

**In what sense, if any, is there movement in  
Hegel's system?**

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*To Heythrop College*

## Abstract

The essay is composed of two parts. The first part responds to Trendelenburg's objections (in his *Logische Untersuchungen*) to Hegel's derivation of the concept 'becoming' from the concepts 'pure being' and 'pure nothing' in the *Science of Logic*. To do this, I present an outline of the first steps of the *Logic*. The aim is to suggest that Trendelenburg and Hegel have different standards for what an adequate 'becoming' concept is. Trendelenburg emphasises the requirement that the concept be capable of capturing difference intrinsic to the content of the concept. Yet Hegel holds that the concept 'becoming' can be adequate despite the fact that it has no difference intrinsic to a content because it has no content at all. I point to Hegel's account of vanishing as the sense of movement in the opening stages of the logic. The second part is a constructive account of what I take concepts and some of the senses of movement to be in Hegel. It will draw on the account I have given of the opening stages of the logic. It will be based on some distinctions I find in §53 of the preface to the *Phenomenology*. Included as an appendix is my translation of the section from the *Logische Untersuchungen* that is in question.

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# Introduction to movement

This section provides a general introduction to movement in Hegel's work. I focus on outlining the nature of transitions in the system and in what sense they can be considered movements. This is followed in Part I by a discussion of 'becoming', which I take to be the most general sense of movement in the system and therefore fundamental to any understanding of such movement.

In Part I, I look at the readings of the derivation of becoming given by Beiser and Houlgate and try to rebut arguments against that derivation given by Trendelenburg. Trendelenburg's reading focuses on the *Encyclopaedia Logic* and I argue against it with details given in the larger version of the logic, the *Science of Logic*. This will lead me to differ from Houlgate and Beiser in my reading of the derivation.

Trendelenburg argues that if becoming is only composed of being and nothing, it cannot be an adequate concept of becoming, since the *Encyclopaedia* makes clear that its sole logical feature would be self-identity, precluding the inner difference that any concept of movement must have. However, in the larger *Logic*, Hegel is careful to emphasise that becoming is composed of being and nothing in their identity with one and another *and* their difference. I spend some time identifying where this difference could be, whilst respecting what is correct in Trendelenburg's reading. (My translation of Trendelenburg's text is in the appendix.)

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<sup>1</sup> My first thanks go to Professor Sebastian Gardner for his teaching and supervision. Both have provided me with a fruitfully high standard for what counts as textual attentiveness, philosophical rigour, and expressive clarity in dealing with some of the most insightful, creative, and verbose figures in the history of philosophy. Secondly, I would like to thank members past and present of UCL's *Science of Logic* reading group for our long, collective, ongoing struggle, which no number of books could properly replace. I especially thank our most committed members: Robin Halpin, Paul Healey, Simon Angseop Lee, Edmund P. Smith, and Philip Walden. Thirdly, to Marcello Garibbo and my *viva* examiners Professor Stephen Houlgate and Dr Katerina Deligiorgi, who read this text with care and have provided inestimably valuable constructive criticism. Their comments have already helped me begin to further develop the ideas and arguments found here. Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous funder of a grant, who made continuing this research possible when its future was uncertain.

The conclusion of Part I is that 'becoming', the most general sense of movement, is not in the *content* of thinking but rather in the *activity* of thinking. I draw out the consequences of this conclusion in Part II, which is a constructive account of different senses of movement found in §53 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

First, we turn to the general introduction to movement.

## §1 Thinking and non-spatiotemporal movement

We are all familiar with spatiotemporal movements, which are changes in something's position through time. In Hegel's work we find the notion of 'dialectical' movement. It's clear that, whilst Hegel holds that dialectic occurs within thinking and encompasses thinking through contradictory judgements of some subject-matter (à la Kant), it doesn't occur only in the thinking of the subject-matter, but rather also in things themselves.

According to Hegel, the systematic structure of thinking or *reason* is the systematic structure of being. As Hegel famously expresses this point: '[w]hat is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational' (*PR* 20).<sup>2</sup> Or, at greater length:

When it is said that thought as objective thought constitutes the core of the world, it may seem as if, by this, consciousness is supposed to be attributed to natural things. We feel a certain resistance to construing the inner activity of things as thinking, since we say that human beings distinguish themselves from all natural things through thinking. We would therefore have to speak of nature as the system of unconscious thoughts, a 'petrified intelligence', as Schelling puts it. Instead of using the expression *thoughts*, it would thus be better to speak of *thought-determinations*, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. In general, from what has been said so far, the logical dimension is to be sought as a system of thought-determinations for which the opposition of the subjective and the objective (in its ordinary sense) falls away. This

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<sup>2</sup> The titles of Hegel's works are abbreviated as indicated in the 'References' section.

meaning of thinking and its determinations is expressed more directly by the ancients when they say that *νοῦς* governs the world — or when we say that reason exists in the world and mean by it that reason is the soul of the world, residing in it, immanent in it as its ownmost, innermost, its universal. (EL §24 Addition 1)

Hegel considers dialectic to be an inherent part of reason. Indeed, as Hegel puts it, ‘dialectic makes up the very nature of thinking’ (EL §11) such that ‘dialectic’ is the concept of the activity of thinking (EL §41 Addition 1).<sup>3</sup> Now, since Hegel holds (1) dialectic is the constitution of the activity of thinking, (2) the latter’s systematic structure is *reason*, and (3) the structure of reason is equally that of thinking and being, it follows that dialectic is equally inherent in thinking and the objective subject matter of thinking. Hegel notes that ‘[d]ialectic is commonly regarded as an external and negative activity which does not belong to the fact itself’ (SL 21.40) but, he says,

this method is not something distinct from its subject matter and content — for it is the content in itself, *the dialectic which it possesses within itself*, which moves the subject matter forward. (SL 21.38; cf. EL §41 Addition 1)<sup>4</sup>

The ‘method’ in the system is not a set of rules for systematic thinking set out in advance and used to produce an adequate system, but rather the systematic process that is produced by the *self-development* of the subject matter in thought-determinations (see SL 21.8). This method is the true *content* of the *Logic* in that it is method that develops throughout the *Logic* from beginning to end. It is justifiably called a *method* because it is a process or procedure of thinking that is systematic and that produces knowledge.

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<sup>3</sup> Hegel actually says that dialectic is the *name* for the activity of thinking, but I take this to be the name for what it is constitutively such as calling milk ‘milk’ and not what it is accidentally such as calling Richard a scoundrel.

<sup>4</sup> I use the *Gesammelte Werke* pagination found in the margins of Di Giovanni’s English translation of the *Science of Logic*.



Hegel 'know[s] that it is the one and only true method' (SL 21.38) because true knowledge of some subject-matter (which turns out to be method itself in the Logic) is the cognition of its own development from its own internal dialectic and the method here is the process of *following* this *self*-development of the subject matter. Development is internal, dialectically produced, and goal-directed change: something changing into what it is as a result of its own internal contradictions.

This is an instance of a wider tendency to associate terms such as truth, contradiction, concept, judgement, and inference that are traditionally associated with thinking about being and beings with the being and beings themselves (Inwood, 1992: 16). Hegel holds 'that thought is not distinct from things, but is embedded in them and responsible for their nature and development' (Inwood, 1992: 16). As Inwood puts it,

For Hegel, dialectic does not involve a dialogue either between two thinkers or between a thinker and his subject-matter. It is conceived as the autonomous self-criticism and self-development of the subject-matter, of, e.g., a form of consciousness or a concept. (1992: 81)

For Hegel, '[t]he dialectic of objective things *must* be internal to them, since they can only grow and perish in virtue of contradictions actually present in them' (Inwood 1992: 82, emphasis added). Since true knowledge is cognition of something's development and development is internal, dialectically-produced, goal-directed change, true knowledge of anything requires cognition of its internal contradictions and how they produce some goal-directed change within that thing. Dialectic, as the activity of thinking, is thus equally a part of thinking and of real things, since both change and develop *rationally* in that they change and develop in response to internal contradictions.

As such, it is clear that movement or change in the system is not limited to space and time, its occupants, or spatiotemporal concepts (all three of which I now refer to as 'the spatiotemporal') with thought a static outside observer thereof. Movement or change is also in thinking and it is of the *exact same kind* as that found in the spatiotemporal. Dialectical

movement, as seen above, is a constitutive element of every part of scientific knowledge, including the *Science of Logic*. The concepts used and related in the *Science of Logic* are logically prior to and therefore independent of those of the *Philosophy of Nature*, which is where space and time appear, though they are not thereby static and observational of movement and change.

Dialectical movement is meaningful in abstraction from the spatiotemporal. This movement is *atemporal*. It is difficult to comprehend how anything *atemporal* can move. A movement, change, or development is a process, which is, by definition, temporal. There is one easy sense in which there is process in the atemporal system. My thoughts about conceptual truths such as the sum of the angles of a triangle being  $180^\circ$  are not only about particular triangles, for if no triangle had ever been drawn or otherwise formed the conditional would still be true that if  $x$  is a shape with three corners, then  $x$ 's internal angles total  $180^\circ$ . It is thus not necessarily (and so constitutively) a truth about any actual occupant of space-time. Rather, it is a true conditional, one based on modality, or what is and is not necessary or possible. Modality is not constitutively spatiotemporal, even if it necessarily conditions every occupant of the spatiotemporal. Modal truths can be cognised in abstraction from the spatiotemporal in the form of conditionals.

Similarly, processes can be cognised as conditionals: if being, then nothing. One can cognise the rational implications of such-and-such. In short, rational inference is a non-spatiotemporal process. One might object, however, that inference is possible only because the thinking mind is temporal. Thinking through the stages of an inference is itself a temporal process. Yet, whilst a temporal mind follows an inference temporally, it need not do so with reference to any particular spatiotemporal occupant.

Some philosophers have conceived of thinking as atemporal, despite the temporality of individual thinkers with reference to an atemporal God and yet if thinking can move it is puzzling how it is atemporal but if it is performed by a temporal being it is puzzling how it can be atemporal. Rational inferences are constitutively nowhere, even

when exemplified or instantiated by *reality* or the *thinking mind*. So, we can say that the concept 'movement' as used in the *Science of Logic* is, though never assessed as a category, an inference-like relation between concepts and so this 'movement' has a wider sense than 'spatiotemporal movement'.

## §2 Restful unity as the result of every dialectical movement

There have been extensive discussions of many of the transition concepts we find in Hegel's works. Examples include 'becoming', 'vanishing', 'passage', 'passing over', 'disappearance', and 'transgression of limit'.<sup>5</sup> The most well known transition concept from Hegel's work is 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*) and its verbal form 'sublate' (*aufheben*).<sup>6</sup> *Aufheben* has three main senses: '(1) "to raise, to hold, lift up"; (2) "to annul abolish, destroy, cancel, suspend"; (3) "to keep, save, preserve"' (Inwood, 1992: 283). Since it is the most well known transition concept, looking at the sense in which *aufheben* is or involves movement will be instructive.

*Aufhebung* is the integration of 'double transitions into a single, unified concept', according to Burbidge (2007: 90). Formulated slightly differently, *Aufhebung* is the 'collapsing of two reciprocal movements in equilibrium into a peaceful unity' (Burbidge, 2007: 90). An example of this is the unity of 'quality' and 'quantity' in 'measure'. As Hegel puts it,

for the totality to be *posited*, a *double* transition is required, not only the transition of one determinateness into the other, but equally the transition of this other into the first, going back into it. Through the first transition, the identity of the two is present at first only *in itself*: quality is contained in quantity, but the latter still is only a one-sided

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<sup>5</sup> These are often discussed in terms of 'movement'. Consider the following quotes. 'The name that fits such a movement is "becoming"' (Burbidge, 2007: 91). 'Close observation shows that beings are always engaged in sublating a "not" or lack. The least complex form of this movement is "becoming"' (de Boer, 2000: 229). 'It is this movement — this passing-over or disappearance' (Burbidge, 2007: 90; cf. Burbidge, 1993: 96).

<sup>6</sup> These are also considered in terms of movement: '[t]he movement consists in the fact that a one-side moment sublating itself and passes over into its opposite' (Adler, 1842 – as translated in Stewart, 2003: 401). See also Crooks (1997: 278).

determinateness. Conversely, that quantity is equally contained in quality, that it is equally also only as sublated, this results in the second transition, the going back into the first determinateness. This remark regarding the necessity of the *double* transition is everywhere of great importance for scientific method. (SL 21.320)

In the transition of 'quality' to 'quantity' it is shown that 'quality is contained in quantity' and any identity of the two is 'only implicitly present'. So, the transition from quality to quantity shows that any quality is potentially identified as a quantity. For example, any something (a quality) can be one or two or three (quantified). The second transition is that 'quantity' is also contained in 'quality'. The transition from quantity to quality shows that any quantity is potentially identified as a quality. For example, a ratio (a quantity) is so-and-so such that 'the determinateness of either quantum lies reciprocally in the determinateness of the other' (has determinate qualities) (EL §674).

With this, the identity of 'quality' and 'quantity' is no longer implicit but rather explicit. The identity is 'measure': a quantum identified with, or applied to, a quality (Burbidge, 2007: 201). The identifiability of quality and quantity is only implicit in quality- and quantity-concepts. When qualifying ('this is a something, not an other'), it is not necessary to *explicitly* quantify. When quantifying ('these are two'), it is not necessary to *explicitly* assess the qualities of quanta. In the concept of 'measure', both qualification and quantification are necessarily *explicit* and therefore 'measure' is a concept that identifies both. For example, the measure of temperature (a 'specifying measure') is the qualitative identification of a quality (EL §730).

The relation of the quality and quantity to one another is distinct in different forms of measure. In specifying measures such as temperature, for instance, the quantification is a uniform scale (where (a) the difference between every unit is the same and (b) every temperature is quantifiable

on the scale<sup>7</sup>) and yet the change in the temperature itself is non-uniform. This is shown by the fact that the temperature of some medium (such as the air) can be constant whilst the occupants of that medium (such as plants, animals, or rocks) can vary wildly. As Hegel puts it,

the particular bodies in the medium differ in the way they absorb the temperature, for through their immanent measure they determine it as received from outside themselves and the change of temperature in any one of them does not correspond in a direct ratio with that of the medium or of the other bodies among themselves. (*EL* §730)

Burbidge describes the transitions from quality to quantity and quantity to quality as movements (Burbidge, 2007: 90). As a general observation, reciprocal movements tend to collapse into peaceful unities (with the necessity of this demonstrated in each instance, but never generally) (Burbidge, 2007: 90). *Aufhebung* is the resulting peaceful unity. As such, the transition from quality to quantity and that from quantity to quality are movements. Measure, however, is not a movement, but a peaceful unity, a 'result'. As such, we can draw some conclusions. Movement is a necessary antecedent to any *Aufhebung*, though not a feature of the peaceful unity. All *Aufhebungen* are peaceful unities. No *Aufhebung* is itself a movement.

Except it is not true that anything that is an *Aufhebung* is thereby not a movement. Throughout the *Logic*, we find examples of process-concepts (and therefore movement-concepts, since any process requires movement) that are *results*. The 'relation of repulsion and attraction' is a process and it is the result of 'exclusion of the one' and 'the one one of attraction'. 'Affirmative infinity' is also a process that is the result of 'the infinite in general' and 'the alternating determination of the finite and the infinite'.

Furthermore, some of these process-results are the results of other process-concepts. 'Action and reaction' is a process that is the result of 'formal causality' and 'the determinate relation of causality'. Various

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<sup>7</sup> '[T]he alteration of the temperature proceeds on the scale of an arithmetical progression, increasing or decreasing uniformly' (*EL* §730).

sylogisms, which require rational inferences (themselves transitions), are results of others in the 'Syllogism' section of the *Logic*.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the 'peacefulness' that results from some prior concepts, including concepts of movement, is sometimes a movement and sometimes not.

*Aufheben*, the verbal form of *Aufhebung*, however, is a concept of movement. It is used by Hegel to refer to 'what happens in each transition on its own' as well as the double transition before it collapses (Burbidge, 2007: 90). 'Being', for instance, "sublates itself" in moving to nothing, and vice versa' (Burbidge, 2007: 90). In the case of being and nothing, Burbidge notes, 'thinking pure indeterminate being turns out to be thinking nothing; and when we think pure nothing, indeterminate nothing *is* in our mind so that this empty thought is the same as the one we had when thinking pure being' (Burbidge, 2007: 90). Being sublating itself is a movement and nothing sublating itself is a movement.

The relationship of being and nothing is reciprocal in two ways. Firstly, being transitions into nothing and nothing into being. Secondly, the transition itself is identical. Thinking pure indeterminate being *turns out to be* thinking pure nothing. Likewise, thinking pure nothing *turns out to be* thinking pure indeterminate being.<sup>9</sup> This 'turning out to be' is what Hegel calls 'vanishing'. Being and nothing vanish in that, through thinking either of these thoughts alone, one turns out to be thinking the other and *not* the first, and yet not because one has thought anything in particular *about* the first. There is no middle term or mediation of either one and its other. The first has simply *vanished*.

Hegel is clear that vanishing is at least sometimes an instance of sublating. The difference between being and nothing itself vanishes or 'the distinction between them *is*, but equally *sublates itself* and *is not*' (SL 21.79).

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<sup>8</sup> It is also not true that *Aufhebung* is the integration of 'double transitions into a single, unified concept', since there are a few examples of *Aufhebungen* being double-concepts, including 'action and reaction' and 'form and content'. That is, unless (1) 'action and reaction' and 'form and content' are not themselves *Aufhebungen* much as 'becoming', whilst being constituted by being and nothing, is not their *Aufhebung* or (2) each of these, e.g. 'action and reaction', *is* a single, unified concept.

<sup>9</sup> Though I will later highlight the importance of the *asymmetry* between these movements.

This transition of vanishing is what Hegel calls 'becoming' (Burbidge, 2007: 90-91). Becoming is not an *Aufhebung*, since it is not a collapse of two reciprocal movements. It is rather the concept of these movements. Being sublating itself and nothing sublating itself are both instances of becoming.

The eventual collapse of these reciprocal movements (with the collapse of the difference or purity of being and nothing) only comes in *Dasein*, which is the vanishing of the vanishing itself, the difference between the two referred to above. As Houlgate puts it,

[b]eing and nothing start out by vanishing, but precisely by virtue of vanishing into one another they show themselves to be indistinguishable and so no longer to be purely *other* than one another at all. This means that there can no longer be any vanishing or transition of *one* into the *other*. That in turn means that there can no longer be any becoming. All there can be is the undifferentiatedness and 'sameness' of the two. (Houlgate, 2006: 290)

As Hegel puts it, '[t]heir vanishing is therefore the vanishing of becoming, or the vanishing of the vanishing itself. Becoming is a ceaseless unrest that collapses into a quiescent result' (SL 21.93). Becoming is pure being's vanishing into pure nothing and pure nothing into pure being. Yet when they become indistinguishable, they are no longer *pure*. They are mixed up with one another. As such, they are no longer opposed. As such, there is no vanishing and so no becoming (Houlgate, 2006: 291). This indistinguishability of pure being and pure nothing is the *Aufhebung* of pure being and pure nothing and is called *Dasein*.

### **§3 Concepts' intelligibility through internal contraries**

In many of the discussions in the secondary literature, it seems that any of the concepts studied in the system (by which I mean those that have their own sections) can be characterised as 'a movement'. To characterise a concept as a movement sometimes seems to be to characterise its process of synthesising its internal contraries (its 'dialectic'). The following

comment exemplifies this, where one truly thinks the concept in question only if one thinks both of its 'two sides': its being (identity) and not-being (difference).

The difficulty of death remains that thought must not forget the concept's two sides: it both is and is not — for only the movement of contradiction, the becoming of their identity and difference, is true. (Haas, 2000: 226)

To truly think with a concept is to think the movement of that concept's contradiction. This means neither specifying what something *is* nor specifying what it *isn't* is sufficient to determine a being in thought. Rather, determining a being in thought is thinking what it is *and* what it isn't. Yet, a list of these will not do. Rather, to determine a being in thought is to think the *movement* of contradiction or 'becoming' of their identity and difference. I thus read the 'becoming of their identity and difference' as the becoming in which we find the two sides of the concept (call it A-B-becoming) as constituted by two kinds of relation. The first is a relation of identity. The second is a relation of difference.

It might be thought that I have chosen the unnatural reading of the genitive. The natural reading is that it refers to a process whereby the two sides come about or change, but does not constitute their identity. My reading of the genitive suggests that it is rather a process that is constituted by these two relations: of identity and of difference. I need not deny the first sense in holding to the second. The second will be more central to my explanatory procedure.<sup>10</sup>

An account of the concept in question is only true if it accounts for the 'becoming' of these contraries and the 'movement' of contradiction. That is, it is only true if it accounts for becoming as constituted by these two sides (A and B) through two contrary kinds of relations: one of

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<sup>10</sup> Hegel sometimes seems to use the genitive so as to imply both implied senses and intentionally suggest two different things at once, such as the 'need of philosophy' implying both what philosophy needs and something / someone's need for philosophy (Harris's footnote at Hegel, *Diff.*: 89n7).



identity ( $A=B$ ) and one of difference ( $\sim(A=B)$ ). An account of the concept would not be true if these two sides were not shown to constitute their becoming through these two contrary relations. It is clear, then, that the thought of these contraries are not some mistake in thinking about becoming. Rather, both contrary relations are treated as having explanatory value together.

As accounted for above, it is the relations between the two sides that are contraries: identity and difference. Often, though, the contraries are not just contrary relations but also the contrary terms of the relations. So, in the beginning of the Logic, pure being and pure nothing are shown to be identical yet different.<sup>11</sup> These two contrary relations constitute their relation. Yet the terms themselves (pure being and pure nothing) are also contraries. Indeed, this is visible in the quote above. The 'two sides' of the concept of death are the specific senses in which it 'is' and 'is not'.

What this presupposes is some way in which contrary relations (and, in most cases, contrary terms) constitute a 'movement'. Whether the movement is presupposed as that which we're trying to explain or not does not affect the point. The question of why the terms and their relations constitute a movement is of how they can explain the sense in which 'becoming' is a movement. They must be able to constitute this movement in themselves (without reference to becoming) to be genuinely explanatory.

What makes this question particularly important is that it seems that any concept is to be explained in this way, the way in which movement is explained. Any concept is to be explained in terms of these contrary relations of identity and difference and often with contrary terms as the relata. This is how movements or concepts of movement are to be explained, since the configuration of relations itself constitutes movement. If any concept is to be explained with these explanatory criteria, and these explanatory criteria are sufficient for movement (in constituting it), then an adequate account given for any concept will imply that it is a

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<sup>11</sup> To be discussed in detail later in Part I.

movement. As the author later puts it, '[t]he contradiction of death [...] must be thought as a movement' (Haas, 2000: 226).

So, as I see it, Hegel's accounting for concepts as movements is to be justified by him holding that any adequate account of movement must be accounted for in terms of a pair of contraries, most generally being and not-being, related in two contrary ways, most basically identity and difference. Why must an adequate account of something's movement be constructed in this way?

As Haas puts it earlier in the book, '[m]ovement' is 'the movement [...] of conceptual thought' and 'Hegel's way of thinking the logic of contradiction, the two-sided concept' (Haas, 2000: 89). 'Movement' then refers to a process of conceptual thinking. It is also, as we have seen, the way in which any constitutively contradictory concept is to be accounted for (and so all concepts, at least considered metaphysically). The contradiction that constitutes death 'must be thought as a movement' (Haas, 2000: 226). So, the way in which a constitutively contradictory concept is to be accounted for is in terms of a reference to a process of conceptual thinking.

I take it that the thought is not just that this is *a* way Hegel has chosen to think the logic of contradiction but also that Hegel thinks this is the *right* way to think this logic. So, we take 'movement' to be a process of thinking required to give an adequate account of concepts constituted by (and thereby synthesising) contraries. It can seem, from this, that movement is a *process of thinking about* certain determinations or concepts. Yet Hegel sometimes suggests that *that which thought is about* — the *content* — itself moves.

Consider 'the movement of being itself' (SL 21.66) or the 'movement' of the finite and the infinite (SL 21.135). '[P]ure self-consciousness', too, 'is a movement within pure concepts' (Phen. §574). 'Purpose [...] is movement' (Phen. §22). Universality is movement (Phen. §590). In these cases, it is not always clear whether we are referring to the process of thinking or its content. As we have seen, this ambiguity has

some reason behind it. In the case of thinking, the movement is the movement of both the process of thinking and the content itself.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This can lead to some difficulties when the concept under investigation is a concept that we would ordinarily recognise to be a concept *of* movement or *of* something that is constitutively processual. The concept of becoming (*SL* 21.69-96) and locomotion (*PN* §§260-261), for instance, are both of these. Is the movement of these concepts that of the process of thinking about them or is it that these concepts are *about* movements? Or is it both, as seems to be the case in the examples of thinking about mental contents above? Or is it something else?

## Part I

### *Being, Nothing, and their Unity in Movement*

#### **§4 Introducing Trendelenburg's arguments against the derivation of becoming**

I want to use Trendelenburg's objections against the possibility of deriving concepts of movement in an *a priori* system to provoke and guide discussion on the sense in which there is movement in Hegel's system. My focus will be on his challenge to Hegel's derivation of *becoming* from pure being and pure nothing. As what I consider to be the most general sense of movement in the *Logic*, the sense in which becoming is movement will be a good guide as to at least one important sense in which there is movement in the system more generally.

I will start this essay by presenting a reading of the opening sections of the logic, which Trendelenburg quotes in giving his objections. As I will show, Trendelenburg argues that Hegel's concept of becoming is not a concept of movement. There are four reasons we can draw from Trendelenburg's text. Firstly, Hegel's concept 'becoming' is and only is the concept of the unity of pure being and pure nothing. Pure being and pure nothing have no content and so neither can be about becomings. Nor can their unity, since that unity just *is* their contentlessness.

Secondly, pure being and pure nothing have no inner differentiation. That unity is constituted by the *identity* of the concepts of pure being and pure nothing *qua* contentless. As such, they must be concepts *about* logical self-identity. As Trendelenburg puts it, '[s]ince both pure being and also not-being express rest, so consequently, if the unity of both set out should come to be [in thought], the next task of thinking can only be to find a resting unification [outside of thought]' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38).

Thirdly, contentlessness does not permit differentiation in (or between) concepts. So, the unity of pure being and pure nothing cannot, by Hegel's account of pure being and pure nothing, permit inner differentiation. As such, the concept of becoming does not permit inner differentiation. Yet inner differentiation is required for a concept of movement. A concept of movement must be analysable into being and nothing. As the day becomes, that becoming must be analysable into it *being* and *not-being* (yet). So, Hegel's concept of becoming is not a concept of movement since it cannot capture this. It ought not, given that it is the *identity* of being and nothing, be analysable into any kind of extended process in which one can pass into another. From this conclusion, Trendelenburg draws another: it is not an adequate concept of becoming.

Fourthly, Trendelenburg seems to hold that a concept of movement must be a concept in which one thing or part has an impetus to produce another in which its movement continues. However, neither being nor not-being have the impetus to do this in becoming since they are wholly identical. If they are not wholly identical, they are distinct, and Hegel doesn't show how either one in its distinctness leads to the other. So, becoming is inadequate as a concept of movement.

Trendelenburg's arguments are valid and his textual reading has merits, which I will highlight alongside my counter-arguments. My main point will be to highlight that Hegel's aim with the concept 'becoming' is not to provide a concept *of* movement in the sense Trendelenburg wants. Hegel's aim is to account for becoming as a concept *with* movement. As I understand it, a concept with movement is one such that when and only when thinking thinks with it, the thinking that thinks with it is movement. A concept *with* movement is not necessarily a concept *of* movement. A concept that entails the movement of thought need not be *about* any movement, especially not a spatiotemporal one of the kind that Trendelenburg seems to demand.

As I understand it, all of Trendelenburg's objections rest on the thought that if the concept 'becoming' is to be adequate it must be capable of being about becomings. I will hold that the distinction between these two roles for movement in conceptuality — thinking with a movement-

concept and thinking of movement with a concept — allows for (1) Trendelenburg to be right about 'becoming', that it is not a concept *of* movement and (2) Hegel to defend the sense in which his concept 'becoming' (a) *has* movement, or is a concept *with* movement and (b) is still adequate as the concept 'becoming'.

The distinction allows Hegel to agree that there is no differentiation in the content of the concept 'becoming' whilst still holding there to be differentiation at the level of the form of the concept, what I take to be the form of the activity of thinking. This, in turn, allows the concept 'becoming' the intrinsic differentiation that is required for movement to be possible on Trendelenburg's own standards, on Hegel's, and on any common sense 'becoming' concept. The required distinction between being and nothing can be made at the level of the activity of thinking rather than the content of thinking.

The concept 'becoming' cannot, to be clear, be a concept *of* the process of thinking through pure being and pure nothing, since then it would be a concept with content, *of* becoming. Rather, if there is to be movement then the concept 'becoming' must itself *be* that movement, that process of thinking. The sense in which a concept *is* an act, for Hegel, will help to make the grounds for the possibility of this clear. The concept 'becoming' is still adequate by Hegel's standards, despite not being a concept *of* movement. Hegel does not need movement in the content of becoming.

Firstly, the concept 'becoming' does not need to be *about* movement to effect the unity and difference of pure being and pure nothing that Hegel needs it to. With this, the criticisms outlined above fail. Secondly, we who are trying to understand Hegel do not need it to understand how the concept of becoming develops further in the opening stages of the *Logic*. I don't intend to placate adherents to Trendelenburg's understanding of what the concept 'becoming' requires. I will have argued that Hegel and Trendelenburg demand different things of the concept 'becoming'.

Insofar as I only show that Hegel's demands for this concept are different to Trendelenburg's, I will not have shown that Hegel meets

Trendelenburg's demands. Indeed, I will have accepted that he can't meet those demands (at least not in this logical context or with regard to the concept 'becoming'). I will have accepted that Hegel's concept 'becoming' cannot be a concept *of* movement in the way Trendelenburg seems to demand it to be.

In seeing how Hegel can respond to Trendelenburg, we will nonetheless have gained a more precise understanding of why Trendelenburg's demands are wrong and thereby the sense of movement in the system. We will have seen that 'becoming' is a concept *with* movement, but not *of* movement. The conclusion we are led to by Trendelenburg will not simply be dismissed. I take it to be a genuine insight that Hegel's concept 'becoming' *cannot* be a concept *of* movement given its derivation.

This might all provide fuel for Trendelenburg's fire. The Hegelian system is so locked in pure thinking that its concept 'becoming' cannot be about anything, not about the becomings we see all around us but only of thought's immanent activity — 'this concrete intuition commanding life and death, cannot emerge' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38).

## §5 The difference puzzle

### *The puzzle's first part: there is no difference*

Trendelenburg starts his objection by noting that 'it is the basic idea of the Hegelian dialectic that pure thought presuppositionlessly generates and cognises the moments of being out of its own necessity' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 36). He then quotes from Hegel's *Science of Logic* and *Encyclopaedia Logic*. The quotes are as follows<sup>13</sup>:

A beginning is *logical* in that it is to be made in the element of a free, self-contained thought, in *pure knowledge*. (SL 21.54)

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<sup>13</sup> These are the translations of the relevant passages in the Cambridge translations of *SL* and *EL*.

To which Trendelenburg adds 'thought begins only with itself'  
(Trendelenburg, 1870: 37). Then:

*Pure being* constitutes the beginning, because it is pure thought as well as the undetermined, simple immediate, and the first beginning cannot be anything mediated and further determined. (EL §86)

Now this pure being is a *pure abstraction* and thus the *absolutely negative* which, when likewise taken immediately, is *nothing*. (EL §87)

Conversely, *nothing*, as this immediate, self-same, is likewise *the same* as *being*. The truth of being as well as of nothing is therefore the *unity* of both; this unity is *becoming*. (EL §88)

Then, Trendelenburg notes that the concept 'becoming' is analysable into being and nothing. 'While [...] the day is becoming, it already *is* and *is not*' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38). The point here seems to be that in that single event — the dawning of the day — the day that is the subject of this becoming both *is* and *is not*.

I now want to outline some features of how I think Hegel deals with concepts. Anything can be part of the content of many different concepts. Language is part of the content of the different concepts 'prose' and 'letter'. 'Prose' refers to language in its ordinary form, without metrical or otherwise poetic structure. That's what prose is. 'Letter' refers to written, typed, and/or printed linguistic communication. That's what a letter is.

Conceptual emptiness is not only part of the content of pure being and pure nothing, but exhausts their content. Not only do pure being and pure nothing *have* the same empty content, but they both *are and only are* the concepts of that same empty content. This raises the question of what differentiates the two concepts.<sup>14</sup> Hegel must also allow for strange

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<sup>14</sup> A longer discussion would address the similarities of this position to the position, found in Frege (1892), that there is no difference between 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' at the level of reference, but there is one at the level sense. The



thought. He must allow that the same content can be exhaustively captured with *contrary* concepts. That is, empty content is referred to by and only by the concepts 'pure being' and 'pure nothing'.

Again, the question comes up of what differentiates the two concepts. Also, why are *two* concepts required for a single content if they are only for that content? All of this throws up the question of what logical feature of them legitimates the common-sense position that being and nothing are contraries, something central to my concerns in this thesis for constructing a response to Trendelenburg's challenge.

This is the puzzle of the missing difference. Trendelenburg sees Hegel holding becoming to be just the identity of being and nothing. Yet, a concept of becoming must be constituted by *difference*, too. Hegel struggles to make sense of how becoming can be, constitutively, an identity *and* a difference. He argues that pure being and pure nothing are identical as pure abstractions (EL §87) and that this identity of pure being and pure nothing constitutes the unity of the concept 'becoming' (EL §88).

Pure being and pure nothing are only identical insofar as they are void of internal differentiation. This mutual emptiness is the unity that Hegel claims constitutes the unity of 'becoming'. In fact, as we see above, Hegel puts it in a stronger way: the unity of being and nothing *is* becoming (EL §88). Trendelenburg continues:

Pure being, self-same, is rest; nothing — the self-same — is also rest. How, out of the unity of two resting representations, has a moving becoming come to be? (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38)

The stipulation that pure being and pure nothing are rest is found in neither the *Science of Logic* nor the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. In fact, Hegel seems to suggest they are *not* at rest in the third remark to the first section of 'Becoming'. There, he says that, '[t]ransition is the same as becoming except

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concept of 'Hesperus' and the concept of 'Phosphorus' both refer to the planet Venus. They have the same referent. Not only that, but they *only refer* to Venus. There are similarities between the two positions that I won't have space to discuss. In any case, I won't take Frege's discussion as a guide here.

that the two terms, from one of which the transition is made to the other, are represented in it more as at rest [*mehr als [...] ruhend*] (SL 21.81). 'More as at rest'. The 'more' here might suggest that more *emphasis* is put on the rest of two terms when expressing their transitional relation than is expressed in their becoming relation. That at least has the implication that the *emphasis* on rest in 'becoming' is less than that in 'transition'.

On a stronger reading, though, the claim is that rest is just not a feature of becoming, as it is of transition. In transition, we have a move from one term at rest to another. In becoming there is no such transition. Yet becoming's moments are being and nothing (they are all it can be analysed into). So being and nothing are not at rest. The terms of becoming are inseparable and they are so *in their becoming one another*. As such, the terms cannot be thought through on their own in abstraction from this becoming.

Wilkinson (2000: 268n6) holds that 'Trendelenburg dogmatically asserts' that pure being and pure nothing are rest. I disagree. Trendelenburg seems to reveal his rationale for holding that pure being and pure nothing are at rest in the quote: 'pure being, self-same, is rest; nothing — the self-same — is also rest' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38). Both pure being and pure nothing are rest *qua self-identical* ('self-same'). This is the reading of the rationale given by Beiser in a recent discussion. He expresses Trendelenburg's point as follows:

Hegel implies that being is unchanging because he says that it is 'identical to itself', and so forever the same; he also implies that nothingness is unchanging, because it too is 'identical to itself' and so forever the same. But if being and nothingness are both unchanging and forever the same, how do we get the concept of becoming from them? Both concepts exclude the idea of change, and we cannot get change or becoming from something that does not change or become. If being is static, and if nothingness is static, their synthesis should also be static. (Beiser, 2013: 62-3)

The argument would thus be that since pure being is self-identical and anything self-identical is at rest, therefore, pure being is at rest. This draws from claims that Hegel does make as to the self-identity of the content of pure being and pure nothing, the implication that, despite Hegel never explicitly saying so, the contents of the concepts of pure being and pure nothing are 'at rest'. In quoting Trendelenburg, Wilkinson elides the 'self-same' qualification. With Beiser, I take this elided qualification to be the rationale for the claim that they are 'rest'.

Though characterising being and nothing as 'at rest' is without textual basis, the self-identity point stands. If pure being and pure nothing are both self-identical, and they are unified precisely insofar as they are self-identical, then their unity is pure self-identity. Yet Trendelenburg holds that any adequate concept of becoming has some inner differentiation feature, too.

Becoming as articulated by Hegel is and only is a concept of the identity of being and nothing. Yet if becoming is constituted by identity alone then one cannot do justice to the necessary feature of any becoming, a discernible difference between the being and not-being of the subject of change. What if one breaks down becoming into its moments?

[W]hen we find these two moments in becoming by separating them it is not at all understood how these concepts can be in one another. The one who distinguishes between trunk, branches, and leaves has not solved the puzzle of how the parts can come into being from a common (source) and live through another. (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38)

This passage uses the physical architecture of a process as an example. A trunk carries water through branches to its leaves, but it these parts themselves won't reveal the processes they take part in, nor their co-dependence. Likewise, analysing becoming into 'being' and 'nothing', doesn't reveal a process, but parts. Such analysis might work with non-process concepts. 'Bachelor' analyses into 'man' and 'unmarried' and 'unmarried man' is what 'bachelor' means. Whilst analysing a tree into its parts will furnish the architecture of its living processes (what the process

moves through), it will not itself furnish the process. Likewise, whilst becoming is a movement through being and nothing, it is not itself just being and nothing.

Analysis of the concept of becoming into being and nothing, deconstructing this identity by considering being and nothing separately is not enough to show how they can 'live through [one] another' in the concept 'becoming' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38). That is, it does not show that either has or even can have the impetus to pass over into the other in a movement. The trunk has the impetus to pass over into the branches and the leaves. Considering being and nothing *on their own* is not enough to grasp a single process in which these moments only make sense as parts of a 'passing over into one another'.

So, even if Hegel could show a difference between being and nothing, he wouldn't have shown a process. On Trendelenburg's presentation, Hegel is out of options.

### *The puzzle's second part: there can be no difference*

Nowhere in the antecedent stages is movement prefigured, without which becoming would be only a being. Since both pure being and also not-being are expressed as rest, so, consequently, if the unity of both set out should come to be, the next task of thinking can only be to find a resting unification. (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38)

Trendelenburg's argument in the quote above appears to depend on the presupposition that if pure being and pure nothing are shown to be identical, and 'becoming' is the concept that captures this unity, then it is the concept that captures *only* this unity. At the level of content, it seems he must be right, for there is no difference in the content of the two concepts, only one emphasises what cannot be thought and the other what can. If being and nothing refer to what is changeless, then any concept composed solely of being and nothing must also refer to what is changeless.

Trendelenburg holds that movement has not been prefigured in the logic *and* must itself be derived before it can become a feature of concepts. Hegel tries to derive movement from pure being and pure nothing. Yet he can't. They and their unity only have one kind of content: their own content. As such, they cannot count as concepts about what they are not.

The concept of the content 'being and nothing', that is, the content of the concept unifying the two either expresses (a) self-identity or (b) some other relation between being and nothing that opposes them irrespective of their constitutive self-identity, of which movement (becoming) is an example. Yet if it is to be presuppositionlessly derived, it must share the same logical qualities as that which pure being and pure nothing appeared to have in their separation: that of simple self-identity. As such, it must be (a). So, the concept of the unity of being and nothing must be a concept of simple self-identity. It cannot have as its content a relation between what is and what is not, or its own passing away into another.

A concept of becoming, however, must be a concept about things passing away and coming to be. Yet as simply self-identical, this unity (unlike the unity of the *intuition* of becoming) cannot have any internal difference and so cannot have an internal relation between what is and what is not of the same subject. As such, it cannot be a concept of its own passing away. Therefore, it cannot be a concept of movement in this second sense. It lacks the necessary elements to be such a concept. Thus, Trendelenburg, accepting the first part of the following claim for the sake of argument, rejects the second:

The truth of being as well as of nothing is therefore the *unity* of both; this unity is *becoming*. (EL §88)

The result of this is that 'becoming' as figured here cannot count as the becoming of anything, since, as a concept whose unity is constituted by nothing but the logical qualities of self-identity, it must have for its content (must only be *about*) things that both are and are not, which in this context

means the same thing: pure self-identity. 'Becoming' does not refer to anything that can change.

As a consequence, this concept named 'becoming' doesn't deserve the name. It cannot be about becoming as we encounter it in experience. Take the day's dawning, using the concept with the logic above should identify the self-identity of that instance of becoming, but it would not identify any other feature of it. Yet the self-identity, whether of being or nothing is not sufficient to identify its becoming, only its self-identical being or nothing.

### §6 Pure being in the larger *Logic*

In what follows, we will turn to the *Science of Logic* to fill in some of the gaps left by the quotes above and thereby get a clearer idea of Hegel's argument. As we will see, both the concepts of pure being and pure nothing are, according to Hegel, only<sup>15</sup> acquired and used through an act of absolute abstraction (what Hegel refers to as the '*absolutely negative*' (*EL* §74)). The concept 'pure being' is a concept whose content cannot be of any determinate being and so is not a concept of anything. Thinking only thinks with the concept for this content through the act of abstracting from all content of thought.

The content of such abstracting must be *empty* to count as thinking pure being or pure nothing. To think some content by Hegel's lights is to think determinately. Only abstracting from all determinacy, any content whatsoever counts as thinking with the concept 'pure being'. So it is with pure nothing too. That concept's content is nothing. Thinking only counts as thinking with that concept when it is abstracting from all content. This train of thought captures the sense of the passages quoted by Trendelenburg.

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<sup>15</sup> This means that how he shows them to be acquired *a priori* here is supposed to be the *only* way to properly acquire them *a priori* (the standard for properness including systematicity).

*Pure being* constitutes the beginning, because it is pure thought as well as the undetermined, simple immediate, and the first beginning cannot be anything mediated and further determined. (EL §86)

The start of the logic must be the result of empty abstraction. What is left after this abstraction? '[W]hat we have before us is only *simple immediacy*. [...] [I]t refers to the distinction from what is mediated' (SL 21.55).

According to Hegel, '[t]he true expression of this simple immediacy is therefore *pure being* [...] [which] should mean nothing but *being* in general; *being*, and nothing else, without further determination and filling' (SL 21.55-56). Given that one abstracts from any content of thought *qua* content, the result is not a particular pure (form of) being (such as God, on some theologies) but being as such, general and pure. It is contentless being.

Beiser (2013: 62) notes this, though he qualifies it as abstracted from any *empirical* content. This isn't strong enough, since then it would still be legitimate to think about perfect triangles, the cosmos as such, justice, and other non-empirical contents. It's vital that thinking counts as thinking pure being when and only when it does not think any content at all, including non-empirical content.

'Pure being' is accounted for in a little more depth in the *Science of Logic* than the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that Trendelenburg quotes. I quote the description of thinking with the concept 'pure being' in full.

*Being, pure being*, without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself. It is also not unequal relatively to an other; it has no diversity within itself nor any with a reference outwards. It would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it or by which it could be distinguished from an other. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness. There is *nothing* to be intuited in it, if one can speak here of intuiting; or, it is only this pure intuiting itself. Just as little is anything to be thought in it, or it is equally only this

empty thinking. Being, the indeterminate immediate, is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than *nothing*. (21.68-69)

Three kinds of features of such thinking stand out: (1) the content it has; (2) the relations it stands in; and (3) the activity of thinking it is equivalent to. We will focus on the first two here.

Firstly, on the content. The concept 'pure being' is indeterminate. To think with it is not to think any determinate content. It is '[b]eing, pure being, without any further determination'. We've already seen this above. Here, though, we can discern two senses in which it lacks determination. First, it has *no* content and so cannot have *determinate* content. 'There is *nothing* to be intuited in it' and '[j]ust as little is anything to be thought in it'. There is nothing this concept is about. 'It is pure indeterminateness and *emptiness*' (emphasis added).

Second, it has no inward or outward determination. '[I]t has no difference within it, nor any outwardly' (SL 21.69). This is perhaps superfluous given that it has *no* content. To have determination, we infer from this passage, is to have diversity *in* its content (intrinsic diversity, let's call it) or for its content to have reference outwards (extrinsic diversity). The concept 'pure being' has no content. Having content is required to have diversity in or through content. So, the concept 'pure being' has no intrinsic or extrinsic diversity.

Hegel says pure being 'is equal only to itself'. Such a notion of self-identity is a simple kind of the kind we can express with ' $A=A$ '. Yet this is not the full story. Hegel qualifies the identity. It is 'also not unequal with respect to another'. That can be expressed as ' $\sim(A\neq B)$ '. It is self-identity ( $A=A$ ) such that  $\sim(A\neq B)$ . This seems to make some positive claims about the components of pure being, but I hold these features are components of the activity of thinking with 'pure being'. They are relational thoughts. Relational thoughts that are not thoughts *about* relations can still be thoughts *in* relation in some other way.

The other way to hand is the activity of thinking with the concept 'pure being'. They can be descriptions of thinking's procedures in thinking with the concept 'pure being'. The claim that *thinking* with this concept is



self-identical implies that this thinking (with the concept 'pure being') cannot involve thinking anything opposed to the thinking itself, which includes any kind of content that is not the thinking itself.

Yet, in holding that the concept is not unequal with respect to another, a difference is drawn. Thinking being without determinate content might be read as being cut off from determinate content. I take it that the qualification  $\sim(A \neq B)$  is designed to rule this out. It is not that there *is* some content opposed to it that it is failing to think. Rather, it does not grasp external content in some other sense. Thinking's own vocation, in thinking with the concept 'pure being' is to think of no content. It is on its own terms that it thinks nothing, not the terms of the content or any other limiting factor. Thinking with it is not to think of anything.

In what sense is 'pure being' a concept at all? It necessarily and constitutively has no content. Concepts can be differentiated not just at the level of content but also at the level of the activity of thinking with that concept.<sup>16</sup> Though thinking with the concept 'pure being' is necessarily (indeed, constitutively) not to think of anything, it is to think in a definite way. The concept comes with a distinct activity of thinking, though this distinctive way is not identified at the level of content. It is to abstract from all content by referring thought to that which is distinct from being mediated, thinking without content.<sup>17</sup>

Pure being is a strange kind of result for thinking. It is and only is the result of abstracting from all the contents captured by 'being' and yet the result in question is not anything one thinks, but empty thinking itself.

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<sup>16</sup> This bears some resemblance to a 'conceptual rule' theory of concepts. On a conceptual rule theory, a concept is a rule for evaluating transitions between thoughts. The classic account of a conceptual rule theory of concepts in the 'analytic' tradition can be found in Kripke (1982), who claims inspiration from Wittgenstein. A more recent account, also inspired by Wittgenstein can be found in Horwich (2012). Christopher Peacocke's conceptual rule theory is perhaps the most extensively developed in contemporary philosophy. It is developed in Peacocke (1992).

<sup>17</sup> Note, this needn't counter Hegel's claims to presuppositionlessness, since his demand is only that the first thought be without content. His demand was not that all processes of thinking themselves be abstracted from, negated. Then thinking would stop. No, — rather, we continue thinking, but not about anything.

## §7 Pure nothing in the larger *Logic*

So, the same with nothing. To think with the concept 'nothing' is to think of nothing. Again, it is the result of abstracting, only now we have the pure result, the characterisation not just of what one is *not* to think (i.e., anything) but also what one *is* to think (nothing). Here is the section on pure nothing from *SL* in full:

*Nothing, pure nothing*: it is simply equality with itself, complete emptiness, absence of all determination and content—undifferentiatedness in itself. In so far as intuiting or thinking can be mentioned here, it counts as a distinction whether something or *nothing* is intuited or thought. To intuit or think nothing has, therefore, a meaning; both are distinguished and thus nothing *is* (exists) in our intuiting or thinking; or rather it is empty intuition and thought itself, and the same empty intuition or thought as pure being. Nothing is, therefore, the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as, pure *being*. (*SL* 21.69)

Nothing is neither a concept of a particular something nor a concept of a kind of relation. On the level of content, it is void of any content just like 'pure being'. The concept 'pure nothing' is the concept of no content, of contentlessness. Given these symmetries with thinking pure being, the asymmetries in the relations are noteworthy. Hegel holds that nothing is 'simple equality with itself' ( $A=A$ ) and doesn't specify, in the way he does with being, that it is also not unequal with respect to another,  $\sim(A\neq B)$ . This appears deliberate.

In the expositing of pure nothing, Hegel states that it is 'lack of all distinction within' (*SL* 21.69). Likewise pure being, Hegel says, 'has no difference within it' and states that '[i]f any determination or content were posited in it as distinct [...] it would thereby fail to hold fast to its purity' (*SL* 21.69).

Yet Hegel is seemingly careful to state of pure being that it also lacks *outer* differentiation: 'it has no difference within it, nor any outwardly' (*SL* 21.69). I have suggested this adds to the  $A=A$  self-equality

a  $\sim(A \neq B)$  self-equality. The addition is repeated in the following sentence: '[i]f any determination or content were posited in it as distinct, *or if it were posited by this determination or content as distinct from an other*, it would thereby fail to hold fast to its purity' (SL 21.69, emphasis added).

Twice, then, Hegel compliments a claim about its self-relation with one about an other-relation. Nothing, too, bears the same self-relation. As stated, pure nothing is like pure being 'simple equality with itself' (SL 21.69), equality formalisable as  $A=A$ . Yet, the qualifications to pure being that add the  $\sim(A \neq B)$  structure are missing from the exposition of pure nothing. That Hegel omits this outward reference twice, yet ascribes the same self-relation twice suggests a deliberate decision to draw an explicit distinction between being and nothing.

So, as we have seen, thinking with 'pure being' and with 'pure nothing' is in both cases constitutively to think without content. Any thinking with content is not thinking with the concept 'pure being' or 'pure nothing', since it does not count as 'not thinking of anything' (pure being) nor does it count as thinking nothing (pure nothing). Their content is not analysable into anything more basic. They have no constitutive content. Or, constitutively, they have no content. Both are empty, self-identical thoughts.

Do we already have the unity of pure being and pure nothing here? Yes, they are the same, Hegel says in the sections from the *Logic*. 'Being, the indeterminate immediate is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than nothing' (SL 21.69). 'Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is' (SL 21.69). As such, '[t]he truth of being as well as nothing is therefore the unity of both' (EL §88). — truth, that is, in that this is what they *result* in.

This nothing that pure, indeterminate being itself proves to be is not just the nothingness to which we frequently refer in everyday discourse. We often say that there is 'nothing' in the bag or 'nothing' on television when what we mean is that the specific things we desire are not to be found and what there is is not what we are interested in.

Such everyday nothingness is merely the absence of this or that specific thing (say, a ball), that is at the same time the presence of something else (say, the air). By contrast, the nothingness Hegel has in mind in the *Logic* is the absolute 'lack' or 'absence' of anything at all, or sheer and utter nothing. (Houlgate, 2006: 264)

In this sense, there is no difference between being and nothing. As Houlgate puts it, being 'turns out to be' nothing and Hegel claims that 'that pure being lacks all further determination' but does not 'define being as the explicit lack, absence, or negation of determinacy' (Houlgate, 2006: 82). This supports my view that, whilst thinking with the concept 'being' is not thinking of anything, thinking with the concept 'nothing' is thinking of nothing. This lack of *determinacy* defines pure being, which is pure indeterminacy. By contrast, nothing is defined as absolute absence of anything at all, without reference to this being an absence of *determinacy*.

## §8 Abstracting

Above, I have referred to the act of abstraction. Hegel perhaps implores us to not put too much weight on his own references act of abstraction. Note the description of the being-nothing transition as 'easy and trivial' when one 'remembers' that being is the result of a perfect abstraction in the following passage:

In being, when taken in that simplicity and immediacy, the memory that it is the result of a perfect abstraction, and that it is therefore already abstract negativity [i.e. already negatively mediated], nothing, is left back behind the science [...] With the recovery of this memory, it is possible to present the transition from being to nothing, or also, as it is said, to *clarify* it and make it *comprehensible*, as something itself easy and trivial. Of course, the being which is made into the beginning of science is a nothing, since it is possible to abstract from everything, and when abstraction is made from all, nothing is left over. (SL 21.86)<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Hegel points out that one might then say that science begins with *nothing* but he

Yet, Hegel finds no problem with explaining transition in terms of the act of thinking rather than its content, as is clear in a comment on 'nothing'. '[W]hether a beginning is made with the activity of nothing or with nothing is equally indifferent, for the activity of nothing, that is, the mere abstracting, is neither more nor less true than the mere nothing' (SL 21.87). As such, it is not just, as Hegel (rightly, I think) suggests easier to explain the moves in terms of the act of abstracting, but, as he also suggests, it makes no difference to the philosophical point. As it is simpler and it makes no difference to the philosophical point, I opt for this route of explanation.

### §9 Vanishing

Houlgate reads the derivation of becoming as follows.

[T]he thought of pure being slips away of its own accord into the thought of nothing, and the thought of nothing itself slips away into the thought of pure being, thereby generating the new thought of this very slippage or 'vanishing,' which Hegel names becoming. (2006: 52)

According to Houlgate, then, becoming is just the concept of the vanishing. We should note, already, how different this appears to be from Trendelenburg's account. How does movement come to be from resting representations? Houlgate's answer is: the two thoughts vanish into one another. This surely is sufficient for a 'process' and so sufficient for movement. Movement is in becoming *qua vanishing*.

The point at which one goes from 'not thinking about anything' in being to thinking about nothing and vice-versa is a vanishing point. Thinking that counts as not thinking about anything already counts as thinking about nothing and vice-versa. There is no inference made to justify what is essentially a shift in emphasis, hence it is described as a

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sees this as no challenge to his point since nothing, on his account, vanishes into being.

‘vanishing’.<sup>19</sup> ‘[T]he thought of pure being slips away of its own accord into the thought of nothing’ (Houlgate, 2006: 52). Or, as Hegel puts it, ‘[t]he concept of being is just this, that it is so simple as to vanish into its opposite immediately’ (SL 12.33). The ground for this transition is more or less clear. Both have the same empty content.<sup>20</sup> This has given us a better grasp of the following:

Now this pure being is a *pure abstraction* and thus the *absolutely negative* which, when likewise taken immediately, is *nothing*. (EL §87)

As thinking with ‘pure being’ is pure abstracting, not thinking about anything it is thinking about the absolutely negative and so counts as thinking nothing. According to one commentator, ‘[t]here is no secret lurking behind Hegel’s assertion that “pure being” is “nothing”. It simply means that what “being” (taken by itself) refers to is the same as what “nothing” (taken by itself) refers to, namely, [...] nothing’ (Wolff, 2013: 88). On this reading, the identity is just that neither term refers to anything, which is the same as referring to nothing.

Conversely, *nothing*, as this immediate, self-same, is likewise *the same* as *being*. (EL §88)

The act of thinking the concept with ‘pure nothing’ equally slips back into that of thinking with ‘pure being’. As Houlgate puts it, ‘the thought of nothing itself slips away into the thought of pure being’ (Houlgate, 2006: 52). I have opted for a different way of expressing it. As I have put it there is no thinking *of* pure being. As I put it, the thought *of* pure nothing slips away into *not* thinking *of* anything (the abstractive attempt to think pure being).

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<sup>19</sup> Houlgate describes the move from being to nothing as a redefinition (Houlgate, 2006: 95). Hegel does too in the *Encyclopaedia*. He calls nothing ‘[t]he second definition of the absolute’ (EL §87). I have opted for different language.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Beiser, 2013: 62; Houlgate, 2006: 42, 52.

## §10 The intentional difference in vanishing

As we saw, for Trendelenburg, pure being and pure nothing are at rest. 'Das reine Sein, sich selbst gleich, ist Ruhe; das Nichts — das sich selbst Gleiche — ist ebenfalls Ruhe' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38). 'Pure being, self-same, is rest; nothing — the self-same — is also rest'. As stated, pure nothing is like pure being 'simple equality with itself' (SL 21.69), equality formalisable as  $A=A$ . Yet, the qualification to pure being that it is also  $\sim(A\neq B)$  is missing from the exposition of pure nothing, as discussed in the section on nothing above. If this is as deliberate as it seems, one ought to think about the full implications of this for the transition from pure being to pure nothing (and back again), especially with respect to the sameness of the two categories to each other.

This already suggests some difference between pure being and nothing. Yet, as we saw, there can be no difference at the level of content (in content they are both the same, empty). I suggested relational features are not features of the content. Rather, they are features of the activity of thinking.  $\sim(A\neq B)$  qualifies  $A=A$ . No thinking *about*, just thinking ( $A=A$ ), but not because it is detached from external content ( $A\neq B$ ), where B is any  $\sim A$  and so  $\sim(A\neq(\sim A))$ , but rather:  $\sim(A\neq B)$ . This qualification is missing in 'nothing'.

Placing the difference in thinking activity, not the content is supported by the idea of vanishing. In focussing on self-identity, Trendelenburg focusses on the ground of the unity of being and nothing, but not what Hegel takes this ground to bring about in thought, namely *vanishing*. Hegel claims that this unity *has movement* in the sense that there is the vanishing we've seen above.

[T]he truth is just as much that they are not without distinction; it is rather that they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct yet equally unseparated and inseparable, and that each immediately vanishes in its opposite. Their truth is therefore this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one into the other: becoming, a movement

in which the two are distinguished, but by a distinction which has just as immediately dissolved itself. (*SL* 21.69-70)

In avoiding the topic of vanishing, Trendelenburg thereby avoids the very feature that constitutes the movement of the unity and thereby makes it the concept *becoming*. Trendelenburg rejects the idea that this synthesis is movement because the unity of pure being and pure nothing is their self-identity and a concept captures (has for its content, refers to) only that which shares its logical features. Yet the concept also involves *vanishing*. Is this not a feature of the logic of the concept? Does this not allow it to capture things like the dawning of the day?

I argue that insofar as we are reasoning about the content of pure being and pure nothing, Trendelenburg is right to say that being and nothing considered in their self-identity are insufficient for their synthesis to have movement. Trendelenburg's conclusion is that, since movement is necessary for any becoming and becoming is only the unity of being and nothing, it is incorrect to describe the concept of their synthesis as a concept of becoming. Trendelenburg does not criticise the unity of being and nothing, but the origin of the difference required for a concept of movement.

Trendelenburg does not reference the indistinguishability of being and nothing. Yet this indistinguishability is necessary for the move to becoming. A crucial part of their transition into one another is their vanishing, as Houlgate has pointed out. Being vanishes. Its content turns out to be nothing — it has no determinacy. Nothing is this result of vanishing, which in turn vanishes because it is the content of *pure being*, it *is*. He therefore underplays the kind of unity that Hegel attributes to being and nothing.

I hold that Hegel does not need movement in the content of becoming. Firstly, the concept 'becoming' does not need it to effect the unity and difference of pure being and pure nothing that Hegel needs it to. Secondly, we who are trying to understand Hegel do not need it to understand how the concept of becoming develops further in the opening stages of the *Logic*. I hold that at the level of content being and nothing are



in becoming still *indistinguishable*. They are still contentless. The concept of the indistinguishability of being and nothing is that of the lack of content-difference.

However, they are distinguishable at the level of the activity of thinking. Becoming is contentless, intention-laden thinking. It isn't to be analysed into distinct moments of the content of being and nothing. There isn't any distinction in content. Yet, I hold, there is a distinction at the level of 'intention', the activity of thinking with that concept. Trendelenburg underplays the role of the distinction in intention of being and nothing, which Hegel emphasises in his second remark on becoming.

Let us now look at the second remark to the section on becoming in the *Logic*. As Hegel says, not just any understanding of the unity of being and nothing will do. The unity is not, Hegel is keen to emphasise, the unity resulting from 'subjective reflection', not what 'is normally taken as a connection that arises from *comparison*, from external reflection' (SL 21.78). That is because the latter 'finds the same thing in two *different subject matters*' (SL 21.78-79) and so

a unity is there with respect to which complete *indifference* is presupposed on the part of the subject matters compared, so that the comparing and the unity do not touch these subject matters themselves but are rather a doing and a determining external to them. Unity [in the above sense] thus expresses a totally *abstract* sameness, and it will sound all the harsher and the more discordant the more the terms of which it is asserted show themselves to be utterly distinct. (SL 21.79)

Unity through comparison masks over the differences between the things compared, whereas the kind of unity that being and nothing has, Hegel holds, is one that does not hide their difference.

For this reason it would therefore be better to say simply *unseparatedness* and *inseparability*; but then the *affirmative aspect* of the connection of the whole would not be expressed. (SL 21.79)

Inseparability highlights that thinking inescapably counts as thinking with 'pure nothing' when it thinks with 'pure being', and vice-versa. That is, thinking thinks with two contents simultaneously. Yet the identity of the content of these thoughts must also be expressed. Hegel goes on to say that, with respect to the unity of being and nothing,

the whole true result that we have here before us is *becoming*, but a becoming which is not the merely one-sided or abstract unity of being and nothing. It consists rather in this movement, that pure being is immediate and simple and for that very reason is just as much pure nothing; that the distinction between them *is*, but equally *sublates itself* and *is not*. This result does also assert, therefore, the distinction of being and nothing, but it asserts it as one which is merely *intended*. (SL 21.79)

The second half of the quote above introduces two things we have not seen Trendelenburg acknowledge. Firstly, that the concepts 'being' and 'nothing' *and* being and nothing relations constitute the concept 'becoming'. Since these relations aren't mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel might take it to be an aspect of being constituted by the concepts of being and nothing — that is, that not just being is and nothing is not, but the distinction between them, too, both *is* and *is not*. We have already seen one sense in which this is true. Pure being is distinct from nothing in that the act of thinking it is is the activity of not thinking about anything but to think with 'pure nothing' is to think about some content.

On the other hand, this distinction 'sublates itself'. The successful act of not thinking of anything is indistinguishable in content from the successful act of thinking of nothing. To be sure, we can identify the different emphases, but we cannot ground this in any difference in content. Not thinking of anything has no content, which is indistinguishable from the content 'nothing', which is sheer empty content. As Hegel puts it, '[t]his result does also assert, therefore, the distinctness of being and nothing, but it asserts it as one which is merely *intended*' (SL 21.79).

This means that the distinction is made by thinking alone yet in the absence of any difference in content. This is the second thing not discussed by Trendelenburg. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel describes this distinction as ‘mere opinion’ (*EL* §87R.), which captures the same thought. So, though simply identical at the level of content, pure being and pure nothing remain distinguished, without ground in the content, for thinking. As such, the difference between them still ‘is’, is not reduced away but on the other hand also ‘is’ not.

Maybe Trendelenburg read the mere intention of the difference as indicating its contingency. Or perhaps, though recognising the importance of the intended difference for Hegel, Trendelenburg rejects intended differences as relevant to the logical qualities of the concept. On Trendelenburg’s view, what matters is whether a concept can have movements as their content. Yet, the intention, whilst contingent to being and nothing, is not contingent to the vanishing.

We ought not to read the ‘intention’ here as though one is *trying* to make a distinction but *failing* to. The intelligibility of being is *intended* towards nothing in that this intelligibility is made up of nothing at all, and this produces a distinction between the two. However, since all being is is this nothingness, then there is also *no distinction* in content. It seems that the intelligibility of this becoming just is the intelligibility of this kind of unity of being and nothing. Becoming is just a movement in the sense that it depends on a being-nothing identity *and* difference. It is thus not introduced as a *third thought*, a third kind of content but rather is akin to turning back to look at the activity with the content.

Hegel insists, however, that the unity of being and nothingness—what both is and is not—consists in both their sameness *and* their difference, in their being the same in having nothing to distinguish them, and in their being different because one is the negation of the other (Beiser, 2013: 62). The difference in intention is, on Beiser’s reading, a difference of negation. To be nothing is the same as being the negation of being. That is, ‘to be nothing’ = ‘to not be’. Likewise, to be being is the same as being the negation of nothing: ‘to be being’ is not distinguished from ‘to be’.

In any case, the result is that being and nothing are contraries that are indistinguishable in content. The ground of their contrariety cannot possibly be the content.

Hegel's claim is that it 'it makes a difference whether something or *nothing* is being intuited or thought' (21.69). The thought here seems to be as follows. We are still bound by the obligation in the act of abstraction to not think any content when thinking nothing. Therefore, the act of abstracting demands we distinguish between cases where we are thinking something (some content) and thinking nothing.

The distinction is that of the content during the *act of thinking*, the *activity* and the content at the *result* of thinking. Insofar as one is thinking something, one has not completed the abstraction to pure nothing. Yet insofar as one has completed it, one is thinking nothing, the result. Therefore, the act of abstraction itself demands we make a distinction. Therefore, 'nothing' is a definite or determinate content. It is different from being and so it is determinate. Then it must be abstracted away from, and so we return to the act of abstraction, attempting to reach pure being, and yet that results in nothing, and so on. As Hegel later puts it, though, the distinction between pure being and nothing is 'merely intended' (SL 21.75 and 21.79). As such, the definite difference introduced is *not* between pure being and pure nothing's content, but in the activity of thinking, or in determining itself.

Hegel allows concepts to be different in their intention as well as content. Indeed, Hegel thinks that with the concept of being, 'we can only *intend* it without being able to say what it is' (SL 12.33). Though its content is nothing, it can still be 'intended' as being. Intending is here to be understood as the direction of thought, its coming to be about something. The claim that being can be intended but we cannot say what it is thus seems like the claim that thought grasps being in its coming to be about, but it does not grasp being as its object of thought, as the content of thought.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> I talk about intending in abstraction from intentional content here. I see it as the whole point of presuppositionless logic that no affirmative claims are made about the content, but rather that the act of abstraction itself is slowly thought

The difference thinking being or thinking nothing makes is internal to the act of abstracting, to the intending — but not to the content. If one is abstracting and thinks something then one must abstract further, but if one thinks nothing then one need not do so. Both thoughts vanish into each other, but the difference between them remains and maintains this becoming.

As Houlgate, says, Hegel holds that

absolute, radical nothingness has its own immediacy. After all, it *is* sheer and utter nothingness and as such *is* intelligible to thought. Nothingness is, indeed, nothing but the sheer *immediacy* of nothingness itself; there is nothing else to it. As this immediacy, Hegel contends, it is indistinguishable from pure indeterminate *being*. This is not to say that we are mistaken to think of it as nothing in the first place. Pure nothing is *nothing* whatsoever, but it is so purely and immediately nothing that it vanishes logically *into* empty immediate being. Just as pure being vanishes logically into nothing, therefore, pure nothing equally vanishes logically back into being. This means, of course, that pure being and pure nothing not only vanish but also prove to be ineliminable since each one disappears into, and so immediately revives, the other. (2006: 264).

The instability of the definitions of being and nothing constitutes their necessity or ineliminability. This instability is the result of simultaneously being a replacement and an effect and cause of the other definition. This simultaneity constitutes the necessity of being with respect to nothing and

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through, its implications drawn out. I take myself to be in no conflict with Houlgate's claim that the *Logic* involves drawing out the determinations of being, but the difference is that I trace these movements at the level of the act of thinking which, to me, is more intelligible, and Hegel, as I have shown, suggests there is *no difference* in tracing the movements in terms of the background act of abstraction or in terms of the logical content itself. In the absence of any reason to think otherwise, I suppose this to be constant throughout the *Logic*.

vice-versa. This necessity is contingent on the act of purification via abstraction. This account leaves us with some puzzles.

Firstly, the account doesn't make adequate sense of the move from nothing to being. Hegel says that 'nothing *is*', which seems to be more than to say that they are indistinguishable — an epistemic quality. Rather, it seems to say that nothing possesses being — an ontological quality.

The account doesn't make sense of the ontological side of their indistinguishability. It is not that nothing possesses being, but that *not being determinate* and *not being* are different, though the same in content. Pure thought is sensitive to this difference. Yet the ontological side of their indistinguishability is essential to the move from nothing to being.

There is a difference between the *Encyclopaedia Logic* and the *Science of Logic* on the transition from nothing to being. In the former, Hegel *does* suggest that the move from nothing to being has the same structure as the move from being to nothing: they are *indistinguishable*. In the *Science of Logic*, by contrast, it is not their indistinguishableness that marks the move back from nothing to being, it is that 'nothing *is*', a stronger claim. In a remark, Hegel clarifies what this proposition, that nothing *is*, means:

[w]hen taken in its immediacy, nothing shows itself as *existing*; for it is by nature the same as being. Nothing is thought of, represented; it is spoken about; it therefore *is*. (SL 21.88)

Hegel is clear on the ontological implications of this argument, however: 'nothing has its being in thinking, representing, speaking, etc.' (SL 21.88).<sup>22</sup> As I put it, nothing has being *qua* content. Hegel's explanation of this is that nothing can have being *qua* content because it is the content of being ('for it is by nature the same as being'). I hold the ontological side of the

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<sup>22</sup> According to Hegel, when this fact is held together with (1) the thought that pure being and pure nothing are absolutely opposed (not synthesised, in the context of the passage I'm referring to) and (2) that the thinking of pure being moves into the thinking of pure nothing, it follows that the result of thinking pure being is 'mere semblance and opinion', which he takes to explain in what sense Parmenides is justified in holding that pure being cannot be spoken about (SL 21.85).

indistinguishability to be essential to the move from nothing to being in the *Science of Logic*. That nothing *is* is an ontological claim — about content — distinct from the act-level claim that nothing is indistinguishable from being.

The indistinguishability of being and nothing is not a given or an epistemic fact. The indistinguishability applies to the act of thinking pure being and pure nothing. Following from these act-level claims is an ontological content-level claim. The account above makes clear what kind of *change* from being into nothing and vice-versa is at hand. The account says how indistinguishability of content allows for an idea of (1) difference and (2) the relevant change that is at least partly constituted by that difference. It is a change of intention, of what thinking is *doing*. The concept in whose content being and nothing are indistinguishable is *becoming*.

According to Di Giovanni,

[t]o determine an object *in becoming* [...] one must begin by taking back whatever one might say of it *prima facie* as a would-be fixed determination of it; in this sense, therefore, one begins with a 'not', or from 'nothing'. (Di Giovanni, 2013: 258)

On this account, becoming furthers the 'act of abstraction' at work in producing the thoughts of being and nothing. I agree with this approach. As I understand it, becoming is the most general kind of movement in Hegel's system. Movement (becoming) is, at the act-level, a kind of replacement of one *form* of activity of thought (being) with another (nothing). It is the replacement of the act of abstraction with a result. The replacement in question is such that the necessary consequence of the first form's *content* is a second form (in this case because it has the same content) but the second form in turn is necessarily replaced with the first form. The two contents are indistinguishable.

Yet, the following situation arises: a difference between pure being's form and its content. Pure being has no content via abstraction. Pure being's form has no content. It is empty. It is not what it is. This is

*necessary* because otherwise the being is not pure. There is thus a necessary difference between it and its content. It thinks being away into nothing. If the content of pure being is pure nothing, one can say two things. Firstly, that pure being's content is indistinguishable from pure nothing. Secondly, that they are nonetheless different in intention. One negatively thinks (i.e., arrives via abstraction at) nothing. One positively thinks (i.e., about) nothing. That is, the difference is not in the end of the intending but in how thought gets there.

But couldn't one have nothingness that is not the content of being but simple nothing? Yes, but, as I understand it, Hegel doesn't accept this as a *result*. Does *nothing* have its own *form*? If it did, then nothing would have some kind of being (which is Hegel's own argument at *SL* 21.86-87). And its form, as the form without content would be indistinguishable from that of pure being. Thus, if pure being has content, that content is nothing. If pure nothing has a form, it is only *pure* being, not the being of a thing — it is no thing. Insofar as nothing has a rational form, it is thus necessarily that of its opposing form — pure *being*. As such, nothing *is*.

This situation produces a contradiction. Being and nothing are indistinguishable in content and form. Yet they are distinct in intention. This contradiction is sublated by a further concept. This concept must be capable of combining the distinct meanings of being and nothing with their indistinguishability. As a condition of immanent development, this further concept must not contain any other meaning (Wolff, 2013: 88). *Becoming* — the inseparability of the pure being form and pure nothing content in the act of abstraction.<sup>23</sup> Recall that this concept must meet the criterion that it contain no other meaning than what is contained in being and nothing. Then it is clear that becoming can have no temporal meaning at this stage.<sup>24</sup> *Becoming*, as I understand it, is the inherent vanishing in the act of abstraction.

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<sup>23</sup> According to one commentator, this is the introduction of a concept from Newton's differential calculus (his 'method of fluxions'), there named as *fieri* (Wolff, 2013: 89).

<sup>24</sup> Time is a kind of becoming for Hegel. It is '*intuited* becoming' (*PN* §258). This must be drawn out of it through connecting it to other categories, though. It is not a temporal category *as such*.



## §11 Thinking activity

On the view I have presented thus far, that which makes 'becoming' an adequate concept, able to capture movement is not that it is about movement but that thinking is moving. To think *with* the concept becoming is for thought to move. The movement is plausibly between the two ways of thinking identified above. The content is the same in both ways. It is not enough to distinguish them. Yet it is arrived at or captured in two different ways. So, though the content does not change and neither does the fact that it can be considered with two thinking forms, the content does change from being considered under one form to being considered under another.

This shows how important attention to the *process* of thinking is to grasping Hegel's dialectic, not just the content thought about. Attention to the content alone leaves us unable to respond to Trendelenburg. I thus seem to agree with Fischer. According to Fischer, in Beiser's terms, Trendelenburg's 'interpretation had focused on the content of the concepts; but it had crucially ignored the act of thinking behind them' (Beiser, 2013: 110). Trendelenburg held that there was no successful, purely *a priori* derivation of becoming. He held this because the content of the concepts of being and nothing captures self-identity and no relation between opposites, so no being-nothing movement, just being or nothing. So, his interpretation focussed on the content.

However, he did not look at the act of thinking behind being and nothing. Trendelenburg only looked at the content of thought. Yet Hegel's argument depends for its validity on shifts in the act of thinking and that is where the required non-identity can be introduced. On Fischer's view, this act of thinking is the act of abstracting of the subject thinking the logic and that same subject's self-observation (Beiser, 2013: 110). Considered in this way, Fischer takes the derivation of becoming to be successful. One can derive becoming from being and nothing.

As Trendelenburg acknowledges, one can derive the difference of being and nothing from the experience of something changing, *a posteriori*.

He does not question that if we begin with the concept of becoming, we can analyse it into the concepts of being and nothingness. Since something in becoming both is and is not in some respects, the analysis of the concept of becoming will indeed ultimately involve the concepts of being and nothingness. (Beiser, 2013: 62)

Yet Fischer holds that one can derive becoming from the experience of one's thinking agency *alone*, irrespective of the content of thought, and so *a priori*.

Fischer holds that the experience of contentless thinking agency is that the thinking agent both is and is not. I have this experience, then I don't have that experience. Yet this being and nothing *of the thinking agent* are only possible when synthesised in the 'I', and this 'I' is undergoing *becoming*. So, Fischer holds that the experience of contentless thinking agency just is the experience of pure becoming. He finds some textual support in passages from Hegel such as §21 of the preface to the *Phenomenology* where Hegel says that '[t]he I, or becoming, this act of mediating, is, precisely in terms of its simplicity, immediacy in the process of becoming and is the immediate itself' (§21). The I *is* becoming. Namely, its *immediacy is becoming*.

Trendelenburg's retort is that Fischer's argument does not deal with pure being and pure nothing but the being and nothing of a thinking agent (Beiser, 2013: 109-111). The argument depends upon the idea of a determinate something that *has* being and nothing and thereby must *undergo* becoming. Yet this is different from the argument that being and nothing are necessary and sufficient for becoming and it is so in two ways.

Firstly, it does not start by considering being and nothing on their own terms and then develops them into their unity. Rather, it starts by thinking of them in a relation and holds that relation can only hold if they are already unified. Yet, on Trendelenburg's account being and nothing are thinkable independently of becoming and then shown to be unified in a third concept: becoming. For Fischer, the thoughts of being and nothing are only possible with the becoming of thinking and thinking's self-recognition of that in the concept 'becoming'.

Secondly, being is considered as the being of the thinking agent, not as such. Whilst thinking is not of any of its explanatory content, still when we think or reflect on that being we have that agent in mind, the agency is part of the content of the *reflecting agent's* thought. Yet, on Trendelenburg's account, being at the beginning of the *Logic* is pure, unlike the being of a particular agent.

Trendelenburg is right to reject Fischer's account on the grounds just given. As Houlgate has suggested, Hegel's method is immanent only if transitions are made only because of the content of thinking and the features of that content, not features of the experience of thinking itself.

However, the activity of thinking is not thereby without a role in the transitions. As Houlgate notes,

[t]here appears [...] to be some evidence to support the general view that speculative logic is moved from one category to another by the activity of the philosopher rather than the categories themselves. (Houlgate, 2006: 273)

The evidence Houlgate points to is the following:

[Pure being and nothing seem to be,] as Jacobi correctly describes them, results of abstraction; they are expressly determined as indeterminate — and this, to go back to their simplest form, is being. This indeterminateness is however precisely what constitutes their determinateness. For indeterminateness is opposed to determinateness; as opposed, it is therefore itself something determinate or negative — the pure, entirely abstract negative. This indeterminateness or abstract negation which thus has being in it is that to which reflection, whether external or internal, gives voice when it equates such a being with nothing, when it declares it to be an empty product of thought, a nothingness. (*SL* 21.85-86)

As Houlgate notes, this suggests that

we move from the thought of pure being to that of nothing only because reflection experiences pure being as vacuous, not because pure being logically converts itself into nothing. (Houlgate, 2006: 273)

That is, it suggests that the transition is made not because of some positive feature of the content but because of the thinker's experience of that content. Yet, Houlgate disagrees with this reading. For Houlgate, pure being becomes nothing independently of the individual's experience of thinking about pure being. According to Houlgate, second-order thinking, thinking about thinking about pure being (about reflection's experience of pure being, as Houlgate puts it) is incompatible with thinking pure being since such second-order thinking involves a determinate thinker and experience in the content of thought and there is no determinate content in the thought of pure being.

Only features of pure being (the sole one of which is 'indeterminacy') can serve as an immanent ground for being becoming nothing. For Houlgate, these discussions about reflection's experience are descriptive, but they do not account for the agency in the *Logic*, what is active and moves itself. According to Houlgate, the categories have a kind of agency themselves: they move themselves into other categories. My focus on the activity of thinking in this essay, by contrast, makes it seem like I hold that the transition is made because of features of the thinker, who I consider to be the agential force, rather than the content of thought.

I have emphasised the act of abstraction in my exegesis of the opening stages of the *Logic* and I have spoken less than Houlgate about the featurelessness of pure being as responsible for it becoming nothing. Instead, I have spoken of the intention to think pure being, the conditions for successfully doing so, and the resulting featurelessness being *nothing*. That is, on my reading pure being is the intended result of the act of abstraction, but the result is actually the thought of nothing. The thought of pure being is an ideal for thought that is pursued only in the process of abstracting from determinate beings and never achieved, rather resulting in its opposite.

On this reading, the transition from being to nothing is still made because of the content of thinking and not because of any thought about an individual thinker's thought of being. Nor is it made because of a general feature of thinking about pure being. That would still be to think about something determinate: thinking as opposed to being. As the reasoning goes within the *Logic*, the transition is simple: purely indeterminate being is indistinguishable, except in language, from nothing. My explanation of the transition in terms of the act of abstraction does not seek to replace this explanation, but to better understand the concept 'pure being' in the first place and to use this to better understand the concept 'becoming' through a better understanding of what thinking is like such that it *becomes*.

On Trendelenburg's reading, becoming is inextricably linked to spatiotemporal experience<sup>25</sup> such that Hegel's concept 'becoming' can only be intelligible in reference to such experience. I seek to provide an explanation that satisfies Trendelenburg on some levels without conceding that becoming is illegitimately imported into the being-nothing unity. I hold the content of thinking to be the ground<sup>26</sup> of every transition and the movement to take place because of thinking's intentional activity: the movement might be that of thinking, but its direction is provided only by the content.

I try to give an account of the opening of the *Logic* in terms of the activity of thinking. I also argue that becoming is 'in' thinking. So, similarly to Fischer, I hold that agency is the locus of becoming, not categories themselves. Trendelenburg holds that 'pure being' and 'nothing' are static concepts and therefore that the resulting becoming must come from without the content of thought. I agree, but I suggest this does not violate the terms of the *Logic*. I don't invoke the *temporality* of agency to explain the *Logic's* becoming as Fischer does. One need only invoke what Hegel himself says: that thinking is active in the *Logic*.

Trendelenburg holds that spatiotemporal experience is the only other source of the becoming. I turn to the activity of thinking, which is a

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<sup>25</sup> Discussed in the next section.

<sup>26</sup> Without reference to the discussion of grounding in the 'Doctrine of Essence'.

kind of dynamism that is already permitted in the opening stage of the *Logic*, albeit not at the level of content. On my reading, we must distinguish between thinking about the activity of thinking about being, which is illegitimate due to its determinacy, and engaging in this activity of thinking about being, which is clearly not illegitimate if the *Logic* is to be followed at all. The content of the *Logic* does not need to be supplemented with a discussion of the act of abstraction. I accept the sufficiency of the thought of pure being for that of pure nothing and vice-versa. (Trendelenburg also accepts it for the sake of argument.)

However, if we hold that pure being and pure nothing are indeterminate thoughts, there must be a ground for distinguishing them other than the content of those thoughts (no feature of those thoughts can help, since there are none) and so it must be in the thinking itself and not its content, if it is to remain presuppositionless. Looking at the act of abstraction and the role of 'intention' in Hegel's discussion of the *Logic* is my primary means for identifying how pure being and pure nothing can be distinguished other than in mere words.

The sense in which there is movement in the *Logic* or, perhaps more accurately expressed, *where* the movement in the *Logic* is, is: it's 'in' thinking. Movement requires distinction and the first movement of the *Logic* is contingent on a distinction made not in the *content* of thinking but in thinking's *intention*. However, Houlgate's objection to this is that it depends on the 'effort on the part of the philosopher to employ or render determinate and intelligible the category of being' and that without this effort thinking 'would forever remain that of pure being' (Houlgate, 2006: 273).

This objection is a more determinate form of that against thinking *about* the individual thinker. There the objection rested on the thinker or even thinking in general being determinate, whereas pure being must be entirely indeterminate. This objection is against the view that the indeterminacy of pure being is a reason for transition because indeterminacy *is not determinate* and the unintelligibility of pure nothing is a reason for transition because unintelligibility *is not intelligible*. That is, this objection is against the view that pure being and pure nothing are

measured and found inadequate by standards (determinacy and intelligibility, respectively) and this counts as a *presupposition* since it is a standard of evaluating external to *what the category is*. My reading does not violate this, since the act of abstraction's standard of evaluation is simply indeterminacy, a content-level standard determined by and only by what pure being is.

On Fischer's view, the reason for the transition from being to nothing is apparent in an agent's reflection on thinking about being. On Houlgate's view, the reason for the transition is apparent in direct reflection on being itself. Fischer, then, takes the second-order approach and Houlgate the first-order approach. For Fischer, the agency of selfhood is necessary to the transition from being to nothing and is the basic dynamism identified by the concept 'becoming'. Yet Trendelenburg and Houlgate are right to reject the role of determinate being as grounding the opening moves of the *Logic* on the grounds that selfhood is determinate (see Beiser, 2013: 110).

However, this doesn't mean that the agency of selfhood plays no role in the opening moves of the *Logic*. These first moves are dependent upon the self actively abstracting from determinate being and in performing this act of abstraction from all determinate being, it is thinking pure being, but in its result it is thinking nothing. To interrogate becoming it is vital to figure out the move from *nothing* to *becoming*. Why not just end with nothing? My way of explaining this is that there remains, despite the lack of internal difference in becoming, a difference internal to the process of thinking nothing, which is the difference between the *intention to think pure being* in the act of abstraction and the *resulting thought of nothing*.

This, in turn, allows the concept 'becoming' the intrinsic differentiation that is required, on Trendelenburg's terms, for movement to be possible. This doesn't import thinking into the content of thought, since this difference between the intention and the result of thinking is not something thought about but rather a feature of the thinking. My claim, then, is that in this case it is not simply the content of thinking that is responsible for the transition but a feature of the thinking of that content. I

thereby have to reject the claim that all transitions in the *Logic* are because of the features of the content.

However, I can retain the view that they are immanent transitions, because it is not necessitated by anything other than the thinking of pure being. The internal difference is something thinking with the concept 'nothing' has, even if it cannot be what it is about (there is no internal difference in the content). This source of internal difference is one that Trendelenburg does not consider and one that thereby sidesteps his core objection that movement cannot be derived from pure being and/or pure nothing.

We need the idea of the activity of the act of abstraction to distinguish between being something and nothing on my reading. At the level of the act of abstraction (which is the same as the level of the act of negativity) there *is* thinking turning from negatively intending being-content to positively intending the nothing at which it arrives.

Hegel argues that pure being and pure nothing are indistinguishable in content, distinct in intention, and thereby inseparable.<sup>27</sup> It is their *inseparability* emphasised that characterises their unity. My argument in this essay is that when this inseparability is partnered with a distinction of some kind, the relation of the terms has movement. The distinction in becoming is a distinction of 'intention' or 'mere opinion' (*EL* §87R) and so the movement of becoming is contingent on the role of mere intention or opinion. There is no distinction at the level of content. As such, there is no movement at the level of content alone.

## §12 Things changing

Let's look at how Hegel introduces becoming, according to Beiser:

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<sup>27</sup> In the second remark to the discussion of becoming, Hegel will suggest that 'unity' has the wrong connotations. The unity of pure being and pure nothing excludes their disunity. 'Inseparability' is better because it does not exclude their disunity.



The truth of being and nothingness is becoming. This is because whatever becomes both is and is not; it is the movement by which being turns into nothingness, and by which nothingness turns into being (Beiser, 2013: 62)

On my reading, becoming is, at the level of the act of thinking, the coming to be of the act of abstraction in its intention only, before it reaches any content.<sup>28</sup> On my account, it is that very act through which abstraction is made.

As Beiser articulates it above, the argument turns on a concept of being turning into nothing and nothing into being. Becoming is the change of being into nothing and vice-versa. When my tree becomes ash, it changes from being a tree to not being a tree and, in not being a tree, being ash. Or when the forest becomes baron, it goes from not being baron to being so. Yet a concept of change seems to depend upon the idea of a difference between how things were and how things are.

Change is not a good model for making sense of the indistinguishability at hand, for (1) indistinguishability requires there to be no grounds for discernment, whereas in change the difference between how things were and how things are is the ground for discernment; (2) the being in change is determinate being, being a particular something (being *the* forest). Beiser suggests that Trendelenburg is sensitive to precisely this point when he defines change as 'the concept of something becoming different than it was' (Beiser, 2013: 44).

If this is what Beiser's Trendelenburg takes change to be, then he recognises points (1) and (2) above as features of change and must, if being faithful to Hegel's text, not then take being's 'turning into' nothingness nor nothingness's 'turning into' being to be change.

Trendelenburg says that, in response to his objections, 'one can say and will say that [...] the movement of outer nature is itself different from the movement of inner thought' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 39). Yet, he continues, 'if this will be asserted, then the difference would have to be

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<sup>28</sup> As we will see later, content can be of two kinds: *other* or *self*.

stated — this has happened nowhere' (Trendelenburg, 1870: 39). What Trendelenburg here considers is the possibility that his objections rest on assessing the concept 'becoming' as if it were a concept of the movement we find in nature. Indeed, he indicates this in the text.

Becoming could never become out of being and not-being, if the representation of becoming did not come before. Out of pure being, an acknowledged abstraction, and out of nothingness, also an acknowledged abstraction, becoming, this concrete intuition commanding life and death, cannot emerge. (Trendelenburg, 1870: 38)

For Trendelenburg, the concept 'becoming' can only be a concept of the kind of movement that we find in spatiotemporal intuition. He acknowledges that an objector will assert that the concept of the movement of pure thinking is a concept of a different kind of movement than that which we find in spatiotemporal intuition. Yet, he says, nobody has stated this difference. Nobody has given an adequate account of the difference.

The argument I have presented sets the basis for responding to a challenge implied in Trendelenburg's text. My strategy is not to argue for a different kind of movement to that found in spatiotemporal intuition. As stated in the opening sections of this essay, it is the same concept instantiated in thinking and in reality. However, I argue for a related difference. I argue that the concept 'becoming' is moving not in the sense that it is intuited as moving. Or, in the terms in which I have put it above, it is not moving in the sense that acquiring or using that concept constitutively involves a mental activity (whether thinking or intuiting or whatever) that is *about* some movement. Rather, it is that using this concept *is* a movement.

As such, the difference between the movement of outer nature and the movement of inner nature is not to be stated. However, the difference between movement of things thought about and thought moving is to be emphasised. This could be the form basis for establishing a distinction between the movement of outer nature and that of inner thinking. Time, Hegel says, in the *Philosophy of Nature* is (and only is) 'intuited becoming':

[i]t is the being which, in that it *is*, is *not*, and in that it is *not*, *is*. It is intuited becoming. (PN §258)

If becoming is the most general sense of movement, one can say that insofar as movement in its most general sense is in the *content* of thinking, then this movement is *time*. The most general sense in which movement can be the *content* of thinking is time. The most general sense in which movement can be the *form* of thinking is becoming. Thus, when Trendelenburg or a follower objects that the concept 'becoming' is not about the becoming we know from intuition and holds this to exemplify a restriction on the system as a whole, the response is to be that the *Logic* is the wrong place to look.

The becomings they are looking for can be found elsewhere in the system. I won't have the space to develop these ideas further in this essay, but they point towards ways in which the ideas found here will be developed further. This won't placate adherents to Trendelenburg's understanding of what the concept 'becoming' requires. I have argued that Hegel and Trendelenburg demand different things of the concept 'becoming'. Insofar as I have only shown that Hegel's demands for this concept are different to Trendelenburg's, I have not shown that Hegel meets Trendelenburg's demands. Indeed, I have accepted that he can't.

I have accepted that Hegel's concept 'becoming' cannot be a concept *of* movement in the way Trendelenburg seems to demand it to be. However, in seeing how Hegel can respond to Trendelenburg, we have gained a more precise understanding of what sense 'becoming' has in the system with respect to movement. We have seen that 'becoming' is a concept *with* movement, namely the movement *of* thinking, but it is not a concept *of* movement. This can be used to clarify some of Hegel's uses of 'becoming' in the system and mark the beginning of an attempt to address some of the questions outlined above.

## Part II

### *Senses of Movement*

#### §13 Introduction to the different senses of movement

This is a constructive account of the senses of movement to be found in the following key passage from the *Phenomenology's* preface:

Science may organise itself only through the proper life of the concept. The determinateness which was taken from the schema and externally stuck onto existence is in science the self-moving soul of the content which has been brought to fruition. On the one hand, the movement of 'what is' consists in becoming an other to itself and thus becoming its own immanent content; on the other hand, it takes this unfolding back into itself, that is, it takes its existence back into itself, which is to say, it makes itself into a moment, and it simplifies itself into determinateness. (*Phen.* §53, translation modified)

I will try to draw a distinction between movement understood in three different ways. I consider these to be three different aspects of movement and as such, the same movement can instantiate all three.

The first is that of pure movement. This is the gerund *qua* verb: falling, reaching, etc. When this verb is 'thinking', I have called this an act-level interpretation. The second is that of 'becoming other'. This can be expressed with a gerund in its nominal form. That is, it is expressed as a gerund with a noun identifying that to which the movement identified by the gerund relates. For instance, reaching for *the pen*, falling to *the ground*. When the gerund is 'thinking', the noun identifies the content of thinking. For instance, thinking about *my day*, thinking through *a problem*, or thinking of *something*. It is this which is identified in an 'act-level' reading of Hegel's logic of the kind I have offered above in terms of the act of abstraction.

There is also becoming *other*, where the noun identifies something distinct from the movement identified with the gerund. Thinking *about my day* is 'becoming other', since it is a movement or becoming (thinking) that

comes to a rest in something other than that thinking (my day). It is thus 'other' in two ways. Firstly, the concept of that identified with the gerund is distinct from the concept of that identified with the noun. Secondly, as just stated, the gerund identifies an ongoing *process* and the noun attached to it identifies something other than a process. When the gerund is 'thinking' the noun is classed as 'content'. It is what thinking is *about*. In this case, (1) the concepts of thinking and the content are still distinct and (2) the content of thinking is different to the act of thinking.

Self-movement is the third kind of movement. Self-movements are articulated just like 'becoming other'. However, in self-movement the gerund identifies the process whereby that which is identified by the noun comes to be. Examples of this include 'growing of the tree', 'development of the idea', and 'constructing the house'. It is a self-movement because the movement constitutes the result of the movement. This is not the case in 'reaching for the pen' or 'falling to the ground'. Reaching does not *constitute* the pen. Falling does not constitute the ground. When the gerund of a proposition expressing self-movement is 'thinking', the noun identifies a thought. In 'thinking a thought', there is self-movement in that 'thinking' refers to the process that constitutes the result of thinking, its content (the thought).

#### **§14 Pure movement**

Any gerund in its verbal form (abstracted from a noun), is a movement. Take a movement such as the ink falling to the ground. 'Falling' *alone* is a movement. Thus, the ink and its destination are not necessary for identifying the ink falling to the ground as a movement. The tree becoming ash is a movement. However, the 'becoming' alone is movement. One need not make reference to (1) what *S* is becoming *F* or (2) what *F* *S* is becoming. 'Becoming' alone is a movement. Concepts of movement are intelligible independently of the thing moving or the result of the movement. Becoming, Hegel says, is the equilibrium of coming and ceasing to be (*SL* 21.93).

The account of becoming in the *Science of Logic* makes many references to otherness. Of being and nothing, Hegel says,

*each immediately vanishes in its opposite. Their truth is therefore this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one into the other. (SL 21.69)*

'[B]eing and nothing are each unseparated from its other' (SL 21.92), 'each is in their distinguishedness a unity with the *other*' (SL 21.93). There is otherness not only at the level of the 'parts' of becoming, but also in its internal relations. 'The one is ceasing-to-be; being passes over into nothing [...] This coming-to-be is the other direction' (SL 21.93). In the sublation of becoming, the concept of becoming will be shown to have a result. This result is the *existent* or *Dasein* — what Hegel calls a 'quiescent unity' (SL 21.93). This result is *other* than the becoming. It is stable.

Yet, as Hegel discusses how this quiescent unity emerges it turns out that the becoming that we have been looking at did not count as the simple unity of pure being and pure nothing. What was established in becoming was merely the vanishing of being into nothing and back into being (coming to be) or the vanishing of nothing into being and back into nothing (ceasing to be). This vanishing never constituted a positive, restful unity of being and pure nothing that Trendelenburg, for instance, supposes. The unity was only the vanishing, only the movement, which did not count as a simple, restful unity. That restful unity only comes about in *Dasein*, which is becoming's 'other'.

As Hegel puts it, difference is key:

[B]ecoming is the vanishing of being into nothing, and of nothing into being, and the vanishing of being and nothing in general; but at the same time it rests on their being distinct. It therefore contradicts itself in itself, because what it unites within itself is self-opposed; but such a union destroys itself. (SL 21.93-94)

As I understand it, the 'union [that] destroys itself' is the *negative* and thereby *unrestful* unity of vanishing. It is unrestful in the sense that the unity is only captured in a *process* of thought with different moments, not

a single thought. Yet, as we have seen, vanishing does not occur at the level of content. At the level of content we only have empty content. The vanishing, as I have presented it, is just the shift in emphasis between the two forms of thinking that one content. Now, as we have seen above, I follow Houlgate in holding that this shift is because of the nature of the content itself (namely, its emptiness) and so I remain committed to the immanent reading of the *Logic* he employs. However, I hold that the vanishing is *in thought*, in its *intention*, which is the direction of thinking's pure movement, its becoming.

The vanishing is only a change in form, a change in the activity of thinking about that same content. Being and nothing are simply identical in content. Yet, in the activity of thinking, they are distinct. As we have seen, this distinction is in intention. Thus, when Hegel writes of the unity of being and nothing in vanishing, I hold that this is the form-level distinction of one and the same content. Yet this unity 'destroys itself' because

[b]eing and nothing are in it only as vanishing; becoming itself, however, is only by virtue of their being distinguished. Their vanishing is therefore the vanishing of becoming, or the vanishing of the vanishing itself. (SL 21.94)

Here, just as being and nothing were the terms of a unity and the relations of that unity (being is nothing and is not nothing), so in becoming we have the vanishing of each term's identity (because contentless) and thereby the vanishing of their difference (because both are contentless) and, in turn, we now have the vanishing of vanishing itself. If every term and relation is contentless and vanishes for this reason, then the vanishing itself is a vanishing of contentless pure thinking of nothing and becomes thinking of something, of content: 'as existent or [what] has the shape of the one-sided immediate unity of these moments' (SL 21.94).

*Dasein* is 'at rest', it is 'quiescent simplicity' (SL 21.94). Anything 'at rest' is not becoming. So, *Dasein* is not becoming. Not being becoming is being other to becoming. So, *Dasein* is other than becoming. Yet thinking

through the concept of becoming necessarily leads to the concept of *Dasein*. So, it necessarily leads to what is other than becoming. So, isn't becoming intrinsically related to what is other than becoming? Then isn't becoming intelligible only with *Dasein*? If so, then becoming is not intelligible in abstraction from otherness. I hold that *Dasein* is a shift to a new concept.

The concept of becoming does indeed lead to the concept of *Dasein* by necessity and so 'becoming' does *become other*. However, *Dasein* is not part of the content of the concept of becoming, which is an independent kind of unity: a negative, as opposed to a positive unity. So, the content of the concept of becoming is still intelligible independently of otherness. However, there is a way in which it might be said that the content of the concept of becoming includes otherness. The concept 'becoming' is that of the inseparability and difference of pure being and pure nothing. Yet difference implies otherness. So, the concept 'becoming' is, it seems, a concept with otherness as part of its content.

Hegel says that pure being and pure nothing are indistinguishable in their content. Yet this indistinguishability of content implies there is no difference or otherness. So there is no otherness in the content of the concept of becoming. Nonetheless, Hegel does say that pure being and pure nothing are distinguished. As we have seen, pure being and pure nothing are distinguished in intention alone (or in mere opinion, as Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia*). As such, the difference of pure being and pure nothing is not at the level of content. The difference of pure being and pure nothing is not sufficient for any otherness in the content of the concept of becoming. So, the difference between becoming and *becoming other* corroborates the distinctions between the content and the intention of thinking used in Part I.

Movements identified with gerunds in abstraction from any nouns are pure movements. When the gerund is 'thinking', the movement is that of 'pure thinking'. This is thinking in abstraction from content. This is sufficient for movement, for Hegel. One does not need to ascribe content to thinking to ascribe movement to it. One also does not need to ascribe thinking to a *thinker* to ascribe movement to it. Pure movement, without



agent or result, is intelligible. Pure thinking, without thinker or thought, is intelligible. One might find this to be a familiar idea of 'Heraclitean flux'.

On the view I have suggested, becoming is thinkable *without thinking about anything* and *solely* by thinking pure being and pure nothing *a priori*. The process of thinking through different acts of thinking, regardless of the content, is sufficient for movement.

I would now like to look at three problems for my understanding of 'pure becoming'. The first is a philosophical worry. I have invoked 'becoming' in the preceding to explain a *pure* sense of movement. To analyse movement in terms of becoming has questionable lacking explanatory value if becoming is itself a movement. This would mean explaining movement as such in terms of a particular instance of it, which is potentially a distortion at best and circular at worst.

The second worry is exegetical, on whether I can be right that the concept of becoming is a concept of pure movement. Becoming is passive. Yet the passive is different from the active. 'I became overweight' means something different to 'I made myself overweight'. So, becoming is different from the active. 'Acting' is a gerund. We said above that any gerund captures 'pure movement'. So, 'acting' captures a pure movement. We said that 'active' is different from 'passive'. Similarly, 'acting' is different from 'becoming'. Yet, becoming is and only is a concept of pure movement. In what sense is the active different from this? If incompatible and 'becoming' (which is passive) is the purest (most general) sense of movement, then activity could not involve movement, which would be strange at best and conceptually impossible (if activity is intentional movement) at worst.

The third worry is that just as 'pure being' is abstracted from every determinate being, so 'pure movement' should be so from every determinate movement, and so to call things like 'thinking' and 'reaching' pure movements as I have done is to make a mistake. It would be like calling particular beings 'pure being'. Furthermore, 'becoming' has some kind of determinacy within it, namely that of *nothing* ('nothing is').

Let us take these in order. On the first, Hegel's account of the concept of becoming is derived from more basic concepts. These concepts (pure being and pure nothing) do not have movement as their conceptual content (as we will see later). So, Hegel's concept of becoming is derived from concepts that are not of movement. So, the concept of becoming itself is not circular. Nonetheless, the concept of becoming is a concept of movement. So, another worry about circularity remains. To analyse the concept of movement with a concept of an instance movement is not of explanatory value.

I avoid this worry because I hold that the concept of becoming is not a concept of movement. A concept is only a concept of movement if it has movement as its conceptual content. Movement is not part of the conceptual content of the concept of 'becoming'. So, the concept of 'becoming' is not a concept of movement. That movement is not part of the conceptual content of the concept of 'becoming' is apparent from the following. There is no conceptual content of becoming that is not the content of pure being or pure nothing. The content of the concepts of being and pure nothing is not movement (and cannot be because that content, in both cases, is nothing). So, movement is not part of the conceptual content of 'becoming'.

So, to specify what precisely the content of the concept of movement is in terms of the content of the concept of becoming is not circular. The content of the former concept is movement. The content of the latter concept is not movement, but nothing at all.<sup>29</sup>

Now, onto the second worry. Hegel does hold to a distinction between acting and becoming. Yet, acting is a more complex determination of becoming. Activity, for Hegel, is to be conceived of as the negation of the 'othering' in 'becoming other' (to be looked at below), but not the becoming. The qualification is that the becoming's result is a 'self' rather than an 'other'. To be a more complex determination of becoming

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<sup>29</sup> It also cannot be movement, since this would introduce content other than that found in pure being and pure nothing.

requires that it is not the opposite of becoming. So, acting and becoming are not opposites.<sup>30</sup>

The third worry is answered by extending the answer to the second one. Acting is a further determination of becoming. Likewise, any movement is a further determination of becoming. Any characteristics of X apply to all the determinations of X. So, any characteristics of becoming will apply to all the determinations of becoming. As such, they will apply to any movement whatsoever.

### §15 'Becoming an other to itself'

On the one hand, the movement of 'what is' consists in becoming an other to itself and thus in becoming its own immanent content. (*Phen.* §53)

The second kind of movement is that of 'becoming other'. It is that aspect of movement that requires reference to otherness. This is expressed with a gerund with a noun. For instance, reaching for *the pen*, falling to *the ground*. That noun must identify that to which the movement identified by the gerund relates. The pen is what is reached for. The ground is what is fallen to. The noun must also refer to something that is an *other* to becoming. It is 'other' in two ways.

As stated above, thinking *about my day* is 'becoming other', since it is a movement or becoming (thinking) that comes to a rest in something other than that thinking (my day). It is thus 'other' in two ways. Firstly, the concept of that identified with the gerund is distinct from the concept of that identified with the noun. Secondly, as just stated, the gerund identifies an ongoing *process* and the noun attached to it identifies something other than a process. When the gerund is 'thinking' the noun is classed as 'content'. It is what thinking is *about*. In this case, (1) the

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<sup>30</sup> When I use 'concept', I mean to classify what it is at the act-level: a structured and unified act of thought. The content of the concept of a concept, however, will be a lot more complicated and is explicated in the very ending of the *Science of Logic* and the subsequent parts of the system.

concepts of thinking and the content are still distinct and (2) the content of thinking is different to the act of thinking.

The 'other' is characterisable as *Dasein*. In 'becoming other', the becoming 'receive[s] its determinateness from an other'. Determinateness is differentiation.<sup>31</sup> The point here is as follows. Becoming is conceptually prior to becoming other. When otherness is expressed with becoming then difference is also expressed: namely, the difference of becoming and the other. In expressions of 'becoming other', the particular kind of movement and the 'other' in question qualify the intelligibility of (or 'mediate') the other.

The 'becoming' of 'becoming other' is understood in exactly the same way as it would be outside of that relation. The 'reaching' in 'reaching for the pen' is understood in just the same way as it is when reaching *as such* (that is, as a pure movement) is expressed. The same is true of the 'other'. 'The pen' is understood in the same way in 'reaching for the pen' and in the simple reference with 'the pen'. There needs to be no constitutive relation between *Dasein* and the becoming that produces it at this level of becoming other. As one author puts it,

[f]rom the perspective of simpler stages of immediacy, mediation appears as an external relation among otherwise independent phenomena. (Bykova, 2013: 232)

The qualification that this is from the 'perspective of simpler stages of immediacy' anticipates that not all terms will be related in this external manner. We will see how this is not the case in the third kind of movement, self-movement.

Before that, I want to differentiate expressions of 'becoming other' from another kind of expression of movement. Sarah Broadie has highlighted specific kind of movement to which 'becoming other' might seem similar: E(mergence)-movement (95-96).<sup>32</sup> This captures the idea of

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<sup>31</sup> 'This state of sublation of the distinction is existence's own determinateness; existence is thus *being-in-itself*; it is *existent, something*' (SL 21.103).

<sup>32</sup> Broadie calls it 'change' but she might just as well have called it 'movement',

being able to express a movement simply with reference to something being different to how it was before. This movement is that which is the result of moving to B from A. When I move my lunchtime from 13:00 to 14:00, the E-movement is that lunch is at 14:00 (instead of 13:00).

No doubt there were conditions C causally related to the emergence of B, but these were not the change to B itself, nor any part of the change. (Broadie/Waterlow, 1982: 95).

'Becoming other' is not an E-movement. An expression of an E-movement can be made with a simple predicative proposition 'it is *F*' with a contrast of *F* with some other state, '(it was *Z*)', that need not be made explicit. Such a simple predicative proposition and the relevant contrast, then, need not make reference to the process whereby *F* came to be. Yet, such a reference is required for expressions of 'becoming other'. So, an expression of an E-movement need not be an expression of a 'becoming other'. There is a further difference.

If an expression of an E-movement requires reference to a state of affairs with which the result of the movement is to be contrasted, then the expression of an E-movement is a more complex expression of becoming than that of a 'becoming other'. If an E-movement requires that contrast, it requires something that 'becoming other' does not. 'Moving to 14:00' is an adequate expression of a 'becoming other'. It does not require reference to what is moved from, 13:00, for instance. Yet, any expression of becoming that requires something in addition to that required by an expression of becoming other must be a more complex form of becoming than 'becoming other'.

So, 'becoming other' does not express movement by expressing something being different to how it was before. This is despite the quote indicating that it becomes 'other *to itself*' (§53, emphasis added). The 'itself' here need only refer, I hold, to the becoming, even if in more complex cases of movement the contrasting case is indicated, too.

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since she aims to capture the sense of the ancient Greek '*kinesis*' which does not differentiate between change and movement.

Let us look at a concept of change that *does* captures becoming 'other'. This is the 'L(eading to)-concept' change, which *includes*

the conditions that causally led up to the emergence of B [the new state]. Far from being all of the change [as in E-concept change], the emergence itself is the culmination of a prior state of affairs which as a whole is regarded as the change to B. (Broadie/Waterlow, 1982: 96)

This is a *process* change. The L-concept version of the change of my lunchtime from 13:00 to 14:00 would include causally influencing factors that occurred prior to the end of the process, the result. Examples include setting up a meeting, deciding to eat later, and letting my understanding friends know. The gerund and its result-noun *together* and *only together* indicate an L-concept.

The distinction between E- and L-concept *changes* is supposed to apply to cases of *movements*, too, since it is supposed to capture the ancient Greek word '*kinesis*', which does not distinguish between change and movement. Hegel's concept of mediation is intended to capture the L-concept of change, which is the process and result. 'Hegel uses "mediation" to refer to both a process and its result' (Bykova, 2013: 232).

'Becoming other' is, however, an L-concept change where the *other* is comprehended independently of that process. In that respect, it shares something with the E-concept change.

## §16 Self-movement

[O]n the other hand, it takes this unfolding back into itself, that is, it takes its existence back into itself, which is to say, it makes itself into a moment, and it simplifies itself into determinateness. (*Phen.* §53)

Self-movement is the third kind of movement. Self-movement is that which is expressed in an expression of how 'what is' or *Dasein* 'takes this

unfolding back into itself' (*Phen.* §53).<sup>33</sup> Self-movements are just like 'becoming other': again the distinction is not in the expression's grammar. These are three different aspects of movement. Self-movement differs from pure movement and becoming other in the gerund identifying the process whereby that which is identified by the noun (the other, the *Dasein* in becoming other) comes to be. Examples include 'growing of the tree', 'developing of the idea', and 'constructing of the house'. Self-movements can also be expressed by nominalising the verb, for example, with 'the growth of the tree', 'the development of the idea', or the 'construction of the house'.

The process here is a process of construction or a process of development.<sup>34</sup> Thus, 'thinking about my plans' could be thinking about plans that are already made. In this case, it is a 'becoming other'. If, however, it is thinking that is constructing these plans, then it could be a 'self-movement'. The result of a self-movement is not 'other' to the process identified in the expression. It is a 'moment' of the process. The result of the process is not thought as a moment rather than an other. It is a 'self-movement' in this way.

The identity, though, is still that of a *process* and some *Dasein*. It is not of one *Dasein* producing another *Dasein*. The agent, that is, is the process itself, not a *Dasein*, not a stable existent. So, 'I'm reaching for the pen' is a self-movement just because of the relation of 'reaching' and 'the pen', not because of a relation *me* and *the pen* or of *me*, *reaching*, and *the pen*. Self-movement differs from 'becoming other', I hold, just in the relation of the result of the movement and the process that leads to that result. Reference to an agent is contingent for expressing self-movements.

As such, the movement of self-movement need not be absolutely opposed in kind as *activity* to the *passivity* of becoming. As presented in

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<sup>33</sup> Self-movement is described in many vivid ways, including a return to self and a coming home.

<sup>34</sup> *Pace* La Montagne (2012: 87) I don't hold 'becoming' to be sufficient for 'self-development'. 'Becoming other' is not sufficient for self-movement since pure movement does not 'develop' but simply becomes and in 'becoming other' the 'otherness' is precisely not, *qua* other, a *self*. Self-development is an instance of self-movement only.

§53, self-movement is a development from becoming other. It 'takes this unfolding [its product] back into itself' (§53). I read this as it reconceptualising the 'other' such as to not be other anymore.

Recall, we saw two senses in which there must be 'otherness' in 'becoming other'. Firstly, the concept of that identified with the gerund is distinct from the concept of that identified with the noun. The concept of reaching and the concept of the pen are different concepts. Secondly, the gerund identifies a movement and the noun attached to it identifies something that is not necessarily a movement (since not expressed with the gerund). In self-movement, the concept of that identified with the gerund is still distinct. The growing and the tree are identified with different concepts. So, the first sense of otherness is the same in 'becoming other' and in 'self-movement'.

However, the second sense is different. In self-movement, the result of the movement is identified *as a moment of* that process that brought it about. '[I]t makes itself into a moment' (§53). In one sense, this doesn't alter the intrinsic intelligibility of the oak tree at all. It just adds another feature to it, or a developmental context, or a causal origin, perhaps. I think the point Hegel seeks to make, though, is that our understanding of the *Dasein* itself does change as we consider it no longer under its aspect as *other* from its process but as a *moment* of that process.

Not only is the oak now a moment of a process, but now the difference between it and the process is internalised to the process. That is, whilst a tree is not to be equated with its process, that which serves to distinguish them, that one is static and the other a process, is itself a moment of a process. This is how I understand Hegel's claim that 'it simplifies itself into determinateness' (*Phen.* §53). The simplification is that there is now just one identity rather than two: that of the process encompassing its static moments, rather than the process of growing and the static oak. Determinateness is differentiation. So, the simplification into determinateness is to make the point that it establishes a single identity that is *internally* differentiated. What is this internal differentiation?



In some ways, this means that the process that was previously the agent of an external product (the other), now internalises this other and so it can be said to be the agent of itself rather than an other. Now, it is no longer 'growing into an oak tree' nor 'growth of the oak tree'. The oak is just a moment of its process. It is thus not a process that essentially tends towards the oak tree and then ceases. The oak tree drops its acorns and eventually gives way for them to grow. The 'self' of self-movement has a contrastive sense. It is no longer 'other' but a movement into a moment of itself. As such, it is a self-movement. This 'self' is not supposed to lead one to confuse things with *conscious* agents.

How are self-movements expressed? In some sense, it seems the expression should be 'growing', since this is the expression of the process without expressing another into which the process leads. However, that is also how one would express a 'pure movement', as we have seen above.

As I understand it, self-movement ought to be distinguished from pure movement. Hegel presents 'self-movement' as something that happens *after* becoming other. In order to express a self-movement's moments, one must express how self-movement results in an other that is then reconceptualised as its moment. An expression of a pure movement does not require this. That can be done simply through reference with the gerund. Here, what is required is an expression of self-movement with an expression of 'becoming other' showing how this 'becoming other' 'makes itself a moment' and 'simplifies itself into determinateness'. So, there is, at least, a difference in how these are to be expressed.

The growth of the oak tree is thus a self-movement in the following way: (1) growing (pure movement); (2) growing into an oak (becoming other), where the oak is the product of an external agent, the growing; and (3) 'growing' (self-movement), where the growing differentiates itself into its moments (the acorn, the sapling, the oak, etc.). Note how this is a reconceptualisation, not a difference in the real oak itself.

When the gerund is 'thinking' in self-movements, the thinking is taken to have content by differentiating itself into its moments. Furthermore, thinking does not come to a rest in the content of thinking. The content is now taken to be a moment of the process of thinking rather

than that in which it comes to a rest. In one case we have something like thinking about my plans, where thinking thereby comes to a rest in 'my plans' or, in other words, 'my plans' is the thought that thinking comes to. In another we have thinking about my plans as a self-movement where (1) thinking itself *produces* the result; (2) the product is a moment of the thinking process, but does not contain the whole of it. That is, the self-movement of thinking is a whole process of thinking that produces its own moments.

This is an L-concept change, but with the qualifications just stated.

In self-movement, process and result are not only connected. They are inseparable:

in Hegel's system, every result necessarily includes the process leading up to it [...] In reality, however, mediation expresses the crucial interconnection of phenomena which themselves have significance only as parts of a comprehensive whole. Thus thought's mediating process is a progression towards ever-greater determinateness and concreteness; it is the development of an integrated unity of opposites which exists for itself. (Bykova, 2013: 232)

As I suggested, the account involves characterising existents as mere *moments* of whole movements. These movements will, in turn, be products of wider, more holistic movements as each movement is shown to have some *otherness* as a result, for which a new process must be found. So goes the 'progression toward ever greater determinateness'. The recognition of the intrinsic relation between the processes and results in a further aspect of that movement, its self-movement, gives the original movement 'greater determinateness and concreteness'.

At the level of the activity of thinking, this greater determinateness and concreteness involves the content of thinking (thinking's *other*) being recognised as determinate and as other only in virtue of thinking employing a particular concept and the movement is thereby revealed as a self-movement: the act of thinking and the content of thinking. Self-

movement, then, is taking this other ('this unfolding') back into itself. It 'takes its existence back into itself' (*Phen.* §53). The latter means that it 'takes itself as a moment' and 'simplifies itself into determinateness' (*Phen.* §53).

'Itself' here refers to the movement of thinking or the content. There are two ways of reading it. The movement returns to itself or results in that movement that it is rather than resulting in something other than that movement on the act-level. The 'existence' here is the 'other' which the movement became or the content of thinking. This indicates that becoming other, or having content is necessary for the self-movement of thinking even if not necessary for the pure movement.<sup>35</sup>

The result of self-movement is not this other but rather 'determinateness'. That the movement, as Hegel says in §53 of the *Phenomenology*, 'simplifies itself into determinateness' means that the becoming has a product and that product is the self, that which identifies the process in a self-movement. That it makes itself a moment is elaborated on further in the section on difference and identity in the *Logic* when Hegel says that '[b]oth difference and identity make themselves into *moment* or *positedness* [(or determinateness, as noted at II.267)] because, as

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<sup>35</sup> According to one commentator, what Hegel means by self-movement is a process in which spirit 'becomes aware of its opposition against all otherness' (Jonkers, 2012: 187). From the account I have given, we can see in what sense, indeed, self-movement involves opposition against otherness. Self-movement is, by contrast with movement as such or 'becoming other', the result of making the other that is the result of movement a moment of the becoming rather than a result that is external to the becoming. It thus indeed harbours an opposition against otherness insofar as the result of movement qua self-movement is not an 'other' but a self. Jonkers is thus also right to suggest the reflexivity of the result in stating that spirit becomes aware of *its* opposition against all otherness. Jonkers also highlights, though, that his formulation is only meant to capture self-movement as found in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. I hold that the account of movement is constant throughout the systematic works. Yet I agree that it takes different forms in the different parts of the system. As I see it, the difference is in the subject that it is moving. Whilst in the *logic* the subject is pure thinking, in the *philosophy of spirit*, the subject is spirit. I see one way of cashing out this thought is to say that the pure thinking and spirit are different ways of characterising *otherness*. In *logic*, the other of pure thinking is determinate content. In *spirit*, the otherness is that of the particular thinker, with each stage progressing to a more universal conception of rational agency until philosophy itself brings us back to the notion of pure thinking but through self-abstracting rather than other abstracting, as in the pure act of abstraction. Every movement of spirit is a self-movement, but what is at issue is what exactly that 'self' is.

reflection, they are negative self-reference' (II.266). A moment is an other to which something relates that is constitutive of its self-movement. Difference makes itself into a moment because it refers to itself as an other (the different must be different from difference) and this 'negative self-reference' constitutes what it is (and leads to identity).

The concept of something's essence, however, is a concept of its becoming (in thought) and it as content (of thought). 'Its concrete existence is only this movement, and it is immediately logical existence' (*Phen.* §51). The concept of an essence is such that it is the concept of a process and a result and this inter-connection (and so is concrete).<sup>36</sup>

There is often sensitivity to this in the literature, even when it is not explicitly acknowledged. In discussing consciousness and self-consciousness, for instance, Peter Simpson notes that '[t]o be self-conscious is to have the movement of experiencing that is in-itself, for-itself. If it merely posits itself as that truth, it is no different from the in-itself, or conscious life, because *its own movement means nothing to it*' (Simpson, 1998: 51). Hegel's distinction between movement and self-movement is in play here. Positing is a relation to an other and so is a form of 'becoming other', or mere movement.

Insofar as consciousness is the product of a mere movement, it is an other to the process that produced it or, as Simpson puts it above, '*its own movement means nothing to it*'. To be self-conscious is to have that movement as incorporated or embodied, part of the consciousness that is the result of this process. That is the sense, too, in which 'in its movement' it is 'the expression of the truth of selfhood' (Simpson, 1998: 51). To be a self just is to incorporate the movement that produced one, but it is thereby to become something stable, a *Dasein*, and so the dialectic continues and deepens.

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<sup>36</sup> Hegel's qualification that this is logical necessity might lead one to think that this account of necessity will not apply in the philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit in the way it does in the logic. To hold this, one might hold that the logical necessity plays no role in the other parts of the system or that it plays a role, though it is limited or augmented somehow. The clear parallels between sections of the *Logic* and the other two sections decisively disprove this in my eyes, but don't have space to address this concern here.

The account of self-movement here should be distinguished from one intuitive sense of self-movement. If *I* am producing some movement and the movement is the movement of *me*, then I am moving myself. This is a plausible way of talking about self-movement. This depends on the identity of the agent and patient of movement. This is a plausible meaning for 'self-movement' but I don't think it is the meaning Hegel has in mind. As we saw, Hegel takes self-movement to involve a distinct result of movement.

The distinction between movement and self-movement can be made without reference to either (1) an agent preceding the movement that initiated that movement or (2) the identity of the thing moving and the thing being moved. Yet both (1) and (2) are required for identifying the above sense of self-movement. So, the distinction in Hegel's work is not between movement and the intuitive sense of self-movement just laid out. Let's try and be a little clearer on this point.

In some respects, the becoming is itself the agent. It acts on the content. However, the notion that self-movement requires a stable existent that produces the movement ought to be rejected from a Hegelian standpoint. If there is an origin of the movement, it is contingent to the intelligibility of that movement. Movement, that is, is epistemologically basic in this context. It does not require a prior understanding of something at rest with a capacity to move something, say.

### **§17 Purpose and philosophical thinking**

The understanding of self-movement I have attributed to Hegel clarifies the following argument from the 1807 *Phenomenology*:

*Logical necessity* in general consists in the nature of what it is to be 'its concept' in 'its being'. This alone is the rational, the rhythm of the organic whole, and it is equally as much the *knowledge* of the content as that content itself is the concept and the essence — that is, it is this alone which is the *speculative*. – The concrete shape which sets itself into movement makes itself into simple determinateness, and it thereby elevates itself to logical form and exists in its essentiality. (§56)

This is an act-level description. As the act of thinking, self-movement means the 'concrete shape' of the content just is the act of thinking. It is not distinct from the becoming as it is in the case of becoming other.

The *Phenomenology* provides an account of the concept of 'purpose' as both a concept of a state of rest and a concept of movement. Hegel says that 'purpose is the immediate, is what is at rest, is self-moving' (§22). Purpose is both 'at rest' and 'self-moving'. This is not an isolated incident. However, we will focus on it because of the importance, for Hegel, that he is right on this point. It is of fundamental importance in grasping the operation of speculative reason.

The context of the claim makes clear its importance. In §22, Hegel is outlining in what sense 'reason is *purposive activity*'. He uses the above characterisation of purpose to make his point. According to Hegel, since 'purpose is the immediate, is what is at rest, is self-moving', 'it is subject' (§22). The full argument for this is as follows. In §16, Hegel argues that it is necessary to overcome *formalism* in philosophical science. Yet, '[i]t will not disappear until the knowledge of absolute actuality has become completely clear about its own nature' (§16). To this end, in §17, Hegel introduces the claim that 'everything hangs on apprehending and expressing the true not as *substance* but rather even more as *subject*' (§17).

As I understand it, the argument in §22 is that reason is subjective (in Hegel's sense of 'subjective'). '[R]eason is *purposive activity*' (§22). '[P]urpose is the immediate, is what is at rest, is self-moving, that is, is subject' (§22). Therefore, reason is subjective.<sup>37</sup> That purpose is at rest *and* self-moving is therefore central to this argument that reason is subjective. Why is this argument so important? In the quote from §17, we saw Hegel

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<sup>37</sup> The conclusion should be expressed 'reason is subjective', since the alternative would be that reason 'is subject' and that cannot be the most palatable expression of the conclusion for the following reasons. Consider the following argument. I am a rational animal. Reason is power. Therefore, I am power. This doesn't seem like a very good argument. A more sensible conclusion, it seems, would be that 'I am *powerful*'. That is, a more sensible conclusion would express the predicate of the second premiss in its adjectival form in the conclusion. This seems to be because it took an adjectival form in the first premiss. So, Hegel's conclusion ought not to be reason is subject, but reason is *subjective*. Purpose is subject, and reason 'is subject' because it is *purposive*. Reason is subjective.

claiming that the true ought to be apprehended and expressed as subjective. In §23, Hegel talks of '[t]he need to represent the absolute as *subject*'.

These are foundational, methodological points. They aim to set up a basic requirement for philosophy that 'formalism' cannot meet. In turn, they help to motivate speculative philosophy, which claims to be able to meet this end. Insofar as a necessary condition of being a subject or subjective is that one is at rest and self-moving, and a necessary condition of an adequate philosophical system is that it be organised on the principle that reason is subjective, then a necessary condition of an adequate philosophical system is that it be organised on the principle that reason is 'at rest' and 'self-moving'.

The idea of purpose as at rest and self-movement straight away throws doubt on one reading of one of Trendelenburg's arguments. That is, on any argument that includes within it the premiss that something cannot be moving because it is at rest. This would preclude the possibility of an internal criticism *or* it must be shown that Hegel is wrong in either (1) holding rest and movement to be *in some sense* compatible; (2) his understanding of subjective reason (a) as such or (b) its importance for philosophy. The absolute incompatibility of rest and movement as characteristics of concepts, however, cannot be assumed and used to rule out any of Hegel's conceptual derivations. That would be to preclude from the get go the possibility of the speculative standpoint in philosophy.

We have given an account of in what sense a movement's process can be understood as a self-movement. Yet it also seems that the *result* of movement can be self-moving. Hegel expresses this in talking about the content. He says that in self-movement,

the content gives itself this determinateness, it bestows on itself the status of being a moment, and it gives itself a place in the whole. (*Phen.* §53)

Let us use this to think about what the self-movement of thinking would be. Let's take 'thinking about an idea' as an example. This is 'becoming other' insofar as the idea is distinct from 'thinking' in (1) being identified with different concepts and (2) thinking being a process and 'idea' not being a process. This passage speaks from the perspective of the *content* rather than the *process*. Hegel aims to show how 'the content gives itself this determinateness, it bestows on itself the status of being a moment, and it gives itself a place in the whole' (§53).

Yet, I suggested above that self-movement was a process making the result of the process a moment of itself and thereby giving that moment a place in it as a moment. On the quote above, the content makes itself a moment and gives itself a place in the whole.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Hegel needs to think that the contents of thought can be self-moving, according to his own account of logical development. Consider the following quote from the *Encyclopaedia*:

The *drive* to find in being or in both a fixed meaning is the very *necessity* that expands [*weiterführt*] being and nothing and gives them a true, i.e. concrete meaning. This development is the logical elaboration and the progression presented in what follows. The process of *thinking them over* that *finds* deeper determinations for them is the logical thinking by means of which these determinations produce themselves. (EL §87)

Though Hegel is keen to emphasise that philosophical thinking is a process of thought, Hegel is equally keen to emphasise how the rationality of the process of thought is to be evaluated in terms of the content of

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<sup>38</sup> Hegel contrasts this with another case: 'the content shows that its determinateness is not first received from an other and then externally pinned onto it' (§53). The contrast here is not with the other senses of movement. It is rather with a different way of thinking grasping the determinateness in question. If thinking is thinking about some content, *x*, in terms of *a*, something other than *x*, it might do so via first thinking *a* then thinking *x* as *a*. In this sense, the determinateness of thinking is the determinateness of thinking *a* and *x* is made to fit into thinking *a*. This is what Hegel would call 'formalism'. Alternatively, one might think *x* in terms of *a* by thinking about how *a* gives differentiates itself and in doing so gives a place to *x*.



thought alone. Look at the second emphasis in the quote from the *Encyclopaedia* above. In philosophical activity, thinking, strictly speaking, does not produce the logical determinations, even if it does construct them for itself (the sense of which has been seen above). Rather, in the process of thinking over the determinations, one '*finds*' 'deeper' determinations (*EL* §87). It is crucial, for Hegel's purposes, that, as Hegel puts it, 'these determinations produce themselves' (*EL* §87). Self-production is a kind of self-movement. So, the contents must be self-producing, self-moving.

What has already come out of the above is the following. Firstly, the sense in which thinking, in being about contents, is a process of producing contents such that thinking itself is a kind of self-movement. Secondly, that these contents must produce themselves such that these contents are self-moving. In thinking about the contents, deeper determinations are found. These are produced by thinking insofar as they are moments of thinking's self-movement. However, they are also *found in* the content's own self-movement. The process of thinking thereby involves thinking about some determinations that are the moments of something *other* than the process of thinking: the self-determination of the content.

In §87 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, thinking also involves a drive to find a fixed meaning, a *result* for the process under investigation. Both of these last features suggest that insofar as the contents are self-moving, the thinking process ought to be characterised as 'becoming other'. They are contents produced by the contents' self-movement. To resolve the difficulty, we have to appreciate how Hegel holds that something can be self-moving whilst still being a moment of the self-movement of another.

In love, for instance, loving's movement involves loving *the other*. As such it is 'becoming other'. Yet it is also a self-movement, where that means that the other is not that in which the loving comes to an end but that the other (the beloved) is a moment of the process of loving alongside other moments such as desire, for example. The loving *continues on* even after it has 'reached' the other and loving is not exhausted by its reaching this other. Also, if there are two lovers, this logic does not change, it is just instantiated twice.

It is similarly so in the case of the content of philosophical thinking. Thinking extends to the content. Yet that which instantiates the role of the content can also instantiate the role of thinking such that the contents of the logic are themselves process of thinking with their result being that they are thought by the reader. The logic of thinking does not need to change. It is just instantiated twice. As such, the thinking produces or moves itself through and only through the content of thinking.

This content might be the thoughts in the mind of the reading philosopher (with the process of thinking being the process as found in the text).<sup>39</sup> Or, they might be the contents of the logic (with the process of thinking being the process as found in the mind).<sup>40</sup> In either case, the logic of the process of thinking and its content is present but instantiated differently. They are moments of the same process. Whether the philosopher is thinking these contents or the contents are thinking themselves is contingent to their identities *qua* movement.

Whether something counts as a self-movement for Hegel is independent of the origin of that movement. What matters is whether or not the result of some movement encompasses or embodies the movement of which it is the result. This contrasts with the intuitive understanding of self-movement, on which the proper classification of a movement as a self-movement depends upon the relation of that movement to the one originating or the one classifying the movement. On Hegel's view, the fact that the contents of thought only move because the philosopher is thinking them is not relevant to whether or not the content is self-moving.

The contents of thought move in as much as their result is the philosopher having some thought in mind. Something is expressed as moving, in Hegel's terms, independently of any agent other than the process itself. As such, the question of whether *I* or *they* are the agents of

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<sup>39</sup> Insofar as other, contingent content related to the philosopher who is instigating the thinking shows up (such as how agitated, tired, or happy one is), it is to be ignored as non-philosophical, for it is not the self that the process is interested in (which is the process).

<sup>40</sup> Insofar as thinking is active on any other content (such as the etymology of the words in which the thoughts are expressed), it is to be ignored as non-philosophical activity.

the process we find in the logic is contingent in this context. The *Logic* seeks only to give the logic of the movement independently of an agent other than the process.<sup>41</sup>

One implication of this is that metaphors of 'returns' and 'homecomings' in spirit are not to be understood as a reconciliation with some basic origin, not to be understood in a (stereotypically yet not entirely accurately) Rousseauan conception of an ideal primordial unity that we ought to strive to return to. For Hegel, coming home, returning home, and bringing back into oneself apply to things which never in the first place *left* home — which were never alienated from a prior origin. Such origins, on Hegel's terms, are what we work towards, rather than what we have come from. The resonances with Aristotle's unmoved mover, which is the origin of all movement through things' *love* for it, their search to *emulate* it, rather than due to its primordial existence, are strong (*Met. Λ, Phys. Θ*; cf. Ferrarin, 2004: 140ff.).

This involves embodying or encompassing the becoming that has produced one such that that becoming is characterised in terms of that end point and such that the end-point can be said to be self-moving. Reason is purpose, is subject, we saw Hegel say, in the sense that it is self-moving. This does not require that there is a purpose-force that exists prior to the result. What, in fact, occurs is that the resulting movement, as characterised as the purpose of what came before, ought to be characterised not just as a result or an external purpose but as the very character of the whole movement.

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<sup>41</sup> The issues we have explored above address what might seem like a paradoxical relationship between movement and self-movement. For Hegel, the latter is a result of the former. Yet self-movements, for Hegel, tend to lead to further problems. These categories tend to collapse. This leaves us with a sense of 'the need for reconciliation of a standpoint that is simply accomplished and a standpoint that is ever accomplishing itself' which 'poses the question of the place the philosopher holds' (Clark, 1971: 206). As I see it, Hegel does not see the philosopher as defunct, for it is vitally important that the categories are thought through by someone and the rationality of the movement evaluated for the mind passing through them. Without this, the categories have no actualisation. It does, however, leave a question of what the role of the philosopher is if, as is commonly conceived, the philosopher's role is to introduce novelty of proof or analysis and construction. As Hegel sees it, such activity is not speculative philosophy.

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## APPENDIX<sup>42</sup>

Adolf Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, pp. 36-40

3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870)

Through Hegel, logic has come to be transformed after the metaphysical aspect.<sup>43</sup> His dialectical method promises to achieve to the highest degree what we in formal logic miss. It takes a bold grip to develop thought and being in unity and, in the way it expresses itself, to constitute the steps on which thinking determines itself to be being. If formal logic searches for its greatness in the sharp segregation of forms and of contents, the dialectical method asserts a self-movement of pure thoughts that is likewise the self-generation of being. If there is such a dialectic, by which thinking, unfolding through itself, through its power alone, the innermost nature of things, unfolds then therein we have the fullness of truth and certainty all at once. It is therefore our task to investigate this dialectical path.

1. It is the basic idea of the Hegelian dialectic that pure thought presuppositionlessly generates and cognises the moments of being out of its own necessity. That which has been won along the way will later be presupposed, and insofar as this [presupposing] is one-sided and limited, thinking will be forced to generate the next — complementary — concept.

We don't argue preliminarily with this standpoint; may it be justified through the Phenomenology. We ask first: is there such a presuppositionless beginning of the logic in which thought doesn't have anything but itself and spurns all image and intuition such that it deserves the name of pure thought?

'The beginning is logical, in this, in the element of thought's free

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<sup>42</sup> I give special thanks to Leonie Kühn and Marcello Garibbo, who revised and discussed earlier drafts. They are not responsible for its final form, especially not the somewhat clunky English.

<sup>43</sup> I have translated this as though Trendelenburg means that Hegel has transformed logic into a kind of metaphysics. I am unsure on the meaning, however, and so this might not be correct. An alternative translation would be that Hegel has transformed logic so that it is no longer metaphysical (in the rationalist, problematic sense of metaphysics) but rather a matter for 'pure thought'.

being for-itself, it should be made in pure knowing.' Thought begins only with itself.

'Pure being makes the beginning, because, in any case, pure thought is qua indeterminate simple immediacy; but the first beginning cannot be mediated or further determined.'

'This pure being is now the pure abstraction, hence the absolutely negative, which, taken immediately in the same way, is the nothing.'

'The nothing is qua this immediate, self-same, even so conversely the same, what being is. The truth of being, just like [the truth of] nothing, is therefore the unity of both; the unity is becoming.'

Does pure thought remain in itself in this first stage?

We want to take the mediated concept of pure abstraction, through which the Nothing is won, and the ambiguous concept of unity, which brings becoming to light, as given to thought. Otherwise we would perhaps also discover something lying in the background with these concepts that lays beyond pure thinking. In order to abstract, something must be presupposed from which one abstracts. Understanding pure being as pure abstraction is therefore possible insofar as thinking already possesses the world and has withdrawn into itself alone.

For now we only ask how the essential progress out of bare thought could happen. Becoming is first clear through intuition, such that it is thereby possible to distinguish in this between being and not-being. While, for example, the day is becoming, it already *is* and also *is not*. When we find these two moments in becoming by separating them it is not at all understood how these concepts can be in one another. The one who distinguishes between trunk, branches, and leaves has not solved the puzzle of how the parts can come into being from a common (source) and live through another. We go therefore through the premises of how becoming should be understood.

Pure being, self-same, is rest; nothing — the self-same — is also rest. How, out of the unity of two resting representations, has a moving becoming come to be? Nowhere in the antecedent stages is movement prefigured, without which [i.e. without the prefiguring of movement] becoming would be only a being. Since both pure being and also not-being



are expressed as rest, so, consequently, if the unity of both set out should come to be, the next task of thinking can only be to find a resting unification. If, however, thought produces something different out of every unity, it openly bears the other added and implicitly shoves movement under in order to bring being and not-being to the flux of becoming. Otherwise the moving, always living intuition of becoming would never be generated out of being and not-being — these resting concepts. Becoming could never become out of being and not-being, if the representation of becoming did not come before. Out of pure being, an acknowledged abstraction, and out of nothingness, also an acknowledged abstraction, becoming, this concrete intuition commanding life and death, cannot emerge.

Hereafter, the movement of the dialectic that wants to presuppose nothing is undiscussed and presupposed. Movement pulls itself through Hegel's entire logic, and will after all be drawn in the investigation first into the *Naturphilosophie*. One can say and will say that movement, which the *Naturphilosophie* has to consider, should be a whole other movement; the movement of outer nature is itself different from the movement of inner thought. If this will be asserted, then the difference would have to be stated — this has happened nowhere. Where, however, being and not-being should pass over into becoming, there is exactly the schema of every spatial movement, through which the general representation [of movement] will first be possible; and this movement itself accompanied the emergence of spiritual concepts. Wherever we turn, movement remains the presupposed vehicle of dialectically generating thought.

In dialectical logic, thought should determine itself to be being. On this point, thought also determines itself as becoming. But then what determines thought? Pure being is empty being, there is nothing in it to look at, nothing in it to think; and being and nothing came to be the same in it. Therefore, it is said, thought determined itself into a concept in which one passes over into another. But this deductive 'therefore' doesn't follow at all. Pure being is the empty, and the empty the pure. In this complete equalisation, every impetus to progress or passing over is defunct. The logical reflection of equality will be implemented in a real unity. Who

would believe in becoming, if it sprang from there?

The beginning of the dialectic is later construed as corresponding to the beginning of Euclidean geometry. Call the postulate of the logic: 'think', like the postulate of geometry: 'take a straight line'. Both sciences stride forth through these activities. What lies in the imperative 'think' would be presupposed and nothing more. However, the difference between both cases arises easily. Geometry postulates something simple; dialectic also intended to demand something simple, therefore it specified its demands as pure thought. — but look what has happened; this pure thought, that only wants itself, cannot get away as this simple; it depicts itself in the first steps growing together with a representation, in which one acknowledges space and time as moments; it is then not pure thought, which is entirely unchained/independent/free from all outward being.

If movement together with space and time are presupposed by the dialectical movement right at the start, so this becomes to the unbiased observer even more evident in the continuation (of the work), precisely in the Paragraph about Quantity. There, dialectic claims to generate concepts out of pure thought, such as continuity and discreteness, extensive and intensive magnitude; it treats the extensive without intuition of space, the intensive and number without presupposing time, their relation without movement. Whoever believes that these concepts can be thought purely through logic, ignores the intuitions that carry them. The traces of movement, space, and time are impressed in these concepts down to their smallest parts. Without these they have no clarity.