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### The mystical nothingness and the consequences of logic

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#### Abstract

In this brief article, I will argue that logic leads to a curious redundancy or tautology, a law of identity. Now, rather than simply think that such an assertion really says nothing, I will argue that one can impute a mystical dimension to such a conclusion. That is, when mystics speak of that great nothingness or the undefinable infinite or that which cannot be described via language, they are in fact asserting

tautologies of this kind, that what is simply is. Or rather, what is not something else but is present to the mind as a something that is in fact nothing. This “nothing” is precisely the “object” of mystical traditions and is not the object of the quantifiable and measurable. This devolves from the axiom that everything contains everything. Or more crudely: the infinite is in the finite.

**Keywords:** Logic, Mystical Dimension, Universal

#### 1. Sets and elements

1. Each thing is an element of each thing.
2. Each set is an element of each set.
3. Everything is an element of everything
4. Every set is an element of the “set of all sets” (every set).
5. Each thing and each set are an element of each thing and each set
6. Everything and every set (“the set of all sets”) are an element of everything and the “set of all sets” (every set).
1. Consider a thing  $x$ , say the table on which my computer stands. It contains certain elements and substances we call matter. It is wood. It is not metal or cardboard or simply air. Yet what of its origins? It is certainly a product of the “big bang” and therefore contains traces of that “memory”. While its fiery beginnings belie the seemingly inert wood it now is with certain defined limitations on its properties and identity, it still shares at least one element with everything that was, is and will be. Therefore, any conceivable entity is part of every other conceivable entity, at least by a single element. So, for example the set of all natural numbers is a subset of all real numbers, just as the set of wood is a subset of all inanimate matter. But this is absurd: the set of all wooden objects is not a set of all metals, say, though if one has a higher dimensional set, like the set of all materials then indeed wood sets and metal sets of enclosed therein and the “higher” one goes in set order, so the more sets are included in its grasp so that elements and sets become more and more shared, just as the theory of atoms applies to all matter.
2. If “A” contains everything (“B”) and “A” is a set as is “B” then perforce “A” is an element of “B”. The power set necessitates it. Deeper yet, within “A” is “B” for every set is an element of every other set. Each set is an element of each set. This devolves from the axiom, namely that there is a set of everything, the Universal set. One might call it infinite. Deviating from standard mathematics, we are arguing that this Universal not only contains other sets and elements from the outside, as it were, but also from the inside – it is that element (which forms that set) that is everywhere, in all things. Sets and elements are the abstraction of things and their structure or even concepts and their relationships.
3. The notion of the “set of all sets” implies that nothing is not part of it, either as an element in itself or a set in itself. Even as a set, it is but an element.
4. Applying this infinite Universal, one finds that every set is an element of every set. That is, since each set is a set within the “set of all sets”, then every set shares an element in common with every other set. Therefore, every set is an element of every set (defined by a certain property, at the very least that it is a subset of the “set of all sets”).
5. Since each thing and every other thing are so interrelated and since each set and every other set are so interrelated, then each thing and each set are an element of each thing and each set.

6. In accordance with the infinite Universal, we must then say that everything and every set are an element of everything and the “set of all sets” (every set).

## 2. Tautology: Paradox and the solution

At a cursory glance or a quick reading, the statements above seem to all share the structure,  $A = A$ , the Law of Identity. It would appear that they are simply tautological, redundant statements that lack meaning or as asserting something. Or indeed if they do assert something, they assert nothing.

Another problem is what of the case of the “set of all sets”: Russel writes (1919, 136): “The comprehensive class we are considering, which is to embrace everything, must embrace itself as one of its members. In other words, if there is such a thing as “everything,” then, “everything” is something, and is a member of the class “everything.” But normally a class is not a member of itself. Mankind, for example, is not a man. Form now the assemblage of all classes which are not members of themselves. This is a class: is it a member of itself or not? If it is, it is one of those classes that are not members of themselves, i.e., it is not a member of itself. If it is not, it is not one of those classes that are not members of themselves, i.e., it is a member of itself. Thus, of the two hypotheses – that it is, and that it is not, a member of itself – each implies its contradictory. This is a contradiction.” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/russell-paradox/>

In other words, it is akin to the semantic paradox in the utterance by a Cretan: “All Cretans are liars”. If it is true, it is false and if it is false, it is true. One can visualize this as a switch that when turned on activates a hand that then promptly switches off the mechanism. It is this problem of self-referentiality that leads to a logical impasse.

An application of this idea is the post-modern assertion that everything is relative. If that were so, it would render the proposition itself as relative and therefore any reference to the system as a whole – as a product of such a system – cannot be determined to be true or false or as meaning anything. Does that mean that the “set of all sets” cannot be said to exist since if it did it would be a “something” and then a member of itself as both a set and an element rendering the very concept as vacuous, as self-defeating?

The solution then is not simply to do away with grand theories or the “master narrative” for that in itself would be a master narrative. Rather, one could maintain a position which seems to defy the basic laws of logic, of non-contradiction and the excluded middle, and claim that things are relative *and* are not relative. A quantum philosophy.

## 3. The Mystical

Once language itself no longer serves to account for grasping the totality of things and logic itself bends in on itself, one has a space for the other of language, of propositional logic and symbolic thought-forms. What is implied by this?

A space is carved for tacit knowledge, a knowing that is non-propositional or verbal or symbolic. The conventional areas of such kinds of knowledge are activities such as art, sport, dreaming and meditation. the realm of the imagination and of altered states of consciousness.

Hence the repetition of a thought-form – a mantra – where the law of identity –  $A = A$  – becomes melodic and induces an altered state. It is not by accident that logic leads us to the truth of Identity and then an application of this in the form of certain kinds of meditation. The paradox leads to the

fundamental Uncertainty principle whose field of reference in terms of mystical experience is the sense that matter itself both exists and does not exist, even consciousness exists in this partial frame of being. While one cannot then just impute a transcendent consciousness within out frame of reference, the inherent undecidability, incompleteness and unknowability, implies only the existence of an experiential and phenomenological being, rather than language as corresponding to a given, the truth. It is this awareness of the in-the-moment self or being that is at the heart of awareness and a mystical relationship with and in reality, itself.

Yet while the imagination can assert that  $A = B$  or at least  $A$  is like  $B$ , for all intents and purposes  $A$  must simply be  $A$ . A heart is a heart. A heart is not a liver. However, the more one abstracts, so liver and heart are part of the human body; the human body part of the self; the self-integral to the brain or mind and the nature of the mind can be described as consciousness as such, while we might abstract further and talk of a collective consciousness and then travel further into notions of the universe itself as a kind of consciousness. Once we arrive at such a point, we are back to the “set of all sets” and can go no further but to the illogical realm of contradiction resolved as a principle of uncertainty and theories of Complementary.

The conclusion must be that something is something and something is nothing, from which we deduce that nothing is nothing and nothing is something. Beyond generalities which lead no-where, we allow logic as a guide but as the point of abstraction tends to the universal and infinite, logic breaks down and language loses its meaning. Then there is just the mystical Om, the point at infinity that has no dimensions.