dog, that we must be in a position to demolish such unwarranted extrapolations.

So, what about Change?

#### **Dealing with Change – Hegel**

To tackle this area we must abandon all ideas of Absolute Truth and predictable development. We must look for a kind of Evolution in everything.

Hegel did it by standing on his head!

He realised that in Thought were all the elements of Change, and that they were happening *all the time* in our thinking. So, in contrast to contemporary scientists, he could not countenance their assumptions and methodology as the way to his required truths. They were fine for immutable and stable situations ("wait for equilibrium conditions to become established" was their credo), and they **had** perfected *control* of, and *extraction* from, Reality's limited areas of study, but they were nowhere when it came to Change! And by this I must emphasize that we are talking of Qualitative Change as distinct from varying magnitudes, which were their chosen bag.

He therefore broke ALL their rules by using **introspection**, and studying Thought to tackle Change.

He was, of course, an Idealist in taking this route, for it implied that the crucial elements that he needed to unearth were present there. This was of course, the opposite of the attitude of most scientists who were Materialists and considered Thought to be secondary to Matter. When we consider all the arguments between these two camps, it is remarkable that they are always said to be "matters of principle", whereas they are more often pragmatic decisions to study what it is felt has to be revealed. And in the context of our present discussion, where it is evident that we ALL make our decisions for very similar reasons, such hostilities seem to do as much harm as good. For, Hegel has been universally condemned by scientists for his "insupportable

stance”, which has, ever since, walled them off from his undoubted contributions, and indeed, revealed their own “beliefs” in their refusal to tackle Change right up to the present day.

But, they all forget that Hegel lived long before the work of Darwin was published, and before the great revelations of Geology, and the remarkable accelerating ascent of the Natural History of Living Things into the modern Science of Biology. He had NO other available *ground* for his studies on Change, apart from where it was evidently rife – within his own thinking.

So, Hegel began to study Change and note its general features. Everyone has heard of the cryptic versions of what he is said to have put forward – **Quantity into Quality; Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis; Contradictions overcome yet maintained;** and many more. But only a few were really listening, and such fragments have become arguments **against** his work rather than aspects of what he achieved. In addition, the vast quantity of useable data produced by scientific investigations greatly undermined his status as a serious investigator.

### **Dealing with Change – Marxism**

Indeed, it took the revolution undertaken by his disciples, the Young Hegelians, who abandoned Idealism, and embraced Materialism, to transform Hegel’s contribution. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw significant developments in Science, and these new men, led by Karl Marx KNEW that they could not continue the developments started by Hegel if they maintained his basic standpoint AND his limited area for study. Marx and his collaborators (particularly Engels) attempted to realise an inclusion of the best that Science could offer into a comprehensive World View. They went to History via Michelet, to Economics via the British School, the ideas of the French Utopian Socialists (Fourier and St. Simon (?)) along with the Sciences and Mathematics, and with German Philosophy (Hegel) into the most comprehensive Monist approach to Human Knowledge.

A Philosophy of Change was emerging, with a replacement for Formal Logic – Dialectical Logic.

Now, in the direction that they took, they were both inverting Hegel (“standing him on his head, or rather on his feet”), yet maintaining a philosophical approach. They dealt in generalities. It was almost a Top Down methodology, and though this was unavoidable at the time, it was to undermine their credibility.

**To be continued**

(1.063 words)