

Being

Hegel occasionally gives the same title both to a chapter and to one of its sections or subsections. “Being” is the first chapter of “The Doctrine of Being,” which is divided into three sections. The first section is also called “Being,” though, given its content, “Pure Being” seems more apt. The subsequent two sections of this chapter are titled “Nothing” and “Becoming.”

The main idea proposed in this chapter is that both pure being and nothing refer to the complete absence of determination, and are the same for this reason. Consequently, they vanish into each other. In vanishing, being ceases to be, and nothing comes to be. This mutual vanishing is becoming, which shows a sign of distinction between being and nothing. This distinction leads to a contradiction, which causes becoming or vanishing to vanish. The result is a stable equilibrium in which being and nothing are preserved in a simple unity. This unity is determinate being. We are now to see how this happens logically, according to Hegel.

BEING

Hegel has already informed us that the system of logic, if it is to be truly scientific, must necessarily begin with pure being.¹ Once again, the reason for this is that the beginning must be pure immediacy, and so presuppositionless. Accordingly, “the beginning ... is to be taken as an unanalyzable ..., simple, unfilled immediacy, and therefore *as being*, as

complete emptiness" (SL 70/75/75).² Although Hegel denies this, this statement itself constitutes a presupposition.

Since a complete sentence would imply some sense of determination, Hegel begins with an incomplete sentence: "*Being, pure being*, without any further determination." As such, pure being is "indeterminate immediacy" (SL 77/82/82). This description of pure being implies that being is indeterminate immediacy on account of lacking further determination. On its own, this is an acceptable description of being as such. However, Hegel wants to reduce being to nothing, and this reduction depends on describing pure being as the *utter lack* of determination, and not simply as the absence of *further* determination.

Hegel adds that pure being "[1] is equal only to itself and also [2] not unequal in contrast to another." This is because (1) it has neither any "distinction within itself" nor (2) "any outwardly" distinction. Thus pure being (1) is self-identical, for it "would not be ... [this] purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it." This is a valid statement. However, it is not true that (2) pure being cannot be distinguished "from an other" (SL 77–8/82/82). By virtue of being "pure" or "simple," being is distinguishable both from a complex being and sheer nothing. Indeed, Hegel's description of pure being is an attempt to distinguish it from more determinate, complex being.

However, and once again, Hegel's aim here is to reduce pure being to sheer nothing. The first decisive step in this direction consists of incorrigibly ambiguous phrases: "There is *nothing* to be 'intuited'" in pure being; or, this "intuiting" itself "is pure," and so is "only ... empty thinking" (SL 78/82/82).

What Hegel means to say here is that, try as we may, pure being cannot be thought of or intuited, for "there is *nothing*" in it or about it that could be intuited. This, of course, is an absurd claim, which is debunked by the very fact that Hegel is here thinking about it. As it turns out, this unjustifiable claim is the source of Hegel's deduction of *nothing*. In other words, since "there is *nothing*" in it or about it that could be intuited, our "empty" intuition amounts to the thinking of nothingness. But, as Feuerbach rightly and rhetorically asks, "are simplicity and [self-] sameness ... not real determinations? Do I really think nothingness when I think simple [self-] sameness?"³ At any rate, Hegel's unjustifiable verdict is that pure being has no determination whatsoever: "it is pure indeterminateness and emptiness," and therefore "is in fact *nothing*—nothing more nor less than *nothing*" (SL 78/82–3/82).

Some of his able interpreters have tried to rescue Hegel from this deeply problematic start. According to John McTaggart, it is “clear” that Hegel’s equation of pure being and nothing does not amount to “the denial of Being.”⁴ A compatible reading is proposed by Herbert Marcuse, who argues that Hegel’s pure being refers to “the predicate of everything,” and so “does not point to an actual [specific] thing.” Accordingly, pure being is “nothing” in the sense that it “is no [specific] thing.”⁵ Others offer similar interpretations.⁶ However, as Stephen Houlgate rightly notes, these interpretations do not coincide with Hegel’s present intentions, for he maintains that “the very indeterminacy of being *itself* means that logically being is not even the being it is.”⁷ After all, Hegel says explicitly that, “because being is devoid of all determination [*Bestimmungslose*], it is ... not (affirmative) being but nothing” (*SL* 100/104/99).

Houlgate thinks Hegel’s reduction of pure being to nothing is logically defensible. In my view, his defense of Hegel in this regard ultimately depends on repeating—or taking for granted—Hegel’s own definition of pure being. In other words, his argument is mainly that, “insofar as ... *pure* being ... is so utterly indeterminate,” it “logically vanishes ... into nothing.”⁸ Walter T. Stace proposes a similar explanation: “being has no character and is utterly empty ...; it is therefore equivalent to *nothing*.” Therefore, “because [pure] being is by its very definition the absence of all determination, it is nothing.” He then goes on to confuse this meaning of pure being with incomplete predication, such as “S is –.”⁹ In so doing, Stace mistakenly equates the unstated predicate with nothing, and this nothing with the copula (i.e., is or being). The bottom line is that the legitimation of Hegel’s equation of pure being with nothing ultimately depends on accepting the definition of pure being as “the absence of all determination.” Once we accept this definition, the conclusion that pure being is the same as nothing follows. However, the definition is unacceptable.

It has been plausibly pointed out before that Hegel could have as easily begun his logic with nothing, rather than with pure being.¹⁰ This is true in the sense that Hegel’s pure being has turned out to be precisely nothing. However, this observation highlights an important problem, which is inherent in Hegel’s beginning: one cannot begin with sheer nothing, for beginning itself is a determination. In short, the claim that what we begin with is nothing, or turns out to be nothing, is also indefensible. Perhaps this is the reason why Hegel does not explicitly claim that he begins with nothing, even if this has turned out to be the case.

NOTHING

Hegel now proceeds to give the same description of pure being to pure nothing: “*Pure nothing* ... is simply equality with itself, perfect emptiness, lack of determination and content—undifferentiatedness in itself” (SL 78/83/82). Once again, it is flatly illogical to treat the “absence of all determination” as “equality with itself,” for self-equality or identity is a determination. Otherwise, and this is a big otherwise, this definition of nothing is acceptable.

As Plato rightly reminds us, there is no “way of describing [or conceiving] ... that which just simply is not” without “attributing being” to it.¹¹ Hegel similarly says that “to intuit or think nothing has ... a meaning ...; thus nothing *is* (exists) in our intuiting or thinking.” What Hegel ignores here is that the nothing we have thought about is no longer sheer nothing. Moreover, he goes on to claim that “to intuit or think nothing” is the same as “empty intuition and thought itself” (SL 78/83/82). At best, this is a very ambiguous statement, which seems to imply that *nothing* is meaningless, or that it has an empty meaning. Of course, the *intuited* “nothing” has a meaning; it refers precisely to complete absence of determination, though it is itself a determination of thought.

However, Hegel maintains that the intuition of nothing is “the same empty intuition or thought as pure being.” Now he seems to be saying that both nothing and pure being are the same as empty intuition or thought. This absurdly implies that intuition or thought could be nothing, rather than being the thought of nothing (or of pure being). More charitably read, he means to say that the thought of nothing is the same as the thought of pure being, in the sense that they both have the same meaning. Thus we reach the following ambivalent conclusion: “nothing is ... [1] the same determination, or [2] rather lack of determination, and is therefore altogether the same as what pure *being* is” (SL 78/83/82).

This is yet another sloppy reasoning. In order to be the same (assuming that they could even be the same), both being and nothing would have to be “the same determination.” But this would mean that they are not the total absence of determination Hegel says they are. In order to avoid this problem, Hegel adds that they are the same “lack of determination.” However, to lack determination is to lack both being and meaning. Under this assumption, logic itself vanishes. But Hegel continues...

Hegel maintains that nothing has meaning, even though it lacks determination. If we “so wished,” we could express it “merely by ‘not’” (SL 79/84/83). On the assumption that nothing and being are the same, Hegel’s present assertion amounts to the following proposition: *is* and (*is*) *not* are just the same, and thus have the same meaning. This further implies that it makes no difference “whether this house is or is not.” Hegel flatly denounces this implication on the ground that it references something concrete (i.e., “this house”). The use of *is* and *not* as the predicates of a concrete something, he says, “completely changes” the meaning they currently have, for we are here dealing with “the pure abstractions of being and nothing” (SL 82/87/85–6).

Hegel thus claims strangely that, as pure abstractions, being (*is*) and nothing (*not*) have the same meaning, or the same lack of meaning, though this is not true when they predicate something concrete. Moreover, “pure abstractions” must mean “total abstractions” in which no determination or distinction whatsoever is found.¹² For this reason, and in this sense, “*pure being* and *pure nothing* are ... the same” (SL 78/83/82).

Hegel’s equation of pure being and sheer nothing is simply indefensible, as his contemporaries made it known. He was well aware of this objection, against which he hurls the following insult: “If the result that being and nothing are the same appears striking or paradoxical in itself, then no further consideration needs to be given; rather should we be astonished by this astonishment, which is new to philosophy, and forgets that there are entirely different determinations in this science [of logic] from those found in ordinary consciousness” (SL 81/85/84). Hegel should have added that he alone possesses such an extraordinary consciousness.

In order to be able to move forward, I will now cease to question the validity of Hegel’s conclusion, which, again, is that “being and nothing are the same.”

BECOMING

Hegel’s discussion of *becoming* occurs in three subsections: “Unity of Being and Nothing,” “Moments of Becoming: Coming-to-be and Ceasing-to-be,” and “Sublation of Becoming.” This triadic division is meant to reflect the development and transcendence of the concept of becoming in three steps, namely, immediacy, (contradictory) determination, and sublation in which becoming gives way to *determinate being*.

UNITY OF BEING AND NOTHING

Hegel now takes it for granted that “*pure being* and *pure nothing* are ... the same.” But, says he, in isolation each term is untrue. Presently, this simply means that they cannot be thought of independently. Thus their truth is that “being has passed over into nothing and nothing into being” (SL 78–9/83/82).

This statement introduces another complication that will remain a problem throughout this section: How could there be becoming if being and nothing are the same? Or, if there is becoming, how could they be the same? In other words, by reducing pure being and nothing to the absence of determination, Hegel has eliminated the ground for their immanent distinction, and so for their transition into each other. Consequently, he cannot speak of transition or becoming,¹³ unless he introduces some sense of distinction between being and nothing.

Hegel solves this problem with an abrupt declaration: “The truth is that ... they are absolutely distinguished” (SL 79/83/83). Thus we now get the puzzling result, which states that two indistinguishable, equally vacuous terms are absolutely distinct. Yet, “they are unseparated and inseparable,” meaning that they are necessarily in unity (hence the title of this subsection). Here, Hegel is simply presupposing becoming, which is the unity of being and nothing (more precisely, not-being). In becoming, each term “immediately *vanishes in its opposite*.” The unstated reason for this mutual vanishing seems to be that, as soon as one thinks of pure being, it slips into nothing, and vice versa. Thus the “truth” of pure being and nothing is not that they are absolutely distinct; rather, it is “this movement [*Bewegung*] of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other.” This immediate vanishing is precisely “*becoming* [*Werden*],” which is “a movement in which both [being and nothing] are distinguished, but by a distinction which has been immediately resolved” (SL 79/83/83). In other words, “the true situation is that being as such is not firm and ultimate, but rather something that overturns dialectically into its opposite—which, taken in the same immediate way, is *nothing*” (EL 139).¹⁴

What is implied here is that their “distinction,” which we have introduced externally, is not yet conceivable, and so it spontaneously or “immediately” vanishes. This notion problematically implies that there is no becoming either, or it too is inconceivable, for becoming depends on the assumption that being and nothing are its distinct moments. But there is a Hegelian solution to this problem, which is another

double-speak: “*becoming* ... [is] the true result,” the “whole,” “which consists ... in this movement [in which] pure being remains immediate and simple ..., as does pure nothing.” In other words, “they are distinguished, but their distinction equally sublates [cancels] itself, and so is *not* [a distinction]” (SL 90/95/91–2).

Hegel ultimately thinks that the distinction between being and nothing is “impermissible” at this stage of logic. “*Those who wish to insist that being and nothing are distinct may also state in what ... [the distinction] consists,*” declares Hegel. Before we may even think about stating their distinction, Hegel reminds us of the Hegelian prohibition: “If being and nothing had any determinateness that distinguished them from each other, then ... they would be determinate being and determinate nothing [not-being], not the pure being and pure nothing that they still are presently. Their difference is therefore completely empty; each of them is indeterminate in the same way;” each is the same indeterminacy (SL 90–1/95/92; also see EL 139).

Here, by challenging his opponents, Hegel simply tries to hide his own problems. A main problem in this context is that he has no right to speak of becoming unless he admits that being and nothing are distinct determinations. At any rate, he insists that their distinction is “unsayable,” for it “does not exist in themselves but only in a third, [namely] in subjective *opinion* [*im Meinen*].” Thus, since the distinction is a “form of subjectivity,” it “does not belong to the present [immanent] exposition.” Should we, then, abandon the category of becoming? We cannot, reasons Hegel, for “the third, in which being and nothing have their subsistence, must also occur here.” In fact, “it has already occurred; it is *becoming*” (SL 91/95/92). The conclusion we must draw here is that Hegel simply presupposes *becoming*.¹⁵

THE MOMENTS OF BECOMING

Hegel takes it for granted now that becoming is a “*determinate* [*bestimmte*] unity in which both being and nothing *are*.” Since the presence of such a “*determinate* unity” depends on the presence of some sense of distinction and relation between being and nothing, he also takes it for granted that these are the distinct moments of becoming. As it turns out, instead of being *a* unity, “becoming ... contains being and nothing as two such [distinct] unities,” each one of which is assumed to be “a unity of being and nothing.” One of the unities “is being [both] as immediate and as relation

to nothing, and the other is nothing [both] as immediate and as relation to being" (SL 108/112/105). This conclusion easily follows from the definition of becoming as the unity of being and nothing, which are each other's relation (even though we are not supposed to have *relation* at this stage of logic).

Hegel maintains next that "the determinations in these [two] unities have unequal [i.e., distinct] values," which means that "becoming is ... in a double determination." How can two unities be both "of unequal values" and also contain the same two indistinguishable moments, namely, being and nothing? Hegel's answer is the following: "In one unity, *nothing* ... goes over into [being] ...; in the other ..., the determination starts from being which goes over into nothing." The former is "*coming-to-be* [*Entstehen*]" and the latter "*ceasing-to-be* [*Vergehen*]" (SL 108–9/112/105–6).¹⁶ Obviously, this distinction is externally imposed by Hegel, who has now arbitrarily introduced two distinct considerations, or points of departure, into becoming. In fact, the consideration of two opposite or unequal processes is repeated several times throughout "The Doctrine of Being." In each case, the opposition between the said processes is resolved with a simple solution, which is that they are both the same becoming.

This is also the case here. According to Hegel, as two "differentiated directions," these processes "penetrate and paralyze each other." This simply means that the said distinction immediately collapses, for "both are the same" in the sense that both are "*becoming*." This, he notes, is not a reciprocal interaction of the two separate movements, for they are not "externally" related to each other. Rather, "each sublates itself in itself and is the opposite of itself." In other words, by "*ceasing-to-be*, being passes over into nothing." However, "nothing is equally the opposite of itself, a transition into being, coming-to-be" (SL 109/112/106).

Even though this statement fails to describe the two processes as indistinguishable, Hegel now assumes that their distinction is sublated. To put this differently, the sublation of their distinction is obtained only from the claim that "each sublates itself in itself and is the opposite of itself." This claim simply ignores Hegel's own (unwarranted) assumption that these two sublations occur in "differentiated directions." At any rate, rather than a simple becoming, we now have sublated becoming.

SUBLATION OF BECOMING

Whereas the sublation considered in the previous subsection was, so to speak, “an occurrence” within becoming itself, the sublation we now have before us concerns the sublation of becoming, that is, its transition to determinate being (*Dasein*).

The first sublation is now called “equilibrium.” This equilibrium is the result of the sublation or cancellation of the (asserted) distinction between “coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be.” The result of the first sublation, or the cancellation of their distinction, then, is “*becoming* itself.” Thus becoming “settles into a calm unity,” for the distinction between its moments has vanished. However, Hegel at once leaps to the conclusion that this vanishing “is the vanishing of becoming or the vanishing of the vanishing itself.” In other words, “becoming is a ceaseless restlessness that settles into a stable result” (*SL* 109/113/106), which, upon settling into a stable result, is no longer becoming or vanishing.

As it turns out, becoming is self-contradictory, and this is why it destroys itself. On the one hand, “becoming only *is*, in so far as ... [being and nothing] are distinguished” in it. On the other hand, being and nothing are indistinguishable (*SL* 91/95/92). In other words, “becoming is the vanishing of being into nothing and of nothing into being ...; but at the same time [the presence of becoming] ... is due to their distinction.” Thus “becoming is, in itself, contradictory, because what it unites within itself [namely, distinction and non-distinction] are opposed [determinations]; but such a union destroys itself” (*SL* 109/113/106).¹⁷

Alas, the “contradiction” is imagined by Hegel, who should really be saying the following. Becoming depends on the distinction of its moments; since pure being and nothing are indistinguishable, it follows that there is as yet no becoming. Thus, rather than destroying itself, the becoming we have imagined earlier is unjustified. Moreover, even if we grant that becoming is self-contradictory, and destroys itself for this reason, it is not at all clear how Hegel obtains “a stable result,” namely, “*determinate being* [*Dasein*],” in which being and nothing are “preserved” as distinct moments (*SL* 109/113/106). In other words, Hegel also presupposes determinate being. As we are about to see, he deduces the said distinction and stability from the definition of determinate being, and not from becoming.

REMARK

This remark initially appears to be a clarification of the speculative meaning of “to sublimate [*Aufheben*],” though it quickly turns into a justification of determinate being by definitional fiat.

Hegel first observes that “to sublimate” has a double meaning: “it means to preserve, to maintain, and, at the same time, it means to cease, to ... end.” In other words, that which is sublated “is not thereby destroyed;” it “has only lost its immediacy,” and so is preserved, as mediated, in the “*result*.” Thus we now have the unjustified conclusion that being and nothing, since they have been sublated, are preserved in determinate being. He then admits that “this more particular determination is ... reflected” externally (*SL* 110-1/114/107). Yet, we take it as an immanently sublated result.

“The clearer meaning and expression which being and nothing obtain, now that they are *moments* [of determinate being], emerges from the consideration of determinate being as the unity in which they are preserved.” Hegel inadvertently admits here that the “more precise meaning” of these two moments is “ascertained from the consideration [or definition] of determinate being.” As opposed to becoming, “determinate being” is “a differently determined unity.” Consequently, being and nothing are “differently determined moments” in determinate being, and thus no longer have “the abstract meaning” they had in becoming (*SL* 111/115/107–8). In short, determinate being is basically derived both from its own definition and from the definition of sublated something.

In conclusion, as Charles Taylor also maintains, the “arguments” Hegel has given thus far “are unconvincing.” However, Taylor thinks that this verdict is mainly applicable to Hegel’s derivation of becoming, which “is not as solid as that of *Dasein*.” According to Taylor, the more “solid” derivation of the latter is based on the following reasoning: the “notion of pure being frustrates its own purpose” in the sense that “we cannot characterize reality with it alone.” Consequently, “we are forced to a notion of being as determinate, as having some quality and not another.” In short, Hegel maintains that “being can only be thought as determinate.”¹⁸

Taylor’s assessment is not entirely groundless, though it ultimately ignores the fact that Hegel thinks “determinate being emerges [dialectically or immanently] from becoming” (*SL* 112/116/109). In other words,

Hegel does not think that determinate being emerges as a consequence of abandoning the previous categories, though some of his claims imply that he does. As Houlgate points out, according to Hegel, “sheer indeterminacy *does* generate determinacy purely by itself.”¹⁹ What Houlgate overlooks in turn is that Hegel fails to make a convincing case for this claim.

NOTES

1. According to Adorno, “the choice of a starting point, of what comes first, is a matter of indifference in Hegel’s philosophy.” Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry W. Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 12. It is rather clear that this is not Hegel’s view (Adorno 1994).
2. The three page numbers included in the citation reference the following three texts: G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Theil: Die Objektive Logik. Erste Abtheilung: Die Lehre Vom Seyn*, ed. Leopold Von Henning (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1833) (Hegel 1833); G. W. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I. Erster Teil: Die Objektive Logik. Erstes Buch*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer und Karl M. Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969) (Hegel 1969b); *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1969) (Hegel 1969a).
3. Ludwig Feuerbach., “Towards a Critique of Hegelian Philosophy,” in *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence S. Stepelevich, 91–124 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 123–24, 108–112 (Feuerbach 1983).
4. Instead of denying being altogether, adds McTaggart, Hegel proposes “the absence of all [further] determination” of being, and this “is just what we mean by Nothing.” In McTaggart’s view, “the absence of all determination” means the absence of any predication. In this sense, the absence of determination really means “we are affirming nothing else” but pure being. John McTaggart, *A Commentary of Hegel’s Logic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 15–16 (McTaggart 1910).
5. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1960), 129 (Marcuse 1960).
6. See Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 232 (Taylor 1977). John Burbidge, *On Hegel’s Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), 39–40 (Burbidge 1981). Rosen also defends this view. Stanley Rosen, *The Idea of Hegel’s Science of Logic* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 113.

7. Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity* (Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2006), 278 (Houlgate 2006).
8. Ibid., 264.
9. Walter T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (New York, NY: Dover, 1955), 135–136 (Stace 1955).
10. Cf. Cynthia Willett, “The Shadow of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*,” in *Essays on Hegel’s Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni, 85–90 (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 88 (Willett 1990); George P. Cave, “The Dialectic of Becoming in Hegel’s *Logic*,” *The Owl of Minerva* 16, no. 2 (1985): 145–60, 159 (Cave 1985).
11. Plato, *Sophist*, trans. Nicholas O. White (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993), 238d–239c (Plato 1993).
12. According to Stace, Hegel’s pure being is “the highest possible abstraction” and, as such, it excludes “all determinations of any kind.” Therefore, it is “utterly empty,” and so is the same as pure nothing. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 135. At least on one occasion, Hegel seems to propose this view: pure being “is the *pure abstraction*, and hence it is *absolutely negative*, which when taken immediately, is *nothing*” (*EL* 136). However, he qualifies that what we have here is “not a mediated lack of determination, not the sublation of all determinacy” (*EL* 137). What this means is that the beginning of logic is made with the unmediated, not-sublated lack of determinacy. It is utterly *abstract*, rather than being the result of total *abstraction* from everything. Thus Pippin rightly claims that Hegel “explicitly” rejects “abstracting from every concrete determination ... a featureless ... being.” Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 184 (Pippin 1989). However, Hegel also entertains the thought that “one could abstract from everything [from everything], and when everything has been abstracted, *nothing* remains” (*SL* 100/104/99). This is an unthoughtful consideration, which implies that being and nothing are distinct, for the latter results from eliminating the former. In *EL*, he gives us another unthoughtful version of this total abstraction: “When we consider the entire world, and say simply that everything is, and nothing further, we leave out everything determinate, and, in consequence, have only absolute emptiness instead of absolute fullness” (*EL* 140–1). But, it must be reiterated, Hegel is not committed to this mediated abstraction.
13. Hegel informs us that “transition [*Übergehen*]” might be an inappropriate expression to be used synonymously with “becoming [*Werden*]” (*SL* 92/96/93). The implication here is that we are not yet concerned with real change between our terms, for such change would presuppose difference between them. However, Hegel neither can nor does avoid using the term “transition.”

14. All quotations and citations from *EL* are from G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets et al. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991) (Hegel 1991).
15. In the final analysis, as Cave aptly writes, “Hegel effects the transition ... of Being and Nothing ... into one another without first explicating the other dialectical component of this transition, namely, the difference of Being and Nothing... Consequently, the transition of Being into Nothing and Nothing into Being [which transition is Becoming] is itself ... unproven.” Cave, “The Dialectic of Becoming in Hegel’s *Logic*,” 160. For a similar criticism, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel’s Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 87 (Smith 1976); Stanley Rosen, *The Idea of Hegel’s Science of Logic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 136–137 (Rosen 2014). However, according to Houlgate, becoming “is not just taken for granted by Hegel but is what being and nothing both turn out logically [immanently] to be.” Houlgate, *The Opening of Logic*, 287.
16. Hegel similarly says in *EL* that “being is the passing into nothing and ... nothing is the passing into being” (*EL* 144).
17. As McTaggart clarifies, Hegel maintains here that “Being and Nothing only exist in Becoming as disappearing moments. But Becoming exists only in so far as they are separate [or distinct moments], for, if they are not separate [or distinct], how can they pass into one another?” McTaggart, *A Commentary on Hegel’s Logic*, 17. Also see Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, 293. However, these authors do not note that the so-called contradiction is false.
18. Taylor, *Hegel*, 232–233. Pippin offers a similar interpretation: Hegel deems the first three categories logically “impossible,” for they are collectively no more than “self-defeating thought of anything at all.” Thus Hegel ultimately “takes himself as providing a rational justification for necessarily thinking of being as a determinate or qualitative being, specifiable by determinate properties.” Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, 189.
19. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, 288–296.

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