
THE HARTSHORNIAN WAY: A WAY TO SOLVE DUALISM

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The Western way of thinking has been dominated by the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle. Even though Hegel tried to initiate a revolution in the Western thought through his dialectical logic, the Aristotelian logic or the either/or logic still haunts the European philosophy. However, the Hegelian logic is not clear enough in epistemological terms to solve the problem of dualism. It is Charles Hartshorne who could be said to have successfully solved this problem in the West. In the article the author demonstrates what he calls “the Hartshornian Way” and argues for this way as the only one through which truths of the opposites can be successfully recognized and combined together.

Key words: Aristotelian logic, Hegelian Dialectic, Hartshornian logic, dualism, law of the excluded middle, panentheism (neo-classical theism)

1. Introduction

Dualism has played an important role in the Western thought. Although we often attribute this problem to Descartes who contributed a lot to the mind/body duality in his epistemic system, the problem of duality, in fact, is as old as other metaphysical problems going back to ancient Greek philosophy.

As a matter of fact, it is normal for human beings, no matter if they are from the East or the West, to learn and see things through contrasts or opposites. Contrasts are pervasive in the world around us, or as Hartshorne says, “Contrast is found not only throughout life but throughout nature as discovered by science” [1. P. 47]. It might be said that the fundamental difference between Western and Eastern people is that the Western mind stops at duality, whereas the Eastern mind strives to transcend duality to reach unity. In other words, the Western people tend toward the duality of reality whereas the Eastern people are inclined to the unity of reality.

Religion stands out among the powerful historical forces shaping our thought. Religion influences the way of life of most peoples in the world even now, in the age of science and globalization. Some thinkers in the past predicted that there would be no more major religions in the world by the twentieth century, and that science would have replaced them. It is true that many people in the West have turned their backs to religion and become unbelievers since the Enlightenment, or as Ian Barbour puts it, “for many centuries in the West, the Christian story of creation and salvation provided a cosmic setting in which individual life had significance. It allowed people to come to terms with guilt, finitude, and death. It provided a total way of life, and it encouraged personal transformation and reorientation. Since the Enlightenment, the Christian story has had diminishing effectiveness for many people, partly because it has seemed inconsistent with the understanding of the world in modern science. Similar changes have been occurring in other cultures” [2. P. XIII].

However, we have found that these predictions were wrong. Throughout the twentieth century people still respected and called for religions especially during and after the First and the Second World Wars. In the twenty-first century Christianity and all other religions are still very much alive, and science has not succeeded in replacing them (1). In fact, it seems that more and more people become believers in these religions. This is evidence of how religion is essentially significant to life.

Religion affects not only the way of life but also the way of thinking. Turning to the West, we will find that “the Western theological tradition, in all its evident diversity, rests upon a polar or, more precisely, a dyadic foundation. Though consistently monotheistic, Christian theology is repeatedly inscribed in binary terms. The history of religious thought in the West can be read as a pendular movement between seemingly exclusive and evident opposites” [3. P. 516—17]. In his book *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (1984) Mark C. Taylor lists the following opposites as examples.

God	World
Eternity	Time
Being	Becoming
Rest	Movement
Permanence	Change
Presence	Absence
One	Many
Sacred	Profane
Order	Chaos
Meaning	Absurdity
Life	Death
Infinite	Finite
Transcendent	Immanent
Identity	Difference
Affirmation	Negation
Truth	Error
Reality	Illusion
Certainty	Uncertainty
Clarity	Confusion
Sanity	Madness
Light	Darkness
Vision	Blindness
Invisible	Visible
Spirit	Body
Spiritual	Carnal
Mind	Matter
Good	Evil
Innocence	Guilt
Purity	Stain
Proper	Improper

Centered	Eccentric
First	Second
Original	Imitation
Natural	Monstrous
Purposeful	Purposeless
Honesty	Duplicity
Height	Depth
Depth	Surface
Interiority	Exteriority
Speech	Writing
Seriousness	Play

A question may be raised, “Why does the Western theological tradition rest upon this polar or dyadic foundation?” An answer may be that it is because it has been influenced by Aristotelian logic.

II. Aristotelian Logic

Logic has a long history. In the West it is more than 2,500 years old. Western Philosophers who made contributions to logic include Pythagoras, Zeno of Elea, and Plato. However, it was Aristotle who made the greatest contribution to logic. In fact, he is considered the father of the formal logic. His formal logic is based on three laws: the law of identity, the law of the excluded middle, and the law of non-contradiction. In the later époques philosophers and logicians such as Boole, Venn, Frege, Russell, Whitehead, and Godel made their contributions to the field. But even if logic is subject to change and development like other areas, all Western logicians have followed the Aristotelian three laws of logic. Of course, Hartshorne is no exception.

Which is the most fundamental among these three laws? I believe that it is the law of the excluded middle. Why so? Because we can convert the other two laws into the law of the excluded middle. Let us consider the following proofs.

1. $p \rightarrow p$ The Law of Identity
2. $\sim p \vee p$ 1, Material Implication, Replacement Rule
3. $p \vee \sim p$ 2, Commutation, Replacement Rule

Q.E.D.

1. $\sim(p \bullet \sim p)$ The Law of Non-contradiction
2. $\sim p \vee \sim \sim p$ 1, De Morgan, Replacement Rule
3. $\sim p \vee p$ 2, Double Negation, Replacement Rule
4. $p \vee \sim p$ 3, Commutation, Replacement Rule

Q.E.D.

The law of the excluded middle makes no room for an intermediate between the opposites or contradictories, or as Aristotle puts it, “...there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate. This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are. To say

of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true; so that he who says of anything that it is, or that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false; but neither what is nor what is not is said to be or not to be“ [4].

From the above quotation it is clear that the law of the excluded middle leaves no room for “both/and” and “neither/nor”. People who follow this law in their thinking are forced to choose one of the two opposites. This can be illustrated with the help of the following examples.

Example 1: The chili is either green or red.

According to the law of the excluded middle, if the statement “The chili is green” is true, then its opposite or contrastive “The chili is red” must be false. There is no space for “The chili is both green and red” and “The chili is neither green nor red.” In fact, the same chili can be both green and red in its different parts at the same time. It can also be neither green nor red, but, for example, white or brown at a particular moment. It can have different colors at different times.

Example 2: Light is either particles or waves.

According to the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle, statements “Light is particles” and “Light is waves” cannot be true together or false together. If “Light is particles” is true, then “Light is waves” must be false, and vice versa. In fact, some physicists hold that light is particles while other physicists hold that light is waves. Still, others claim that light is both particles and waves. Someday perhaps some physicists may discover that light is neither particles nor waves because all actual entities are subject to change at all times.

These two examples demonstrate that Aristotelian logic has its own limits. What I am saying here is not that Aristotelian law of the excluded middle is invalid. I am just saying that this law is true only in its own system or context. It is not always true in any absolute sense.

People who adopt the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle as being fundamental in their way of thinking will be trapped in the game of dualism. If they do not recognize its limits, they will and could not be able to transcend dualism.

III. Hegelian Logic

It was Hegel who first recognized the limits of Aristotelian logic in the West and proposed the Dialectical logic instead. For Hegel, the whole reality is a historical process. The dialectic is something that is realized in the actual process of history. In other words, dialectic logic implies that form and content always go together. Logic is not just a matter of form separate from content, which is how Aristotelian logic is interpreted. Hegel says, “...the maxim of Identity... Everything is identical with itself, $A = A$: and, negatively, A cannot at the same time be A and not A . This maxim, instead of being a true law of thought, is nothing but the law of abstract understanding” [5. P. 136]. In order to understand Dialectic logic clearly, Peter Singer summarizes Hegel’s basic ideas as follows.

1. Reality is a historical process.
2. The way this process changes is dialectical.
3. This dialectical process of change has a specific goal.

4. This goal is a conflict-free society.

5. Until that goal is reached we are condemned to remain in one form or another of alienation (2).

The dialectic is composed of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Unlike Aristotelian logic, the dialectic contends that A and not A can be true together, or as Brent puts it, “a dialectical process is a process that... We begin by starting our thesis, and about such a statement or thesis we might assume with Aristotle’s law of identity that what it says it is, it says it is, that it cannot be both affirmed and denied (non-contradiction), and that it must either be so or not be so (excluded middle). But to make such a claim in the real world of human experience... does not yield knowledge that conforms to such fixed structures. Any such initial statement (thesis) will be contradicted (antithesis) and... no such contradiction is itself ever final. As such, Hegel’s concept of emerging truth breaks Aristotle’s law of the excluded middle and claims that in so doing the inadequacy of that law to explain the facts of how the epistemic subject acquires true knowledge. For these syntheses that arise in both the development of the world and in the development of man’s understanding of it, show that neither thesis nor antithesis is finally true, but rather that both are in a certain way true. The ‘middle’ that Aristotle wished to ‘exclude’ is seen to be the essential core of reality itself” [6. P. 174].

Example 1: Dialectic

Thesis:	Water
Antithesis:	Fire
Synthesis:	Steam

Example 2: Dialectic

Thesis:	Coffee
Antithesis:	Tea
Synthesis:	Coffee mixed with tea (3)

From the above two examples we can see that Hegelian logic can solve the problem of dualism in the ontological dimension. It obviously tells us about the way things are. Ontology deals with the mode of existence, non-existence, and actuality. Hegelian logic works well with the development of the world and its objects. However, in the epistemological dimension this type of logic is not much of a help for developing our understanding of the world and its objects in the form of propositions. Let us consider the following proposition.

Tea is different from coffee.

According to Aristotelian logic, the opposite of the above proposition is “Tea is not different from coffee” or “Tea is similar to coffee.” And according to the law of the excluded middle, if “Tea is different from coffee” is true, then its opposite must be false, and vice versa. On the contrary, according to Hegelian logic, “Tea is different from coffee” and its opposite can be true together. The question to be raised here is why Hegelian logic seems to be silent on the problem of dualism at the epistemological level.

IV. Hartshornian Way

It was an American philosopher Charles Hartshorne (1897—2000) who helps us solve the above question. Hartshorne has been known as a process philosopher who

wrote more than twenty books and a hundred articles in a lifelong mission to prove that God exists, and that He is dipolar. The philosopher did it through process theology and the second form of St. Anselm's ontological argument. David Ray Griffin says, "He (Hartshorne) was clearly one of the major philosophers of the 20th century" [7. P. 15]. John B. Cobb considers Hartshorne the Einstein of religious thought. After reading his works I absolutely agree with Griffin and Cobb.

Hartshorne is generally known as a scholar who made great contributions on a modal proof of the abstract aspect (pole) of God based on the second form of St. Anselm's ontological argument and the concept of the concrete aspect (pole) of God who is dynamic and creative. Some may know him as a philosopher who brought philosophical insights to an empirical field through his first book *The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation*. Others may know him as a distinguished ornithologist through his book *Born to Sing*. Still others may know him as a devout vegetarian who did not own an automobile, preferring to ride a bicycle, and a supporter of feminism, abortion rights and higher taxes. In this paper I will try to show another face of Hartshorne, namely, a great contributor to logic.

For Hartshorne, extremism is always wrong. Let us consider the following three statements.

- (a) There is nothing in the world.
- (b) There is everything in the world.
- (c) There is something in the world.

It is obvious that the first two statements (a) and (b) are wrong because they are extreme. The third statement (c) is correct because some things do exist, and some things do not exist in the world.

Dealing with the nature of God, Hartshorne argues that both classical theism and pantheism go wrong because they are extreme. Hartshorne considers his position as neo-classical theism or panentheism which is in the middle way between classical theism and pantheism. Let us consider the following three statements.

- (1) God is relative in all aspects. (Pantheism)
- (2) God is relative in some aspect. (Panentheism)
- (3) God is relative in no aspects. (Classical Theism)

The words "all aspects" and "no aspects" imply extremism. Thus Hartshorne rejects (1) and (3), and he prefers (2). In his own words, "if 'pantheism' is a historically and etymologically appropriate term for the view that deity is the all of relative or interdependent items, with nothing wholly independent or in any clear sense nonrelative, then 'panentheism' is an appropriate term for the view that deity is in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items. Traditional theism or deism makes God solely independent or non-inclusive. Thus there are logically the three views: (1) God is merely the cosmos, in all aspects inseparable from the sum or system of dependent things or effects; (2) He is both this system and something independent of it; (3) He is not the system, but is in all aspects independent. The second view is panentheism. The first view includes any doctrine which, like Spinoza's, asserts that there is a premise from which all acts are implied conclusions" [8. P. 89—90].

Now if we turn to the word “absolute”, we can play the same game as follows:

- (1) God is absolute in all aspects. (Classical Theism)
- (2) God is absolute in some aspect. (Panentheism)
- (3) God is absolute in no aspects. (Pantheism)

Thus for Hartshorne, God is both relative in some aspects and absolute in other aspects. This is the main thesis of panentheism or neo-classical theism. From the game proposed by Hartshorne, we can apply it to solve the problem that Hegelian logic does not answer at the epistemological level. Let us now turn to the proposition “Tea is different from coffee” and its opposite “Tea is not different from coffee” or “Tea is similar to coffee.” How can we make the two opposites true together according to Dialectical logic? We can make both of them true through the Hartshornian way. Let us start with the propositions containing the word “different”.

- (1) Tea is different from coffee in all aspects.
- (2) Tea is different from coffee in some aspect.
- (3) Tea is different from coffee in no aspects.

It is obvious that the propositions (1) and (3) are wrong because they are extreme. The proposition (2) is correct. Now let us turn to the propositions containing the word “similar”.

- (1) Tea is similar to coffee in all aspects.
- (2) Tea is similar to coffee in some aspect.
- (3) Tea is similar to coffee in no aspects.

Similarly, the propositions (1) and (3) are obviously wrong while the proposition (2) is true. Therefore, with the Hartshornian way, we can make Hegelian logic clear at the epistemological level as follows:

Thesis: Tea is different from coffee in some aspect. (True)

Antithesis: Tea is similar to coffee in some aspect. (True)

Synthesis: Tea is both different and similar to coffee in some aspects. (True)

V. Conclusion

The world today is filled with conflicts and dualism. How can we solve this problem? Following Aristotelian logic and the Western theological tradition without recognizing their limitations, would not help much. The Hartshornian way may be an appropriate answer. It is another face of Hartshorne which is important for solving conflicts and transcending dualism of any kind. The Hartshornian way can give space to all the opposites. Let us consider for example the serious opposition between egalitarian liberalism and multiculturalism. The main thesis of egalitarian liberalism is “Everybody is just like us” while that of multiculturalism is “Everybody is different from us”. For Aristotle, the two theses are opposite, and they cannot be both correct according to the law of the excluded middle. However, the Hartshornian way can help solve this problem as follows:

Everybody is just like us in some aspect. (True)

Everybody is different from us in some aspect. (True)

Everybody is both similar and different from us in some aspects. (True)

If the egalitarian liberals insist that “Everybody is just like us in all aspects” and the multiculturalists claim that “Everybody is different from us in all aspects”, then we can see that both groups are wrong.

Even though Hartshorne did not recognize that his methodology could solve the problem faced by Hegelian logic at the epistemological level, I would like to give this credit to him and call it “The Hartshornian Way”.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Except for those who believe that science and religion are always in conflict. Some of these people have chosen to take side with science while others — with religion. However, Ian Barbour singles out the four ways of relating science and religion: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. Many people including theologians take the last three ways as their alternatives. “Those who are of the opinion that science and religion share common admirable purposes, or at least are on speaking terms, affirm that each enterprise possesses a rational-factual and a normative or valuing component. Both contribute to a fully satisfying understanding of the world and our place in it. Others, however, are of a different opinion. They sharply demarcate the methods and goals of science and religion, assigning special functions to each so as to assure their mutual independence. On the one hand, the challenge is to avoid reducing one enterprise to the other — science to religion in the form of natural theology or religion to science as an antiquated approach to explaining natural phenomena. On the other hand, the challenge is to avoid complete compartmentalization by assigning matters of the heart to religion and matters of the head to science where each has nothing to contribute to each other.” See James E. Huchingson, 1993. *Religion and the Natural Sciences*, Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., pp. 4—5.
- (2) See a series of television programs transmitted by the BBC in 1987. See also Magee, Brian 1987. *The Great Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy* (Based on the BBC Television Series), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 205. Marx followed and took over all Hegel’s basic ideas. The difference is that for Hegel the process of historical development is spiritual whereas for Marx it is purely material.
- (3) Hegelian logic is close to the way of thinking of the Eastern peoples because it is inclusive. All forms of the Eastern logic are holistic because Eastern thought tends to be inclusive whereas Western thought tends to be exclusive. In the epistemological dimension the Nyāya logic is the logic of integration between induction and deduction. In the ontological dimension the Taoist logic is the logic of complementarity while the Buddhist logic is the logic of detachment. In order to see the difference among these types of logic, we may use “tea and coffee” as examples. If a waiter asks, “Tea or coffee?”, an Aristotelian may say, “Tea” or “Coffee”, but not both. A Hegelian would say, “Both tea and coffee in the same cup.” A Taoist will say, “Both tea and coffee in two different cups.” The answer from a Buddhist may vary. It may be “Tea”, “Coffee”, “Both tea and coffee in the same cup”, “Both tea and coffee in different cups”, “One tenth of tea and nine tenths of coffee in the same cup”, or even “Neither.”

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ПУТЬ ХАРТШОРНА: ЕЩЕ ОДИН СПОСОБ ПРЕОДОЛЕТЬ ДУАЛИЗМ

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В западном мышлении превалировал аристотелевский закон исключенного третьего. Хотя Гегель и попытался совершить революцию в западной мысли с помощью своей диалектической логики, аристотелевская эксклюзивистская логика продолжает довлеть над европейской философией. Однако гегелевская логика не достаточно эпистемологически ясна, чтобы решить проблему дуализма. Чарльз Хартшорн — тот философ, которому удалось это успешно сделать на Западе. В статье автор демонстрирует то, что он называет хартшорнианским путем, представляя его в качестве единственного, позволяющего успешно объединять противоположные истинные суждения.

Ключевые слова: аристотелевская логика, гегелевская диалектика, хартшорнианский путь, дуализм, закон исключенного третьего, панентеизм (нео-классический теизм).