

Determinateness (Quality)

Colin McLear

PHIL 4/880 | November 30, 2021

1 The Categories of Determinateness (Quality)

The categories of determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*) or quality (*Qualität*) are three:

1. Being
 - Nothing
 - Becoming
 2. Determinate being/existence (*Dasein*)
 - Finitude
 - Infinity
 3. Being-for-itself
 - One-many
 - Repulsion-attraction
- Why this structure rather than some other?
 - Why start with quality?

Quality is, to begin with, the determinacy that is identical with being in the sense that something ceases to be what it is when it loses its quality. By contrast, *quantity* is the determinacy that is external to being and indifferent in relation to it. Thus, for instance, a house remains what it is, whether it is bigger or smaller, and red remains red, be it brighter or darker. (EL §85 Z)

- This perhaps helps clarify why we start with the categories of quality – they concern being as such, rather than relation *to* it (quantity).

2 Being & Nothing

2.1 Starting Points

- Q: Why start with <being>?

the beginning ought not itself to be already a first *and* an other, for anything which is in itself a first *and* an other implies that an advance has already been made. Consequently, that which constitutes the beginning, the beginning itself, is to be taken as something unanalyzable, taken in its simple, unfilled immediacy; and therefore *as being*, as complete emptiness. (SL 52/21:62)

- Perhaps the reason(s) to start with quality are the same as those for starting with <being>?
- Are we to read the opening of the *Logic* as answering the question as to why there is something rather than nothing?
 - Hegel does not *start* with <nothing>, rather he starts with <being> and shows that *that* “slides into” (or vanishes into) <nothing> and vice versa. So is there a kind of priority to <being>, even if it is identical (in some sense) with <nothing>?
- Perhaps Hegel is here influenced by Fichte’s fact-act (*Tathandlung*) starting point?
 - Hegel could accept aspects of Fichte’s starting point without presuming that (a) thinking requires a thinker; (b) that the nature of thought is to be “absolutely spontaneous”, etc.

1. Thinking or Intuiting?

- Q: Does Hegel treat thinking and intuiting as interchangeable?

[Being]: [t]here is *nothing* to be intuited in [being], 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

[Nothing]: [i]n 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 (SL 59/21:69)

- Is the intellectual act here an intellectual intuition?

2. The Identity of Being and Nothing

- Q: How does Hegel arrive at his two “conclusions” regarding <being> and <nothing>?

- (1) Being, the indeterminate immediate is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than nothing.
(2) Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is (SL 59/21:69).

- Hegel cannot *argue* for either (1) or (2)
- The move to (1) and (2) is not obviously *phenomenological*
- So in whatever way we arrive at (1) and (2), it is not via a deductive (or inductive, etc.) or phenomenological argument. So how do we get to these claims?

2.2 Becoming

- Q: How does the identity of <being> and <nothing> yield a new concept—<becoming>?

(3) [i] *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. [ii] 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 (SL 59-60/21:69-70).

- Is Hegel's derivation of <becoming> analytic or synthetic? He construes the unity of <being> and <nothing> in <becoming> as “entirely analytical,” “The deduction of their unity is thus entirely analytical, just as in general the whole progression in philosophizing (insofar as it is a methodical, i.e. a necessary progression) is nothing other than merely the positing of what is already contained in a concept” (EL §88, p. 141)
- In what sense is <becoming> a “concrete” concept? – Hegel says, “Becoming is the first concrete thought and thus the first concept, whereas being and nothing are empty abstractions” (EL §88A, p. 143)