

SECTION I

Determinateness (Quality)

Being is the indeterminate immediate; it is free of determinateness with respect to essence, just as it is still free of any determinateness that it can receive within itself. This reflectionless being is being as it immediately is only within.

Since it is immediate, it is being without quality; but the character of indeterminateness attaches to it *in itself* only in opposition to what is *determinate* or qualitative. *Determinate* being thus comes to stand over and against being in general; with that, however, the very indeterminateness of being constitutes its quality. It will therefore be shown that the *first* being is in itself determinate, and therefore, *secondly*, that it passes over into *existence*, is *existence*; that this latter, however, as finite being, sublates itself and passes over into the infinite reference of being to itself; it passes over, *thirdly*, into *being-for-itself*.

CHAPTER I

Being

A. BEING

Being, pure being – without further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself and also not unequal with respect to another; it has no difference within it, nor any outwardly. If 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. 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 empty 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.

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B. NOTHING

Nothing, pure nothingness; it is simple equality with itself, complete emptiness, complete absence of determination and content; lack of all distinction within. – In so far as mention can be made here of intuiting and thinking, it makes a difference whether something or *nothing* is being intuited or thought. To intuit or to think nothing has therefore a meaning; the two are distinguished and so nothing *is* (concretely exists) in our intuiting or thinking; or rather it is the empty intuiting and thinking itself, like pure being. – Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is.

C. BECOMING

1. *Unity of being and nothing*

Pure being and pure nothing are therefore the same. The truth is neither being nor nothing, but rather that being has passed over into nothing and

nothing into being – “has passed over,” not passes over. But the 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.

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Remark 1

It is customary to oppose *nothing* to *something*. Something is however already a determinate existent that distinguishes itself from another something; consequently, the nothing which is being opposed to something is also the nothing of a certain something, a determinate nothing. Here, however, the nothing is to be taken in its indeterminate simplicity. – If it is deemed more correct to oppose *non-being* to being, instead of nothing, there is no objection to this as regards the result, since in *non-being* there is contained the reference to *being*. Non-being is both, being and its negation as said in *one*: nothing as it is in becoming. But the issue first of all is not the form of opposition, which is at the same time the form of *reference*, but the abstract, immediate negation, the nothing purely for itself, negation devoid of reference – and this can also be expressed, if one so wishes, simply by saying “*nothing*.”

The *Eleatics* were the first to give voice to the simple thought of *pure being* – notable among them Parmenides, who declared it to be the absolute and sole truth. In his surviving fragments, he did it with the pure enthusiasm of thought which has for the first time apprehended itself in its absolute abstraction: *only being is, and nothing is not absolutely*.¹⁸ – In the oriental systems, essentially in Buddhism, it is well known that nothing, the void, is the absolute principle. – Against that simple and one-sided abstraction, the profound Heraclitus proposed the loftier, total concept of becoming and said: *being is no more than nothing*; or also, all *flows*, that is, all is *becoming*.¹⁹ – The popular proverbs, particularly the oriental ones, that all that exists has the germ of death in its very birth, that death is on the other hand the entrance into a new life, express at bottom the same union of being and nothing. But these expressions have a substrate in which the transition takes place; being and nothing are held apart in time, represented as alternating in it; they are not thought in their abstraction and also, therefore, not so that they are the same in and for themselves.

¹⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 986b.28–29.

¹⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 985b7–8.

Ex nihilo, nihil fit – is one of the propositions to which great significance was attributed in metaphysics. The proposition is either to be viewed as just a barren tautology, nothing is nothing, or, if *becoming* is supposed to have real meaning in it, then, since only *nothing comes* from *nothing*, there is in fact none in it, for the nothing remains nothing in it. Becoming entails that nothing not remain nothing, but that it pass over into its other, being. – Later metaphysics, especially the Christian, rejected the proposition that out of nothing comes nothing, thus asserting a transition from nothing into being; no matter how synthetically or merely imaginatively it took this proposition, there is yet even in the most incomplete unification of being and nothing a point at which they meet, and their distinguishedness vanishes. – The proposition, *nothing comes from nothing, nothing is just nothing*, owes its particular importance to its opposition to *becoming* in general and hence also to the creation of the world out of nothing. Those who zealously hold firm to the proposition, nothing is just nothing, are unaware that in so doing they are subscribing to the abstract *pantheism* of the Eleatics and essentially also to that of Spinoza. The philosophical view that accepts as principle that being is only being, nothing only nothing, deserves the name of “system of identity”; this abstract identity is the essence of pantheism.

If the result that being and nothing are the same seems inherently startling or paradoxical, there is not much to be done about it. We should be amazed rather at this amazement that appears so refreshing in philosophy but forgets that the determinations that occur in this science of logic are quite different from those of so-called common sense – which is not exactly sound understanding but an understanding schooled rather in abstractions and in the belief in abstractions, or more accurately in the superstitious belief in them. It would not be difficult to demonstrate the unity of being and nothing in every example, in *every* actual thing or thought. The same must be said of *being* and *nothing* as was said above of immediacy and mediation (which contain a reference to each other and hence *negation*), *that nowhere on heaven or on earth is there anything which does not contain both being and nothing in itself.*²⁰ To be sure, since we are speaking here of a *certain something* and a *certain actual thing*, those determinations are no longer present in the complete untruth in which they are as being and nothing; they are rather present in some more advanced determination and are grasped, for example, as *positive* or *negative*, the one as reflected being and the other as reflected nothing; but the positive contains being

²⁰ Cf. above, 21.54.

and the negative contains nothing, as their abstract foundation. – Thus even in God quality carries essentially the determination of the negative: *activity, creation, power*, and so forth, are the bringing forth of an *other*. But an empirical elucidation of the claim by means of examples would be entirely superfluous here. For from now on this unity of being and nothing will stand once and for all as foundation, as first truth, and will thus constitute the element of all that follows. All further logical determinations besides *becoming* itself (existence, quality, and in general all the concepts of philosophy) are therefore examples of this unity. – As for that sense that styles itself as common or sound, if it rejects the inseparability of being and nothing, let it try to produce an example in which the one is found separate from the other (let it separate something from limit or limitation, or, as just said, the infinite, God, from activity). Only the empty figments of thought, being and nothing, only these, are separate things, and they are the ones which are accorded priority by common sense over the truth, the inseparability of the two which is everywhere before us.

We cannot hope to address all the confusions in which ordinary consciousness lands itself in connection with this logical proposition, for they are inexhaustible. Only a few can be cited. One cause among others of such confusions is that consciousness brings with it, to such an abstract logical proposition, the figure of some concrete thing, forgetting that the issue here is not anything concrete but only the pure abstractions of being and nothing and that these alone are to be held firmly in mind.

Being and non-being are the same; *therefore* it is the same whether I am or am not, whether this house is or is not, whether these hundred dollars are in my possession or not. – This conclusion from the proposition, or this application of it, alters its meaning completely. The proposition contains the pure abstractions of being and nothing; but the application makes of them a determinate being and a determinate nothing. But, as we have said, determinate being is not an issue here. A determinate, a finite being, is one that refers to another; it is a content that stands in the relation of necessity to another content, to the whole world. As regards the reciprocal determinations that hold the whole together, metaphysics could make the basically tautological claim that if one speck of dust were destroyed the whole universe would collapse. In the instances adduced against our proposition, something appears as not indifferent to whether it is or is not, not on account of being or non-being, but because of its *content* which connects it with some other content. If a determinate content, some determinate being, is *presupposed*, this being, since it is *determinate*, stands in manifold reference to another content. It is not a matter of indifference

to it whether a certain other content to which it refers is or is not, for only through such a referring is it essentially what it is. The same applies to *representing* (inasmuch as we take non-being in the determinate sense of representing as contrasted with actuality). In this case the being or the absence of a content, which is a determinate representation that refers to another, is not a matter of indifference. –

This observation already contains what constitutes a capital point in the Kantian critique of the ontological proof of God's existence, although we only consider it here with reference to the distinction that comes up in it of being and nothing in general and of *determinate* being or non-being. – As we know, that so-called proof presupposed the concept of a being that possesses all realities, including therefore *concrete existence*, which it likewise assumed as one of the realities. Kant's critique took mainly the line that *existence* or being (the two taken here as synonymous) is not a *property* or a *real predicate*, that is to say, not a concept of something that can be added to the *concept* of a thing.⁸ – What Kant means to say is that being is not a content determination. – Therefore, he goes on, the possible does not contain more than the actual; a hundred actual dollars do not contain a whit more than a hundred possible ones;²¹ – that is, the actual one hundred have no other content determination than the possible. And in fact, considered in isolation, it is a matter of indifference to this content whether it is or is not; there is no distinction of being and non-being in it, this distinction does not affect it at all; the one hundred dollars do not become less if they do not exist, or more if they do. Any distinction would have to originate from elsewhere. – “But in my financial state,” Kant reminds us, “there is more to a hundred actual dollars than there is to the mere concept of them (that is, their possibility). For with actuality the *intended object* is not merely included in my concept analytically, but is *synthetically* added to my *concept* (which is a *determination* of my *state*), without the thought itself of the hundred dollars being in the least increased by this being which they have outside my concept.”²²

Here two kinds of “states” (to retain Kantian expressions which are not free of a confused awkwardness) are *presupposed*: one that Kant calls “concept,” by which we must understand “representation”; and another, my “financial state.” For the one as for the other, for the finances and the representation, the hundred dollars are a content determination, or

⁸ *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edn, pp. 628ff.

²¹ A598/B626–A599/B627. The following dash, presumably, is to set off Hegel's own gloss on the paraphrase of Kant's own words.

²² A599/B627.

“they are added to each *synthetically*,” as Kant puts it. “I,” as *possessing* a hundred dollars or as not possessing them, or again, “I,” as *representing* a hundred dollars to myself or as not representing them, is of course a different content. Stated more generally: the abstractions of being and nothing both cease to be abstractions by receiving a determinate content; being is then reality, the determinate being of one hundred dollars; and nothing is negation, the determinate non-being of the same dollars. This determinate content itself, the hundred dollars, also abstracted by itself, is unaltered the same in the one as in the other. But when being is further taken as a financial state, the hundred dollars refer to this state, and for this state their determinate content is not a matter of indifference; their being or non-being is only an *alteration*; they are transposed into the sphere of *existence*. When it is therefore urged against the unity of being and nothing that it is not a matter of indifference whether this or that (the hundred dollars) are or are not, the deception is to project the difference, whether I *have* or *do not have* the hundred dollars, into the difference merely of being and non-being. And this is a deception, as we have shown, based on a one-sided abstraction that leaves out the *determinate existence* present in such examples and retains only being and non-being; just as, conversely, it transforms the abstract being and non-being that should be apprehended into a determinate being or non-being, into an existence. Only *existence* contains the real distinction of being and nothing, namely, a *something* and an *other*. – This real distinction is the one that comes to mind in representation instead of that of abstract being and nothing and their merely intended distinction.

As Kant puts it, “through existence something enters into the context of the whole experience . . . We obtain one more object of *perception*, but our *concept* of the intended object is not thereby augmented.”²³ – This only means, as follows from our explanation, that through existence, essentially because something is a determinate existence, this something is in relationship to *others*, and also to a perceiver among these others. – “The concept of a hundred dollars,” Kant says, “is not augmented through perception.”²⁴ By “concept” is meant here the above noted hundred dollars represented *in isolation*. As so isolated, these dollars are indeed an empirical content, but cut off, without connection or determinateness as against *something else*; their form of immediate self-identity deprives them of external connection and makes them indifferent to whether they are perceived or not. This so-called concept of a hundred dollars is however a false concept; the form

²³ A599/B627–A600/B628. ²⁴ A599/B627.

of simple self-reference does not belong to such a limited, finite content itself; it is a form on loan to it, like a dress, by a subjective understanding; a “hundred dollars” is nothing self-referring but something alterable and perishable.

This thinking or imagining which has before it only a determinate being, existence, must be referred back to the previously mentioned beginning of science which Parmenides made – the one who purified and elevated to *pure thought*, to being as such, his own otherwise pictorial representations and hence also those of posterity, thus ushering in the element of science. – What is the *first* in science had of necessity to show itself to be the *first historically*. And we must regard the *one* or the *being* of the Eleatics as the first instance of knowledge by thought. *Water* and suchlike material principles are indeed *meant* to be the universal even though, as things material, they are not pure thoughts; *numbers* are neither the first simple, nor the self-abiding thought,²⁵ but thought rather which is entirely self-external. 21.76

The move from *particular finite* being to being as such in its totally abstract universality is to be regarded not only as the very first theoretical demand but also as the very first practical one. For when a lot of fuss is made about the hundred dollars, that it does make a difference to my financial state whether I *have* them or *not*, still more whether I am or am not or something else is or is not, we can then be reminded that the human being (quite apart from such financial situations in which the possession of a hundred dollars will in fact be a matter of indifference) ought to raise his mind to this abstract universality in which it is in fact indifferent to him whether the hundred dollars, whatever the quantitative relation that they might have to his financial state, are or are not; just as it would be indifferent to him whether he himself is or is not, that is, whether he is or is not in finite life (by which is meant a state, a determinate being), and so on. *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae*, a Roman even said,²⁶ and still more ought the Christian to find himself in this state of indifference.

Still to be noted is the immediate connection between, on the one hand, the elevation above the hundred dollars and finite things generally, and, on the other hand, the ontological proof and the mentioned Kantian criticism of it. This criticism, because of its popular example, has won universal plausibility. Who does not know that a hundred actual dollars are different

²⁵ *bey sich bleibende*.

²⁶ Flaccus: *Carminum liber tertium*. Ode III, verse 7–8. “If the world were to fall to pieces, the ruins would still sustain the undaunted.”

from a hundred merely possible dollars and that they make a difference to my financial situation? This difference is easily demonstrable in the case of the hundred dollars: therefore, the concept, that is, the determinateness of the content as empty possibility, and being are different from each other; *therefore*, the concept of God and his being are also different, and just as I cannot extract from the possibility of the hundred dollars their actuality, I can just as little “extract”²⁷ God’s existence from his concept. But the ontological proof consists precisely in thus extracting God’s existence from his concept. Now, though there is of course truth to the claim that the concept is different from being, God’s difference from the hundred dollars and other finite things is yet greater. It is the *definition of finite things* that in them concept and being are different; that the concept and reality, soul and body, are separable; that they are therefore perishable and mortal. The abstract definition of God, on the contrary, is precisely that his concept and his being are *unseparated* and *inseparable*. The true critique of the categories and of reason²⁸ is just this: to acquaint cognition with this distinction and to prevent it from applying to God the determinations and the relations of the finite.

Remark 2

Yet another reason can be cited that helps to explain the resistance to the proposition about being and nothing. This reason is that, as expressed in the proposition “*being and nothing are one and the same*,” the result of considering being and nothing is incomplete. The accent falls primarily on the being-*one-and-the-same*, as is the case in judgment generally, where the predicate says what the subject *is*. Consequently, the sense seems to be that the distinction is denied which yet patently occurs in the proposition at the same time; for the proposition says both determinations, being and nothing, and contains them as distinguished. – At the same time, the meaning cannot be that abstraction ought to be made from the two determinations and only their unity retained. This sense would be manifestly one-sided, since that from which abstraction would be made is equally present in the proposition and explicitly named there. – Now, in so far as the proposition “*being and nothing are the same*” expresses the identity of these determinations, yet in fact equally contains the two as distinguished, it internally contradicts itself and thus dissolves itself. And if we concentrate on this result, what we have before us is a proposition which, on closer inspection,

²⁷ Cf. A603/B631.

²⁸ Kant’s critical work was in his day generically referred to as “the critique of reason.”

turns out to vanish spontaneously. It has movement. But in thus vanishing, it is its proper content which comes to be in it, namely *becoming*.

The proposition thus *contains* the result; it is this result *implicit in it*. But the circumstance to which we must pay attention here is the defect that this result is not itself *expressed* in the proposition; it is external reflection that recognizes it there. – In this connection, we must observe right at the beginning that the proposition, in the form of *a judgment*, is not adept to express speculative truths; recognition of this circumstance would go a long way in preventing many misunderstandings of speculative truths. Judgment joins subject and object in a connection of *identity*; abstraction is therefore made from the fact that the subject has yet more determinacies than the predicate has, just as that the predicate is wider than the subject. Now, if the content is speculative, the *non-identity* of subject and predicate is also an essential moment; but this is not expressed in judgment. The paradoxical and even bizarre light in which much of recent philosophy is cast for those not intimate with speculative thought is due in many ways to the form of the simple judgment when used to convey speculative results.

For the purpose of expressing the speculative truth, the defect is first remedied by adding the contrary proposition, namely “*being and nothing are not the same*,” which we also stated above. But another defect then crops up, for these propositions are disconnected and therefore present their content only in an antinomy, whereas the content refers to one and the same thing, and the determinations expressed in the two propositions should be united absolutely – in a union which can then only be said to be an *unrest* of simultaneous *incompatibles*, *a movement*. The commonest injustice done to a speculative content is to render it one-sidedly, that is, to give prominence only to one of the propositions in which it can be resolved. This proposition is then undeniably asserted; but *the statement is just as false as it is correct*, for once one proposition is taken out of its speculative context, the other also must be given at least as much attention and articulation. – Attention must also be drawn at this point to, so to speak, the unfortunate word “unity.” “Unity,” even more so than *identity*, designates a subjective reflection. It is normally taken as a connection that arises from *comparison*, from external reflection. Inasmuch as this reflection finds the same thing in two *different subject matters*, 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 thus expresses a totally *abstract* sameness, and it will sound all the harsher and the more discordant the more the terms of

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which it is asserted show themselves to be utterly distinct. 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.

So 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*.

The *ordinary assumption* is that being is the absolutely other of nothing, and that there is nothing as clear as this absolute distinction; indeed, nothing seems easier than being able to state it. But it is just as easy to convince oneself that this is impossible, that the distinction is *unsayable*. *Let those who insist on the distinction of being and nothing, let them just try to state in what the distinction consists*. If being and nothing had any determinateness differentiating them, then, as we said, they would be determinate being and determinate nothing, not the pure being and the pure nothing which they still are at this point. Their distinction is therefore completely empty, each is as indeterminate as the other; the distinction depends, therefore, not on them but on a third element, on *intention*. But intention is a form of subjectivity, and subjectivity does not belong to the present order of exposition. The third element in which being and nothing have their subsistence must however also be present here; and it is present indeed, it is *becoming*. In becoming, they are present as distinct; becoming only occurs to the extent that they are distinguished. This third is an other than they – they subsist only in an other, which is equivalent to saying that they do not subsist on their own. Becoming equally is the subsistence of being and of non-being; or their subsistence is only their being in a *one*; precisely this, their subsistence in a *one*, is that which equally sublates their distinction.

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The challenge to produce the distinction between being and nothing also brings with it the challenge to state what, then, is *being*, and *what is nothing*. Those who resist acknowledging that the two are equally only a *transition* of the one into the other, and who assert this or that about being and nothing, let them declare *whereof* they speak, that is, let them advance a *definition* of being and nothing, and let them demonstrate that it is correct. Without having satisfied this first demand of the ancient science, whose logical rules they otherwise accept and apply, all their assertions about being and nothing are only assurances without scientific validity. If it has somewhere

been said that existence,²⁹ which is held from the start to be equivalent to being, is the *completion of possibility*, then another determination, namely possibility, is presupposed along with it; so being is not declared in its immediacy but precisely as not standing on its own, as conditioned. For being which is *mediated*, we shall reserve the expression *concrete existence*.³⁰ But the common practice is to *imagine* being, as if it were a picture of pure light, the clarity of unclouded seeing, and then nothing as the pure night – and the distinction between the two is then enshrined into this well-known sensuous difference. But in fact, if this very seeing is more accurately imagined, one can readily perceive that in absolute light one sees just as much and just as little as in absolute darkness; that the one seeing is just as good as the other; that pure seeing is a seeing of nothing. Pure light and pure darkness are two voids that amount to the same thing. Only in determinate light (and light is determined through darkness: in clouded light therefore), just as only in determinate darkness (and darkness is determined through light: in illuminated darkness therefore), can something be distinguished, since only clouded light and illuminated darkness have distinction in them and hence are determinate being, *existence*.

Remark 3

The unity, whose moments, being and nothing, are inseparable, is at the same time different from these moments. It thus stands as a *third* with respect to them – a third which, in its most proper form, is *becoming*. *Transition* is the same as becoming except that the two terms, from one of which the transition is made to the other, are represented in it more as at rest, outside each other, the transition occurring *between* them. Now, wherever and however being or nothing are at issue, this third must be there; for the two have no subsistence on their own but are only in becoming, in this third. But this third has various empirical shapes that abstraction either sets aside or neglects for the sake of holding fast to its two products, being and nothing, each for itself, and showing them as protected against

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²⁹ “I define existence as the complement of possibility.” Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia* (1736), §174. Hegel uses here the term “*Existenz*,” which I normally translate as “concrete existence” to differentiate it from “*Dasein*.” See the note immediately following.

³⁰ For the distinction between *Existenz* and *Dasein*, see “Issues of translation” in the editor’s “Translator’s note.” To be noted here is that both terms signify “being” as determinate and therefore as mediated. But the difference is whether the mediation is explicitly expressed within the structure of the logical object itself (as it is the case with *Existenz*, which explicitly refers to “essence”) or is only immediately present there (as it is the case with *Dasein*). I translate *Existenz* as “concrete existence” because of the immediately preceding mention of “possibility” that definitely places it within the realm of “essence,” which is the realm of explicit mediation.

transition. Such a simple manoeuvre of abstraction can be countered, with equal ease, simply by pointing to the empirical concrete existence in which that abstraction itself is only a something, has a determinate existence. Or else it is by virtue of other forms of reflection that this separation of the inseparable would be held fixed. But in any such determination of reflection, its opposite is present within it in and for itself, and it is thus possible to refute it on its own terms without going back to the nature of the fact and appealing to it, by taking the determination as it presents itself, and by pointing to its other in it. It would be labor in vain to attempt to ensnare, so to speak, all the shifts and turns of reflection and its argumentation in order to pre-empt and render impossible all the evasions and the leaps with which it hides its own contradiction from itself. For this reason I also refrain from taking notice of the many self-styled objections and refutations that have been advanced against the claim that neither being nor nothing are something true but that becoming is their truth. The intellectual education required to perceive the nothingness of these refutations, or rather to dispel such arbitrary ideas on one's own, will be attained only through a critical cognition of the forms of the understanding. But those who are the most prolific in such objections straight away set themselves upon reflecting on the first propositions, without helping themselves or having helped themselves through further study of the logic to the awareness of the nature of their crude reflections.

We shall consider some of the cases that occur when being and nothing are posited in isolation, each outside the sphere of the other, with the result that the transition is negated.

Parmenides held fast to being and was the most consistent, since he also said of nothing that it *absolutely is not*; only being is.³¹ Totally for itself, being is thus the indeterminate, and has therefore no connecting reference to any other; consequently, it seems that *from this beginning* no further *forward move* is possible – that is, from that beginning itself – and that an advance can only occur by adding something foreign to it *from outside*. The advance, where being is the same as nothing, thus appears as a second, absolute beginning – a transition which is for itself, and that would be added to being externally. Being would not be an absolute beginning at all if it had a determinateness; in that case, it would depend on another and would not be immediate, would not be the beginning. If, however, it is indeterminate and is therefore a true beginning, it has nothing by virtue of which it can

³¹ *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (The Fragments of the Pre-Socratics)* Volume II, ed. Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), Parmenides, 232B6.

pass over to an other; as beginning it is equally the *end*. It is just as impossible for anything to break out of it as to break into it; with Parmenides as with Spinoza, there is no advance from being or from absolute substance to the negative, the finite. If there is forward movement nevertheless – something which, as just remarked, can occur only externally if we start from being devoid of any connecting reference and so without forward movement – then, this advance is a second, new beginning. Thus, Fichte’s most absolute, unconditional first principle, $A = A$, is a *positing*, a *thesis*; the second principle is a *counter-positing*, an *antithesis*; this latter should be *partly* conditioned, *partly* unconditioned (and so contradiction in itself).³² This is an advance by external reflection that negates the absolute with which it makes its beginning (the counter-positing is the negation of the first identity) while at the same time equally reducing its second absolute, explicitly, to something conditioned. But if there were any justification at all for the advance, that is, for sublating the first beginning, then the possibility that an other could connect with it would have to lie in the nature of this first beginning itself; the beginning would have to be, therefore, a *determinate* being. But *being*, as also the absolute substance, will not be such, quite the contrary. Being is the *immediate*, the still absolutely *indeterminate*.

The most eloquent, perhaps most forgotten accounts of the impossibility of advancing from an abstraction to something beyond it, and of uniting the two, are given by Jacobi in support of his polemic against the Kantian *a priori* synthesis of self-consciousness, in his *Treatise Concerning the Undertaking of Critique to Reduce Reason to the Understanding* (Jacobi, *Werke*, Vol. III).³³ He defines the task (p. 113) as one of demonstrating the originating or the producing of a synthesis in a *pure somewhat*, be it consciousness, space or time. “Let space be *a one*; time *a one*; consciousness *a one*. Now, do say how any of these three ‘ones’ *purely* turns itself internally into a manifold: each is *a one* and *no other*; an all-the-same-ness; just *selfhood* in general without a he-hood, she-hood, or it-hood, for these still slumber together with the *he*, *she*, *it* in the infinite zero of the indeterminate from which each and every *determinate being* has yet to proceed! What brings *fnitude* into these three infinities? What impregnates space and time *a priori* with number and measure, and turns them into a *pure manifold*? What brings *pure spontaneity* (‘I’) into oscillation? How does its pure vowel sound come to its concomitant sound, the consonant, or better, how does its *soundless*, uninterrupted *sounding* interrupt itself and break off in order to gain at least some kind of self-sound, an *accent*?” One

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³² Cf. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) §§1, 2; GA I.2. ³³ Leipzig, 1816.

sees that Jacobi very distinctly recognized that abstraction is a *nonentity*, whether this *nonentity* is the so-called absolute (only abstract) space, or the equally abstract time or abstract pure consciousness, the “I.” He insists on this nonentity for the sake of maintaining the impossibility of any advance to an other, which is the condition of a synthesis, and to a synthesis itself. The synthesis which is the point of interest here must not be taken as a tying together of *external* determinations already at hand. Rather, the issue is twofold: one of the genesis of a second next to a first, of a determinate something next to something which is initially indeterminate, but also one of *immanent* synthesis, of synthesis *a priori* – a unity of distinct terms that exists in and for itself. *Becoming* is this immanent synthesis of being and nothing; but because the sense most closely attached to “synthesis” is that of an external gathering of things externally at hand, the name of synthesis, of synthetic unity, has rightly gone out of use. – Jacobi asks, *how* does the pure vowel of the “I” come to its concomitant sound, to the consonant? *what* brings determinacy to indeterminateness? – The question of the *what* would be easy to answer, and has been answered by Kant in his way. The question of the *how*, however, means: in which way and manner? in what relation? and so forth, and requires the application of a particular category; but there can be no question here of a “way” or “manner,” of the categories of the understanding. The question of the *how* is itself one that belongs to the bad practices of reflection, which demands comprehensibility, but for that it presupposes its fixed categories and is thereby assured from the start to be forearmed against the answer to what it asks. Nor does the question have in Jacobi the higher sense of a query regarding the *necessity* of the synthesis, for Jacobi, as we said, remains fixed in the abstractions in order to assert the impossibility of the synthesis. Especially graphic is his description (p. 147) of the procedure for attaining the abstraction of space. “For a time I must try clean to forget that I ever saw anything, heard, touched or moved anything, myself expressly not exempted. Clean, clean, clean must I forget all movement, and let precisely this *forgetting* be my most pressing concern, since it is the hardest. Just as I have thought all things away, so must I also get perfectly *rid* of them all, retaining nothing at all except the intuition, which *violently* held its ground, of the infinite *immutable* space. I may not, therefore, *think* even myself *back into it* as something distinguished from it yet equally bound to it; I may not let myself even be merely *surrounded* and *permeated* by it, but I must rather *give myself over* to it totally, become a one with it, transform myself into it; I must allow no leftover of myself except *this my intuition* itself, in order to behold it as a truly self-subsisting, independent, single and sole representation.”

With this totally abstract purity of continuity, that is, with this indeterminateness and emptiness of representation, it is indifferent whether one names this abstraction “space” or “pure intuition” or “pure thought.” It is altogether the same as what an Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, looking only at the tip of his nose, externally motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, representation, phantasy, desire, and so on, he inwardly says only *Om, Om, Om*, or else says nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, taken as consciousness, is just this – *being*.

In this void, Jacobi now states further, he encounters the opposite of what should happen to him according to Kant’s assurance. He does not find himself to be a *many* and a *manifold* but to be rather a one without any plurality and manifoldness; indeed, “I am *impossibility* itself, the *nihilating* of all things manifold and plural – *cannot*, from my pure, absolutely simple and unchanging essence, *produce again*, or conjure in me as shadow, even *the least bit of anything*. . . Thus all externality and juxtaposition, any manifoldness and plurality dependent on them, are revealed in this purity as a *pure impossibility*.”³⁴

The meaning of this impossibility is nothing else than the tautology: I hold fast to abstract unity and exclude all plurality and manifoldness; I keep myself in indistinctness and indeterminacy, and look away from anything distinguished and determinate. Kant’s *a priori* synthesis of self-consciousness, that is, the work of this unity of differentiating itself but in this differentiation of preserving itself, is diluted by Jacobi to just this abstraction. He one-sidedly reduces that “synthesis *in itself*,” the “*original parting of judgment*,”³⁵ to “*the copula in itself*” – an ‘*is, is, is*’ without beginning and end, without ‘what’, ‘who’, or ‘which’; this repetition of repetition *ad infinitum* is the one single occupation, function, and production of the purest of all pure syntheses; the synthesis is itself this mere, pure, absolute repetition.”³⁶ Though, in fact, since there is no pause in it, that is, no negation, no distinguishing, the synthesis is not a repetition but rather undifferentiated simple being. – But then, is this still a synthesis when Jacobi leaves out precisely that which makes the unity a synthetic unity?

First of all, it must be said that when Jacobi assumes his position in absolute (that is, abstract) space, time, and consciousness as well, he transposes himself into something which is *empirically* false, and fixes himself there. *There is* no such thing as a spatially or temporally unlimited space or time, that is, none is empirically at hand which would not be filled with a continuous manifold of limited existence and of change, so that these

³⁴ pp. 148ff., paraphrase.

³⁵ “parting of judgment” = *Urteil*.

³⁶ pp. 125ff., paraphrase.

limits and these changes would not belong, unseparated and inseparably, to spatiality. Consciousness is likewise filled with determinate sensation, representation, desire, and so forth; it does not exist *in concreto* apart from some particular content or other. – The *transition* to the empirical then goes without saying. Consciousness can indeed make empty space, empty time, and even empty consciousness or pure being, its intended object and content, but it does not stay with them. Rather, from this emptiness it passes over – more than that, it forces itself over to a better content, that is, one which is somehow more concrete and to this extent, however bad as content, still better and truer. Precisely such a content is the synthetic as such, “synthetic” understood in its more general sense. Thus Parmenides has to make do with semblance and opinion, the opposite of being and truth; Spinoza likewise, with attributes, modes, extension, movement, understanding, will, and so forth. The synthesis contains as well as exposes the untruth of those abstractions; in it they are in unity with their other, are not therefore as self-subsistent, not as absolute but strictly as relative.

The demonstration of the empirical nullity of empty space and so forth is not however the task here. Consciousness can of course, by means of abstraction, fill itself with such indeterminateness, and the abstractions to which it thus holds fast are *the thoughts* of pure space, time, pure consciousness, pure being. It is the thought of pure space etc. (that is, pure space etc. taken *in themselves*) which is to be demonstrated to be null, that is, what must be demonstrated is that, as such a thought, its opposite has already forced its way into it, that by itself it is already being that has gone outside itself, a determinateness.

But this happens in them immediately. They are, 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. – Or, one can say, since being is the indeterminate, it is not the (affirmative) determinateness that it is; it is not being but nothing.

In the pure reflection of the beginning as it is made in this Logic with *being* as such, the transition is still hidden; because *being* is posited as

immediate, the *nothing* only breaks out in it immediately. All the subsequent determinations are however more concrete, like *existence* which follows right after; there is already *posited* in existence that which contains and produces the contradiction of those abstractions, and consequently their transition. 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, nothing, is left back behind the science which, starting explicitly from *essence*, will exhibit that one-sided *immediacy* as a mediated immediacy where being is *posited* as *concrete existence*, and that which mediates being, the ground, is also *posited*.

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. However, one can continue, so understood the beginning is nothing affirmative, not being, but just nothing, and nothing is then the *end*, at least as much as immediate being, and even more so. Shortest is to let such an argument run its course and to observe how the results of which it boasts take shape. That “nothing” is the result of the argument, and that the beginning would then have to be made with nothing (as in Chinese philosophy)³⁷ need not cause us to lift a finger. For even before we had lifted it, this nothing would have turned into being just as much (see Section B above, “Nothing”). But further, if we presuppose the said abstraction from *everything* (an “everything” which is an *existent* nevertheless), such an abstraction must be defined with greater exactitude. The result of such an abstraction from everything existent is first of all abstract being, *being* in general. For just as in the cosmological proof of the existence of God from the contingent being of the world, where we ascend above this contingent being, *being* is still taken up with us in the ascent; it is determined as *infinite being*. But of course, one *can* abstract also from this pure being. Being *can* be thrown in with the everything from which abstraction has already been made, and then *nothing* remains. Now, if we want to ignore the *thinking* of nothing, that is, that it turns around into being, or would know nothing of it, one *can* indeed proceed in this way in the style of the “*one can*.” One can (God be praised!) even abstract from nothing (for the creation of the world, too, is an abstraction from nothing). But then, what remains

21.87

³⁷ Apparently Hegel is associating Buddhism with China. Cf. above, 21.70, where Hegel speaks of oriental philosophies.

is not nothing, since abstraction would be made even from it and so would be back at being again. – This “*one can*” generates an external play of abstraction in which the abstracting itself is only the one-sided activity of the negative. Directly implied in this very “one can” is that being is just as indifferent to it as nothing, and that as the one vanishes, the other appears in turn; but whether 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.

Plato’s dialectical treatment of the One in the *Parmenides* must also be regarded rather as a dialectic of external reflection. Being and the One are both Eleatic forms which are the same thing. But, as Plato understands them in that dialogue, they are also to be distinguished. After he removes from the One the various determinations of whole and parts, of being-in-itself, of being-in-another, etc.; of figure, time, etc., his result is that being does not pertain to the One, for being does not accrue to a something except according to one of these forms. (Ed. Stephanus, Vol. II, p. 141e.) Plato then turns to the proposition, “*the One is*”; and it is there that we can see how, starting from this proposition, he performs the transition to the non-being of the One. It happens by way of a *comparison* between the two determinations of the presupposed proposition, namely of “*the One is*.” This proposition contains “the One” and “being”; but “the one *is*” contains more than when one only says “the One.” In this, in their being *distinguished*, the moment of negation is demonstrated. It is clear that this method has a presupposition and is an external reflection.

21.88

Just as the One is posited here in combination with being, so is being, which should be held fast abstracted *by itself* in the simplest form without entering into thought, exhibited in a combination that entails the opposite of what should be asserted. Taken in its immediacy, being belongs to a *subject*, is something said, has an empirical *existence* in general, and therefore stands on a ground of restriction and negativity. Whatever the expressions or the turns of phrase that the understanding adopts in protesting against the unity of being and nothing, however much it appeals to what is immediately given, it will find precisely in this experience nothing but *determinate* being, being with a restriction or negation – the very unity which it rejects. The assertion of immediate being thus comes down to an empirical concrete existence, and it cannot reject the demonstration of it, since it is the immediacy outside thought to which it wants to cling.

The same is the case with *nothing*, only in the contrary way. This is a well-known reflection, made often enough respecting nothing. When 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*; nothing has its being in thinking, representing, speaking, etc. But, further, this being is also distinguished from it; it is therefore said that nothing is indeed in thinking or representing, yet for that very reason it is not *it* which *is*, it is not *it* to which being belongs, that only thinking or representing are this being. Even on this distinction, there is no denying that nothing *refers* to a being; but in this reference, though the latter equally also contains distinction, there is a unity with being. In whatever way nothing is said or demonstrated, it shows itself in combination with or, if one prefers, in touch with a being, unseparated from a being, that is to say, precisely in a *determinate existence*.

But when the presence of nothing in a determinate existence is thus demonstrated, this distinction of it from being still commonly comes to mind, namely that the existence of the nothing is nothing at all that pertains to it *per se*. It is said that nothing does not have being in it; that it *is* not *being as such*; that it is rather an absence of being, just as darkness is only the *absence* of light, cold only the absence of warmth, and so forth. It is said that darkness has meaning only with reference to the eye, by being externally compared with the positive, with light, just as cold is something only in our sensation, whereas light, warmth, just like being, are on the contrary objective on their own, they are the real, the effective, of quite another quality and dignity than those negatives, than nothing. One can often find it advanced as a very weighty reflection and a significant item of cognition that darkness is *only absence* of light, cold *only absence* of warmth. Regarding this astute reflection, it can be observed empirically in this field of empirical subject matters that darkness in fact shows its effective presence in light by determining it as color and thereby imparting visibility to it in the first place, because, as we said above, one can see just as little in pure light as in pure darkness. Visibility, however, is an effect in the eye, and the said negative makes just as much of a contribution to it as does the light that passes for the real, the positive; similarly, cold makes itself present enough to water, to our sensation, and so forth, and if we deny its so-called objective reality, we thereby stand to gain absolutely nothing against it. And we should further repeat³⁸ the complaint that here the talk is again of a negative with determinate content; that one has not restricted oneself to the nothing, with respect to which, so far as empty abstraction goes, being is neither at a loss nor at an advantage. – But we must equally take cold, darkness, and similar determinate negations, just for themselves, and, in

21.89

³⁸ Cf above, 21.72 and 75.

respect to their general determination which is at issue here, let us see what is posited thereby. They are supposed to be not nothing in general, but the nothing rather of light, warmth, and so forth, of something determinate, of a content; thus they are a determinate, “contentful nothing” if one may so speak. A determinateness, however, as will be found later on, is itself a negation; thus they are negative nothings; a negative nothing is however something affirmative. The conversion of nothing into an affirmative by virtue of its determinateness (which previously appeared as *a determinate existence* in a subject or in what have you) appears to a consciousness bound to the abstraction of the understanding as the greatest paradox. Simple as it is, or rather because of its very simplicity, the insight that the negation of negation is something positive appears a trivial matter to which the haughty understanding need pay no heed, even though its correctness is undeniable – and not just its correctness, but also, on account of the universality of the determinations involved, its infinite extension and universal applicability, so that it would indeed be well to pay heed to it.

21.90

Regarding the determination of the transition of being and nothing into each other, the further remark can be made that such a transition is to be taken just as it is without additional reflective determination. It is immediate and entirely abstract, on account of the abstractness of the moments in transition, that is, because there is yet to be posited in these moments the determinateness of the other through which they have undergone the transition. Nothing is not yet *posited* in being, even though being is *essentially* nothing, and the other way around. It is therefore improper to apply here more determinate mediations, and to take being and nothing in some relation – their transition is not yet a relation. Thus it is inadmissible to say: nothing is the ground of being, or being is the ground of nothing; nothing is the *cause* of being, and so forth; or, the transition into nothing can have occurred only *under the condition* that something is, or the transition into being only *under the condition* of non-being. The mode of the connecting reference cannot be further determined without the connected *sides* being at the same time also further determined. The connection of ground and consequent, and so forth, no longer has mere being and nothing for the sides which it binds, but has being expressly as ground, and something which, although only posited and not standing on its own, is however not abstract nothing.

Remark 4

One can gather from the preceding what to think of the dialectic directed against the *beginning of the world* and also its end (that dialectic which

would prove the *eternity* of matter), that is, of the dialectic directed at *becoming*, against coming-to-be or passing-away in general. (Kant's antinomies regarding the finitude or the infinity of the world in space and time will be more closely considered below, under the concept of the quantitative infinity.)³⁹ This simple, common dialectic rests on fixing the opposition of being and nothing. That a beginning of the world or of anything is not possible is proven as follows:

21.91

Nothing can begin, either in so far as something is, or in so far as it is not; for in so far as it is, it does not begin to be; and in so far as it is not, it also does not begin to be. – If the world, or anything, had begun, it would have begun in nothing; but in nothing there is no beginning – or nothing is not a beginning; for a beginning implies a being, but nothing contains no being. Nothing is only nothing. In a ground, a cause, and so on, if this is how nothing is determined, there is contained an affirmation, being. – For the same reason, too, something cannot cease to be. For then it would have to contain nothing, but being is only being, not the opposite of itself.

It is clear that in this proof there is nothing brought against becoming, or beginning and ceasing-to-be, against this unity of being and nothing, except an assertorical denial and the ascription of truth to being and nothing taken in separation each from the other. – Such a dialectic is however at least more consistent than ordinary reflective thought. This thought accepts as the whole truth that being and nothing are only in separation, yet allows on the other hand for a beginning and a ceasing-to-be that are equally accepted as true determinations; in these, however, it in fact assumes the inseparability of being and nothing.

Once we presuppose that being and nothing are absolutely divorced, beginning or becoming, as we often hear said, is of course *incomprehensible*, for we make a presupposition which does away with beginning or becoming and yet *again* admits it. And this contradiction, which we create ourselves and make impossible to resolve, this is what is called the *incomprehensible*.

The dialectic just cited is also the same as the understanding deploys against the concept of *infinitesimal* magnitude given by higher analysis. More will be said below about this concept.⁴⁰ – These magnitudes are so determined that they *are in their vanishing* – not *before* this vanishing, for they would then be finite magnitudes; not *after* it, for then they would be nothing. Against this pure thought, it is objected and endlessly repeated that these magnitudes are *either something or nothing*; that there is no *intermediary state* between being and nothing (“state” is here an inappropriate,

21.92

³⁹ See below, 21.228–232. ⁴⁰ See below, 21.252–253.

barbaric expression). – Assumed here is again the absolute separation of being and nothing. But we have shown against this that being and nothing are in fact the same, or to speak in the language cited, that there *is* nothing which is not an *intermediary state between being and nothing*. Mathematics owes its most brilliant successes to precisely that determination which the understanding rejects.

This form of argumentation that falsely presupposes the absolute separation of being and nothing, and insists on it, should be called not *dialectic* but *sophistry*. For sophistry is an argumentation derived from a baseless presupposition rashly accepted without critique; but we call dialectic the higher rational movement in which these, being and nothing, apparently utterly separated, pass over into each other on their own, by virtue of what they are, and the presupposition sublates itself. It is the dialectical immanent nature of being and nothing themselves to manifest their unity, which is becoming, as their truth.

2. *The moments of becoming*

Becoming is the unseparatedness of being and nothing, not the unity that abstracts from being and nothing; as the unity *of being and nothing* it is rather this *determinate* unity, or one in which being and nothing equally *are*. However, inasmuch as being and nothing are each unseparated from its other, *each is not*. In this unity, therefore, *they are*, but as vanishing, only as *sublated*. They sink from their initially represented *self-subsistence* into moments which are *still distinguished* but at the same time sublated.

21.93

Grasped as thus distinguished, each is in their *distinguishedness* a unity with the *other*. Becoming thus contains being and nothing as *two such unities*, each of which is itself unity of being and nothing; the one is being as immediate and as reference to nothing; the other is nothing as immediate and as reference to being; in these unities the determinations are of unequal value.

Becoming is in this way doubly determined. In one determination, nothing is the immediate, that is, the determination begins with nothing and this refers to being; that is to say, it passes over into it. In the other determination, being is the immediate, that is, the determination begins with being and this passes over into nothing – *coming-to-be* and *ceasing-to-be*.

Both are the same, becoming, and even as directions that are so different they interpenetrate and paralyze each other. The one is *ceasing-to-be*; being passes over into nothing, but nothing is just as much the opposite of

itself, the passing-over into being, coming-to-be. This coming-to-be is the other direction; nothing goes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather the passing-over into nothing; it is ceasing-to-be. – They do not sublata themselves reciprocally – the one sublating the other externally – but each rather sublates itself in itself and is within it the opposite of itself.

3. Sublation of becoming

The equilibrium in which coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be are poised is in the first place becoming itself. But this becoming equally collects itself in *quiescent unity*. Being 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. Becoming is a ceaseless unrest that collapses into a quiescent result.

This can also be expressed thus: becoming 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.

21.94

This result is a vanishedness, but it is not *nothing*; as such, it would be only a relapse into one of the already sublated determinations and not the result of nothing *and of being*. It is the unity of being and nothing that has become quiescent simplicity. But this quiescent simplicity is *being*, yet no longer for itself but as determination of the whole.

Becoming, as transition into the unity of being and nothing, a unity which is as existent or has the shape of the one-sided *immediate* unity of these moments, is *existence*.

Remark

To sublata and *being sublata* (the *idealized*) constitute one of the most important concepts of philosophy. It is a fundamental determination that repeatedly occurs everywhere in it, the meaning of which must be grasped with precision and especially distinguished from *nothing*. – What is sublata does not thereby turn into nothing. Nothing is the *immediate*; something sublata is on the contrary something *mediated*; it is something non-existent but as a result that has proceeded from a being; it still *has in itself*, therefore, the *determinateness from which it derives*.

The German “*aufheben*” (“to sublata” in English) has a twofold meaning in the language: it equally means “to keep,” “to ‘preserve,’” and “to cause

to cease,” “to put an end to.” Even “to preserve” already includes a negative note, namely that something, in order to be retained, is removed from its immediacy and hence from an existence which is open to external influences. – That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that. – These two definitions of “to sublatare” can be cited as two dictionary meanings of the word. But it must strike one as remarkable that a language has come to use one and the same word for two opposite meanings. For speculative thought it is gratifying to find words that have in themselves a speculative meaning. The German language has several such words. The double meaning of the Latin “*tollere*” (made notorious by Cicero’s quip, “*tollendum est Octavium*”)⁴¹ does not go as far; its affirmative determination only goes so far as “lifting up.” Something is sublated only in so far as it has entered into unity with its opposite; in this closer determination as something reflected, it may fittingly be called a *moment*. In the case of the lever, “*weight*” and “*distance from a point*” are called its mechanical *moments* because of the *sameness* of their effect, in spite of the difference between something real like weight, and something idealized such as the merely spatial determination of “line.” (See *Encycl. of the Phil. Sc.*, 3rd edn, §261, Remark.) – We shall often not help but observe that the technical language of philosophy uses Latin terms for reflected determinations, either because the mother tongue has no terms for them, or, if it has as it does here, because in expressing them it is more likely to call to mind the immediate, whereas the foreign tongue recalls the reflected.

The more precise sense and precise expression that being and nothing receive now that they are *moments* will have to transpire from the consideration of existence, the unity in which they are preserved. Being is being, and nothing is nothing, only as held distinct from each other; in their truth, however, in their unity, they have vanished as such determinations and are now something else. Being and nothing are the same and, *precisely because they are the same, they no longer are being and nothing* but possess a different determination; in becoming they were coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be; in existence, which is another determinate unity, they are again moments but differently determined. This unity now remains their base from which they no longer surface in the abstract meaning of being and nothing.

⁴¹ “Caesar [Octavianus], he says, made no complaints against you to be sure, except as to a remark which he attributed to you: ‘the young man must be praised, honoured, and lifted up [*tollendum*].” Brutus (2001), Letter 401, to Cicero, p. 307. *Tollendum* can also be translated as “immortalized.” Of course, to be made into a god one must die first.