

TO CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE, SEPTEMBER 24, 1905¹³²

103 Irving St.
Cambridge.

Sept. 24, 1905.

Dear Mr. Peirce:—

Whenever you *do* read my letters,¹³³ please note that, after reading your kind note of Sept 23, I very much doubt whether we differ at all (except in mode of expression), as to the one funda-

¹³² ALS. Peirce Papers. HL.

¹³³ Peirce's final letter in this exchange, dated September 23, 1905 (Royce Papers), begins:

My dear Prof Royce,

At present I have to think of earning money & cannot think of your letters. I thought any hints would suffice to show you your fallacy, but I will interrupt my work to point it out more distinctly.

What you say is that you show how to build up an asymmetrical relation out of symmetrical elements *exclusively*. Symmetry is the equality of certain parts. Asymmetry an inequality among them. So what you say is that inequality can result from equality and nothing else. You cannot be surprised if I say that this is too Hegelian.

mental matter of the true nature of what you define as disquiparance and equiparance. Our difference is as to the interpretation of what I have said in my paper.

I beg you to note that I have *nowhere* said that "inequality can result from equality and nothing else," as you suppose me to say. My postulate IV *distinctly* shows that I had *no* such idea, since I there assert a certain existence of certain defined inequalities as one explicit basis of my system Σ . You are attacking, then, a position which I have nowhere taken.

What I *have* said is that my asymmetries can and do result from "asserting that certain elements do while certain *do not* stand to one another in a perfectly symmetrical relation." In other words, I show how fruitful a certain difference (*viz.* the difference between *do* and *do not* stand, &c), or what you call "disquiparance," is. But I do state my asymmetries "*in terms of* a certain symmetrical relation." How? By showing what follows from saying that certain elements *do*, while certain *do not* stand in that relation. In other words I get certain differences out of an explicitly asserted fundamental difference. Your example of the "pretty near" case is not in the least analogous to my very explicitly asserted view. I repudiate entirely such an interpretation, which is without basis in my text.

I have also asserted that the *contrast* of symmetrical and asymmetrical relations is "superficial." *Your* analysis, in your latest letter, asserts that all relations are of the *one* kind, *viz.*, "disquiparance." So far we appear to differ mainly in mode of expression. Your Hegelian thesis:—"Alles ist unterschieden," is doubtless (in substance) correct. I nowhere have denied that in my paper, and have taught it for years. That thesis however is *not* at issue in my paper.

What I have undertaken to show, in my paper, is that *certain* differences are reducible to a certain fundamental difference, *viz.* to this that some element, say *x does*, while some element *y does not*, stand to the elements of a certain collection in a relation which, *so far as concerns that collection* is symmetrical for all the elements of that collection.

As to what I mean by symmetrical, I agree in usage with the now current usage, which as you are aware, seems to you defective. But whatever you think of my vocabulary, you have no right to charge me with a doctrine nowhere asserted in my paper.

Again I thank you for your kindness. I shall of course never trouble you further with letters so long as these cannot be read. I

send this merely as a last deposit so to speak, against the day when you may have time to find out what it is that I *have* said.

Yours Truly
Josiah Royce.