Jannis Kozatsas, Georges Faraklas, Stella Synegianni, Klaus Vieweg
Hegel and Scepticism

Hegel–Jahrbuch Sonderband

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Volume 10

Hegel and Scepticism

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On Klaus Vieweg's Interpretation

Edited by
Jannis Kozatsas, Georges Faraklas, Stella Synegianni,
Klaus Vieweg

DE GRUYTER

Preface

'Hegel and scepticism' remains an intriguing topic directly concerning the logical and methodological core, and formation, of Hegel's system. Hegel's thought has evolved through his vivid involvement in the vigorous debates over scepticism that took place in Germany around 1800. Contrary to many major scholars of his time, Hegel did not turn to immediate realism, empiricism, or to subjective idealism, in order to overcome scepticism and its deconstructing consequences for philosophical thought itself. Hegel's strategy did not consist either of any fatal immediate confrontation with scepticism.

In the sceptical attack against the phenomenal world Hegel will see a powerful means for thoughtfully negating any mythical narrative about the giveness of the empirical. In the alleged hostility of scepticism against theory he will discern a powerful means of thoughtfully criticising any untheorised belief on the finiteness and the boundaries of thought. His interpretation of Agrippa's five tropes, as they have been delivered by Sextus Empiricus, remains invaluable for his attempt to form a philosophical system that sublates both dogmatism and scepticism. Contrary to any fatal attempt to discard sceptical critique, Hegel will aim to immunize philosophy against the threat of scepticism by integrating the latter into the former as its negative and free moment. To find a way out of the 'hell of negativity' means to integrate scepticism as the moment of dialectic, the moment of negation, into the philosophy itself – therefore to transform scepticism into a sceptical method, into a 'self–accomplished' philosophising which negates its own negation and embraces the Absolute, not in the form of a dogmatic substance but in the form of the subject, of the concept (Begriff), of the identity of the identity and non–identity.

In the last decades there is a growing interest in the issue 'Hegel and scepticism' – an issue which has been more or less neglected in the former Hegel–literature. Research has been oriented to the crucial logical and methodological problems of Hegel's strategic confrontation with scepticism from his earliest academic years till the end of his life. To understand not only Hegel's genuine conception of philosophy but moreover to test the fertility of his approach for the current philosophical debates presupposes for someone to go deep into the logical elements of his system and to investigate the evolution of his thought through his own works and the intellectual frame of his time.

This book presents a series of contributions on different topics concerning the polymorphous relationship of Hegel to scepticism as well as its critical role in dealing with crucial philosophical questions. Around a keynote paper by Klaus Vieweg – a Hegel scholar who has devoted much of his academic work to the historical and systematic relationship between Hegel and scepticism – will unfold different

approaches which will try to understand and restate the limits and the content of this relationship. Various Hegel readers with different theoretical concerns and academic backgrounds deal with Hegel's strategy against (or with) scepticism in a large range of areas from logic and epistemology to practical philosophy and the history of science.

The current volume contains the proceedings of a workshop organised by the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Department of Political Science and History) and the Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Institute for Philosophy) that took place in Athens on 27th and 28th May 2016. For the offer to publish this collective work as part of the renowned series *Hegel–Jahrbuch Sonderband* we remain sincerely thankful to *De Gruyter Publishing House* and personally to the former Editorial Director of the Philosophy Department, Getrud Grünkorn, as well as to the Editors of *Hegel–Jahrbuch*, Andreas Arndt, Brady Bowman, Myriam Gerhard and Jure Zovko. Equally cordially we would like to thank a good friend and colleague, Costas Passas, for undertaking the complicated and grinding task of typesetting this book gratis. Finally, we also owe many thanks to the Project Editor, Johanna Wange, for her constant willingness to solve any technical issue for us till the final preparation of this volume.

The editors

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Ioannis Trisokkas
Hegel on Scepticism in the Logic of Essence

Abstract: The paper, first, discusses Hegel's identification of seeming (Schein) with scepticism in his Logic of Essence and, second, argues that it is mistaken. It also, third, defends this conclusion against Pippin's opposite view.

In the Logic of Essence, the second part of Hegelian Logic, Hegel identifies a logical structure, *seeming*, with "the phenomenon of scepticism" (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396).[1] The present essay, first, fleshes this identification out by describing the argument leading up to it, and, second, argues that it is mistaken. Section 1 deciphers the opening statement of the Logic of Essence, "the truth of being is essence," by specifying its components' meaning. The discussion prepares the way for deliberation on the meaning of "seeming," since seeming proves to be what remains of being in essence; this is done in section 2. It is also shown therein that seeming takes two forms, dualistic and monistic seeming. Section 3 argues that Hegel identifies scepticism only with dualistic seeming, and that the scepticism he has in mind is "subjective scepticism," a scepticism grounded in the subject of cognition. The section concludes that Hegel, judged by his own standards, is mistaken in this identification. Finally, section 4 considers Pippin's objection to this conclusion and offers a rejoinder.

1 Being, Truth, Essence

Hegel begins the Logic of Essence, "the most difficult part of Logic" (Enz.I, p. 236 [§114]), with the following proposition ("H" stands for "Hegel"):

H_1: The *truth* of *being* is *essence*. (WL.II, p. 13/SL, p. 389)

To understand H_1 we must know the meaning of its three components.

Ioannis Trisokkas, Dr. Ioannis Trisokkas, Alexander von Humboldt Senior Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, University of Tübingen.

1.1 Being

Being is the subject–matter (*die Sache*) of Hegelian Theory as a whole. It has many *Stufen* or dimensions, the "determinations" of being; as Aristotle puts it, "being is said in many ways" (Met., Z 1028a10). Determinations are placed on a scale starting from the simplest and ending with the most complex. All determinations are complex with the exception of the simplest. A complex determination "sublates" less complex determinations.

Determinations are clustered under super–determinations, which are in turn sublated into *higher*, more encompassing, super–determinations. Finally, there is the *highest* super–determination sublating *all* higher super–determinations, and hence every determination of being.[2] Being's simplest determination is *being*; thus, the *tautology* of being is a dimension of being. Being's higher super–determinations include the logical, the natural, and the spiritual dimension. The highest super–determination of being is, once more, *being*, this time, however, explicitly conceived as sublating *all* other determinations (WL.I, p. 70/SL, p. 71).

Being's *logical* dimension contains determinations whose content involves neither natural nor spiritual content. What remains is a content called "logical,"[3] the subject–matter of Logic. Hegel divides logical content into three super–determinations: being, essence, and concept. To distinguish the *logical* super–determination of being from the being which is the subject–matter of the whole Hegelian Theory (being), but also from the being which is the subject–matter of the whole Logic (logical being), let us call it *logical–being–as–being*. Logical–being–as–being is a dimension of logical being, and the latter is a dimension of being. This makes logical–being–as–being a dimension of being.

The term "being" in H₁ refers specifically to logical–being–as–being. The latter has been analyzed in the Logic of Being, which precedes the Logic of Essence and has crystallized its fundamental features:

(a) *Determinacy*: Being is determinate being–there. To be determinate is to be a manifoldness of contrasted qualities and quantities. At the beginning of the Logic of Essence, referring to what has been achieved hitherto, Hegel writes that

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2 See the dispute between Schick (1994), Iber (2002), and Trisokkas (2009), over the necessity of having a highest super–determination in Hegelian Theory.
3 I must, therefore, disagree with Dahlstrom (1983, p. 36), who sees Hegelian Logic as "an analysis of the presuppositions of various ways of thinking". Hegelian Logic explicates a dimension of being, as well as the fundamental structures human thought employs in order to know this dimension. Being's logical determinations have an identical content (albeit a distinct existence) with thought's logical structures. A similar view is developed in great detail by Houlgate (2006, pp. 115–143).

"cognition certainly cannot stop short at manifold being–there" (WL.II, p. 13/SL, p. 389). As Pippin puts it, determinate being–there is "the qualities [and quantities] it immediately has" (Pippin 1989, p. 192), "the properties immediately attributed to a thing" (Pippin 1989, p. 196), "a function of qualitative [and quantitative] properties" (Pippin 1989, p. 197), "a series of immediate qualities [and quantities]" (Pippin 1989, p. 199). In short, the determinacy of being is the qualities and quantities that characterize it.

(b) *Something*: Being is not only qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, determinate being–there, but also something. To be something is to be simple, *an* entity, *a* thing (or "*a* being"), "the factual that is present at hand" (WL.I, p. 123/SL, p. 115). Something is always within itself, a "simple relation to itself in the mode of being" (WL.I, p. 123/SL, p. 115). Thus, being, while certainly being a *manifoldness*, is *also* a *non*–manifoldness, a thing that is there as a self–related singularity.

(c) *Immediacy*: "Being is the immediate" (WL.II, p. 13/SL, p. 389). To be immediate is to appear to be there without the mediation of another element (cf. Iber 1990, p. 75). Being is determinate something appearing to be there without going outside of itself, and without "returning to itself" from an otherness. It appears to have a presence purely on its own, and to provide the thing's "beginning" (WL.I, p. 66–67/SL, p. 77–78). Sometimes Hegel describes the immediate as "the concrete" (WL.I, pp. 39, 74/SL, pp. 46, 74), and identifies this concreteness with "the manifold determinate" (WL.I, p. 74/SL, p. 74). To be immediate, then, is to appear to be there as qualitative–quantitative manifoldness *or* as something. The crux of Hegelian analysis is that "the concrete" appears, at one moment, to be a manifoldness, and, at another moment, to be something. These two elements keep their independence from one another, and each does *not* "return to itself" from its other. It is like when we admire the magnificence of a thousand–year–old bristlecone pine standing alone in the middle of a plain field, without paying attention to its qualitative–quantitative manifoldness. The focus is on its solitude, on its simple self–relation. Yet, we then find our mind running through its awe–inspiring qualitative–quantitative manifoldness: its gnarled branches, its brown callous trunk, its multi–shaped cave–looking hollows, its anomalous piercing roots, its terrifying width. Immediacy, in short, is the *indifference* between qualitative–quantitative manifoldness and something: they can equally provide the thing's "beginning".

(d) *Passing–over*: "Something as becoming is a passing–over (*Übergehen*)" (WL.I, p. 124/SL, p. 116). Being as qualitative–quantitative manifoldness is structured in terms of a quality's or quantity's passing over into another quality or quantity. Even though something is a self–relation, *its* manifoldness is structured in terms of other–relatedness. *Its* qualities and quantities pass from one over into an*other*. A tree is there as one, albeit its qualities and quantities are in a constant

change (WL.I, pp. 124, 140/SL, pp. 116, 130). Hegel writes that "passing–over is the same as becoming, only that in it the involved elements remain externally static to one another and the passing–over is represented as occurring *between* them" (WL.I, p. 97/SL, p. 93). This means that the qualities–quantities characterizing something do not "merge" with one another in the process of passing–over; they keep their "self–subsistence." As a consequence of this "externality," qualitative–quantitative manifoldness has the status of a *list* of qualities–quantities. The relation they have is not constitutive of them, precisely because they "insist to hold the other [quality or quantity] fest against them" (WL.I, p. 200/SL, p. 178). It is like when an anatomist is asked to describe a body, and her answer is nothing but a list of anatomical properties (PhdG, pp. 11, 210–211, 249/PS, pp. 1, 166, 199).

If Hegel indeed understands logical–being–as–being in these terms, H_1 must mean that the truth of determinate something (an entity that is immediately there and whose qualitative–quantitative manifoldness has the structure of passing–over) is essence. Yet, what does it mean to say that a determination is the *truth* of another determination in Hegelian Logic?

1.2 Truth

To say that a determination *x* has its truth in another determination *y* is to say that *y sublates x* (WL.I, pp. 115, 218, 225, 382/SL, pp. 107–108, 191–192, 197, 322). Since all determinations bar the simplest, *being*, sublate other determinations, there are as many instances of truth in Hegelian Logic as there are complex determinations! All instances of truth *but one* explicate partial truth (cf. Trisokkas 2012, pp. 324–326). Absolute truth belongs only to that determination that sublates each and every determination. This is why, for Hegel, absolutely true is only the whole (PhdG, p. 24/PS, p. 11). What does it mean, though, "to sublate"?

The meaning of sublation is twofold. On the one hand, to sublate means to *incorporate*; this is why Hegel says that "what is sublated is not thereby reduced to nothing" or "annihilated" (WL.I, pp. 113–114/SL, p. 107). The character or "determinacy" of what is sublated is preserved in the incorporating structure. On the other hand, to sublate means "to cause to cease, to put an end to" (WL.I, p. 114/SL, p. 107), to *supersede*. The sublating determination does not simply repeat the sublated determination. It preserves it, but also adds to it, so that it acquires an altogether new meaning. What is preserved becomes a "moment" in the new structure. This moment together with what is added to it constitute the meaning of the new structure. Incorporation and supersession are the two "opposing determinations" of sublation contained in "one and the same word" (WL.I, p. 114/SL, p. 107).

If the above specification of "truth" is correct, H_1 must mean that essence sublates (incorporates and supersedes) determinate something. What is essence as such a structure of sublation? To answer this question we turn our attention to the minimal meaning of the term "essence" in Hegelian Logic.

1.3 Essence

Essence's minimal meaning derives from a deficiency of logical–being–as–being. The problem is that it does not generate what it "intends" to generate, namely determinate something. What it generates is *only* determinateness, a sheer manifoldness of qualities and quantities. *In logical–being–as–being the "something" in determinate something vanishes*.

Something vanishes because its *immediacy* does not allow it to be anything more than another quality or quantity. Being–something is a quality or quantity of being, as it adds a feature to *what* being is. To be something is to be self–relation; this, however, is another quality or quantity, which, as part of manifoldness, relates to all other qualities and quantities in terms of passing–over. Such a flowing of qualities and quantities constitutes sheer manifoldness, thereby cancelling self–relation, the *thing* that is there as a *unity* of manifoldness, out. While, then, something was supposed to be immediate, a "self–subsistent concreteness," this immediacy causes its degradation into a quality or quantity that passes over into another quality or quantity.

Something's immediacy is the cause of its vanishing as a unity of manifoldness because it prevents it from "merging" with manifoldness in a unity, leaving thereby this manifoldness behind in the "shape" of a "list." As an immediate being, something "stands against" the array of qualities and quantities, turning thus itself into another point in a list of points. To say of a tree that it is something has the same status as saying that it has branches. Something was supposed *not* to be simply a quality or quantity; yet, its absolute immediacy prevents it from exemplifying a structure that goes beyond this qualitative–quantitative being.

The task of the Logic of Essence is to explicate that structure which enables being to be determinate something. This cannot be achieved through logical–being–as–being *alone*, precisely because it has a structure of absolute immediacy. What is needed is a structure that allows something to be self–relation or unity *without* turning it into another quality or quantity. This structure is essence. The Logic of Essence provides a detailed exposition of the relation *something* must have with *manifoldness* (or "determinacy") in order for being to be determinate something, a *thing*–with–qualities–and–quantities, instead of a sheer qualitative–quantitative manifoldness.

What is the status of immediate being, to wit, of qualitative–quantitative manifoldness (as it has been shown that immediate something collapses into another quality or quantity), in the structure of essence? Hegel considers the possibility that something is an entity *separate* from manifoldness. Something neither is a quality or quantity nor can be reduced to a quality or quantity. It is an "essence" lying in "another place" than qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, the "unessential being–there" (WL.II, p. 14/SL, p. 390). The relation between them is one of external connection, and the thing–with–qualities–and–quantities is supposed to be that connection's result.

This "Platonic" solution (cf. Theunissen 1978, p. 322) cannot work. While essence is obliged to generate a *unitary* determinate something, the external connection of something and determinacy fails to generate this. If something were to be separated from determinacy, it would be "a simple unity with no determinacy," an "empty simplicity" (WL.II, p. 14/SL, p. 389). These deficiencies are not removed by external connection, for even after this connection something would still be a self–subsistent other "standing against" determinacy. Putting a horse next to a man does not generate a centaur.

Since the relation between something and manifoldness cannot be one of separation, it *must* be one of non–separation. They must have *already* "merged" in a unity. Hegel writes that such a relation occurs "through […] the infinite *movement* of being," and that in it "the otherness [of manifoldness] is absolutely *sublated*" (WL.II, p. 14/SL, p. 390). He also says that in the relation of essence determinacy is *contained* in something (WL.II, p. 15/SL, p. 390). This relation is described additionally as something's "*negative* relation to itself," as something's "*unity* with itself in this its *difference* from itself" (WL.II, p. 14–15/SL, p. 390). Determinacy "remains therefore *within* this unity and is […] not a passing–over; so the determinations themselves are neither an other *as an other* nor relations to an other [*as an other*]; they are self–subsistent, *but only in such a way that they are together in a unity*" (WL.II, p. 15/SL, p. 390–391). In essence determinacy is "not free;" it is always subordinated "in the relation of essence" (WL.II, p. 15/SL, p. 390–391).

All in all, in essence determinacy has a relation to something that is *not* one of immediacy. It is, therefore, necessarily a relation of *mediation*. This relation involves, somehow, "movement," "negativity," and "containment." Yet, immediacy, self–subsistence, and other–relatedness do not simply vanish. Determinate something still exhibits a manifoldness structured in terms of *other*–relatedness, and still is *characterized* as a self–relation (hence still becomes a quality or quantity). How exactly are these elements (the structure of immediate being) *sublated* in a structure of *mediation*? How could essence preserve determinate something's unity without falling back into immediate being?

2 Seeming

Hegel describes immediate being, qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, as an element that is sublated in essence and is not an other *as an other* to something in H_2:

> H_2: Thus being or being–there has not preserved itself as an other – for it is [now] essence – and the immediate that is still distinguished from essence is not merely an unessential being–there but the immediate that is […] *seeming*. (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395)

He also tells us that "seeming is all that still remains from the sphere of being" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). All terms involved in H_2 are now familiar to us, except "seeming." Hegel discusses this "determination" in two parts. The first (WL.II, p. 19–20/SL, p. 395–396) corresponds to what we will call "dualistic seeming;" the second (WL.II, pp. 21–24/SL, pp. 397–399) brings out what we will call "monistic seeming." This division is significant, for, as we shall see, Hegel identifies scepticism only with dualistic seeming, and not with seeming in general.

2.1 Dualistic Seeming

Seeming has minimally the status of immediate being, of qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, *but only insofar as this being has been sublated in essence, or, if you will, in something–as–essence*: "The being of seeming consists only in the sublatedness of being" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). As "sublatedness" being–as–seeming exhibits simultaneously sublation's two basic properties: (a) ceasing–to–be or "nothingness" or "not–being–there" or "negativity" and (b) preservation or incorporation or being–a–moment.

    Immediate being's sublation turns it into nothingness (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). *This* nothingness acquires a negative meaning from its differentiation from two other kinds of nothingness: (a) the immediate nothing (WL.I, p. 83/SL, p. 82) and (b) the unessential nothing (WL.II, pp. 14, 18–19/SL, pp. 390, 395–395). The difference from the first is that while immediate nothing is "complete emptiness, *absence of all determination* and content" (WL.I, p. 83/SL, p. 82), the nothingness of sublated immediate being is *full of determinacy*, a qualitative–quantitative manifoldness.[4] Hegel writes that "[seeming's content] has been transferred from being to seeming, so that seeming has within itself those manifold determinacies, which are immediate, being–like (*seiende*), and other to one another" (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396).

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4 This point is not always appreciated by commentators; see, for example, Iber (1990, p. 79).

The difference from the second is that while unessential nothing is determinacy *separated* from something (in which case the "essential" something becomes also unessential), the nothingness of sublated immediate being is determinacy that is *not separated* from something (in which case something remains "essential being"). As Hegel puts it, "[sublated immediate being] has this nothingness in essence, and [...] outside of essence there is no seeming" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). Crudely put, whereas the unessential nothing is supposed to be an *entity* (an unessential being) that "stands against" another *entity* (an essence), the nothingness of sublated immediate being is only a "moment" of one entity (essence).

Sublated immediate being's nothingness, then, does not mean indeterminacy or separation from something; this being is fully determinate and inseparable from something. Two questions immediately rise. First, we have been informed what the nothingness of sublated immediate being is not. We still have to find out what it is: what does this nothingness positively consist in? Second, how exactly is sublated immediate being inseparable from something?

The response to the first question follows three steps. First, recall that the problem with immediate being was that, due to its immediacy, it did not have the capacity to prevent something's collapse into qualitative or quantitative being. Immediate being must, therefore, be negated: sublated immediate being is *not* immediate being. Second, however, something, *as a structure of sublation* (*or mediation*), must be *distinguished* from immediate being. For exactly this reason immediate being *cannot vanish* from something–as–essence. It remains as the other in opposition to which something is characterized as not–simply–immediate–being. If this were not the case, something would once more collapse into being simply a quality or quantity. Yet, this means that immediate being must be affirmed as an other of something: sublated immediate being *is* immediate being. Third, we have reached a contradiction: sublated immediate being is and is not immediate being. The contradiction is meant to be resolved through *seeming*: sublated immediate being *seems* to be immediate being, although it *is* not. There is no longer a contradictory relation between an "is" and an "is–not" but rather a non–contradictory one between a "seems–to–be" and an "is–not."

Hegel's idea is that through seeming *something* can keep both (a) its not being simply a quality or quantity (to wit, its being a structure of mediation) and (b) its being also a quality or quantity (namely, its having a character of its own, a "self–subsistent" nature). In the first case, something is confronted with an immediacy that is not, a nothingness. In the second case, it is confronted with an immediacy that seems to be; this suffices for something exhibiting a contrast with its other, and thereby asserting its nature as something other than immediate being. This is why Hegel writes that "seeming [...] *seems* still to have a side that is immediately independent from essence and to be an absolute *other* of it" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p.

395).[5] This, then, is the response to our first question: Sublated immediate being's nothingness consists in its *not being, but only seeming to be, an immediacy*.

The response to the second question is that sublated immediate being is inseparable from something because it has a relation of *positedness* (*Gesetztsein*) with it. As Hegel avers, sublated immediate being "is the negative *posited* as negative" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). An act of positing is absent from both immediate nothing and unessential nothing, *and is precisely that which allows sublated immediate being to avoid the separation from something*. This is so because that which posits immediate–being–as–seeming is something itself.

Thus, seeming is explicated as something's positing a qualitative–quantitative manifoldness that seems to be. It is crucial to realize that, given immediate being's collapse, this is a *necessary* structure in the domain of logical being. On the one hand, something, an element that has a character of its own and thereby characterizes being, is obliged to posit its determinacy as an other; otherwise it would not be able to contrast itself with it and thereby acquire a character of its own. Yet, on the other hand, something, as an element that incorporates qualitative–quantitative manifoldness and is not itself just a quality or quantity, is obliged to take back immediate being's otherness and assert it only as what–seems–to–be–but–is–not. This is why Hegel writes that something's other "contains absolutely the two moments of being–there and not–being–there" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395).

We must not forget that immediate–being–as–seeming has a relation of positedness with something. It is something itself that posits determinacy as seeming.[6] This means that what–seems–to–be is something's own determinacy. This determinacy is *not* an other of something; yet, it *seems* to be an other of it. This is why Hegel writes that "what remains from the otherness of the unessential, insofar as it no longer has a being, is the pure *moment* of not–being–there" (WL.II, p. 19/SL, p. 395). The unessential becomes something's moment precisely because it is no longer an entity that stands against another entity, but rather the determinacy of a single entity, of *something*. Yet, this means that the determinacy *of* something, immediate being or qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, *is not*; it only *seems* to be. Something posits its own determinacy as what–is–not–there–but–only–seems–to–be–there.

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5 The fact that sublated immediate being must still be exhibited as the other of something–as–essence because the latter can be characterized as such only if it is contrasted with it has escaped most commentators; see, for example, Iber (1990, p. 71).

6 Houlgate (2011, p. 141) speaks of a "projection" of seeming by essence: "[…] Essence comes to be understood as that which itself projects the illusion of immediate being, that which itself appears in the guise of immediate being."

The concluding remarks of the first part of Hegel's analysis of seeming confirm my interpretation. He writes that "seeming is this *immediate* not–being–there in the determinacy of being, in such a way that it is there only in the relation to an other, in its not–being–there, the non–self–subsistent which is only in its negation" (WL.II, p. 19–20/SL, p. 396). This is clear enough: Determinacy, qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, has no being–there; it is there only as negated. This negation is its *seeming*–to–be–there. It is, as Hegel has it, "the empty determination of the immediacy of not–being–there" (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396). Yet, its nothingness *is* a relation to an apparent other, *something*. Something posits its own determinacy as that which is not there but only seems to be there.

Such a structure of seeming is what we have called "dualistic seeming" (hereafter "d–seeming"). It is dualistic because what–seems–to–be, something's determinacy, always refers or relates to something that posits it as what is not there. This is not the Platonic dualism of unessential determinacy that is "in another place" than the essential something. It is rather a dualism that is absolutely esoteric, a structure *in* something. Something bifurcates *itself* into a determinacy that only seems to be there and a something that posits this, its own, determinacy as what is not there.

2.2 Monistic Seeming

Hegel does not end seeming's analysis with d–seeming, but with what we can call "monistic," or maybe "reflexive," seeming (hereafter "m–seeming"). M–seeming differs from d–seeming in that in it seeming applies not only to immediate being but also to its seeming–to–be. While in d–seeming immediate being only seems to be an immediacy, only seems to be something's determinacy, in m–seeming immediate being only seems to only seem to be an immediacy, only seems to only seem to be something's determinacy. The result of this *Reflexion*, of seeming's self–application, is the negation of the negation of immediate being, and thereby its restoration as an immediacy, as something's determinacy. Yet *this* immediacy is not the immediacy of logical–being–as–being, the immediacy of a qualitative–quantitative manifoldness structured in terms of passing–over, but rather the immediacy of logical–being–as–essence, the immediacy of a determinate something structured in terms of *negation* of its *seeming*–to–be–an–immediacy. As a negation of a negation, the immediacy of logical–being–as–essence, something's

qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, is in itself a *self–relation*, which is the fundamental determination of *something*.[7]

Why should seeming's analysis proceed from d– to m–seeming? The reason is that *seeming is itself a quality or quantity*, a characterization, of being. Given the argument above, determinate something is obliged to sublate this quality or quantity, namely seeming. Yet, as seen, this sublation is achieved by means of seeming. It follows that seeming only seems to be. Seeming's reflexivity does not cancel the seeming of immediate being out completely, for, due to its infinity (seeming's seeming is once more a seeming, and so on), it constantly falls back to d–seeming. Nevertheless, such "constant falling" has *now* always *already* been sublated in the seeming of seeming. It can never again be the d–seeming it once was; *now* it appears as such only as a "moment" in the circle of seeming.

Given that this circle is self–relation, d–seeming is always already a *manifestation* of, and not a *positing* by, something. Or, if you will, immediate being that "recoils upon itself," that endlessly relates to itself, is a positing that is equally a presupposing. What posits (something) always already presupposes that which is posited (determinacy). The crux of this strange formulation is that in m–seeming there is no internal distinction between something–that–posits and something–that–is–posited. Being's immediacy is in itself a self–relation, and so it is in itself something. Qualitative–quantitative manifoldness is something's determinacy not because it is posited by something, but because it is in itself something (for it relates to *itself*). This is what is gained by seeming's reflexivity.

Hegel writes that as d–seeming seeming "contains an immediate presupposition, an independent side against essence" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). This is not an "independent side" in the sense of unessential determinacy, but it still denotes a *part* of something standing against another *part* of it. Something *is*, but its determinacy *only seems to be*. In m–seeming, by contrast, what–seems–to–be is not only the seeming of determinacy but also this seeming itself. This allows Hegel to say that "seeming is that which is nothingness *in itself*" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). The emphasis is on the in–itself of nothingness and is meant to bring out the fact that seeming's reflexivity is now taking centre stage. We have seen that in d–seeming what–seems–to–be is "the immediacy of not–being" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). In m–seeming "this not–being is nothing other than the negativity of essence *in itself*" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). In this way, seeming's dualism is sublated in essence, for "being is [now] not–being *in* essence" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397).

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7 One of the major disagreements of my interpretation of m–seeming with Iber's is that while I take this to be a structure that restores something, he takes it to be exemplifying something's absence; see Iber (1990, p. 82).

This is, then, the thrust of the second part of seeming's analysis, the one corresponding to m–seeming: the nothingness of determinate something applies not only to immediate being, something's determinacy, but also to itself. This self–application restores something's immediacy or determinacy. In Hegel's words, "the immediacy which, in seeming, determinacy has against essence is [...] nothing other than essence's own immediacy" (WL.II, p. 22/SL, p. 397). Such an immediacy is not a repetition of the immediacy we started with; it is "not the being–like immediacy, but rather the immediacy that is absolutely mediated and reflected seeming" (WL.II, p. 22/SL, p. 397).

The mediated immediacy that determines m–seeming is identified with an endless, "infinite" movement (WL.II, p. 23–24/SL, p. 398–399), the constant "return" of the negative into itself. It is the "relation of the negative [...] with itself," "the negation of the negative," "the self–related negativity," or the "absolute negativity" (WL.II, p. 22–23/SL, p. 398–399). Hegel makes it clear that all these expressions correspond to "the seeming of essence *in itself*" (WL.II, p. 24/SL, p. 399), confirming thus my interpretation.

The Logic of Essence will henceforth take the form of an explication of the various ways in which it can be shown that "the determinations that differentiate seeming from essence are determinations of essence itself, and, moreover, that this determinacy of essence which is seeming is sublated in essence itself" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). This means that the Logic of Essence will present the various structures or "determinations" involved in being's moving from d– to m–seeming. It will be shown that any structure attempting to establish the seeming of *immediate being* is condemned by necessity to "collapse" or, if you prefer, "evolve" into a structure that establishes the seeming of this seeming, and thereby being's mediated immediacy.

3 Scepticism

H₃: In this way, seeming is the phenomenon of *scepticism* [...]. (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

H₃ appears immediately after the *first* part of Hegel's analysis of seeming. This shows that what is to be identified with scepticism is not seeming's reflexivity, m–seeming, the seeming that falls back into itself and thereby generates determinate something, but rather the seeming that is not–being–there, d–seeming. In the first case, *something* is nothing but seeming, a phenomenon that *sublates* qualitative–quantitative manifoldness, the field of determinacy, into something. In the second case, *something* has a *side* that seems–to–be–but–is–not, a phenomenon that

"inwardizes" the opposition between the essential something and its inessential determinacy. This "inwardization" strips something of its determinacy and drags it back into indeterminate nothingness. All there *is* in d–seeming is the indeterminate something, a sheer emptiness and absence of all determinacy. This is so because something's determinacy, its immediate being, *is not* (although it seems to be); it has vanished from the plane of being. Thus, what defines scepticism in the Logic of Essence, "essentialist scepticism," is that it bifurcates something into (a) a seeming, a not–being–there containing something's determinacy, and (b) a hiddenness, something as an indeterminate being positing its own seeming.

This structure, Hegel claims, characterizes a variety of philosophical positions, which, therefore, can all be taken to be manifestations of essentialist scepticism:

(a) A part of ancient scepticism, the one grounded in the "modes of Aenesidemus," considered all things encountered by humans as "seemings," in the sense that humans cannot identify what–seems–to–be with what–is. As Hegel puts it,

H_4: Scepticism did not allow itself to say "it is." (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

Indeed, Sextus constantly reminds us that "we are no doubt able to say how each existing thing appears, […] but are not able to assert what it is in its nature" (PH, I.xiv.87; cf. PH, I.vii.15, and xiv.93, 112, 123). The reason for this, Hegel notes, is that

H_5: [s]uch immediacy […] would have no being outside of its […] relation to the subject." (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

(b) Kantian transcendental idealism is another manifestation of essentialist scepticism. Something's *appearance* is taken to be an immediacy, a being–there, "which *is* not something or a thing" (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396); it is only what something seems to be. As Hegel remarks, for Kant "that seeming should not at all have the status of being, [the subject] should not access the thing in itself through [its] cognition" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397). Thus, the reason for seeming is, once more, the subject of cognition:

H_6: [Kantian] idealism did not allow itself to recognize [the subject's] cognitions as knowledge of the thing–in–itself […]. (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 397)

Indeed, this is exactly what Kant says: "[…] Sensibility and its field, that of appearances, […] has nothing to do with things in themselves" (CPR A251), and "what objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of sensibility, remains completely unknown to us" (CPR A42/B59).

(c) Hegel thinks that Leibnizian monadic rationalism is also a representative of essentialist scepticism. "The Leibnizian monad develops its representations

from within itself; but it is not the power that constructs and binds together these representations. They, rather, arise in it like bubbles. They are immediately indifferent to one another and so to the monad itself" (WL.II, p. 21/SL, p. 396). The key phrase is "immediately indifferent." Leibnizian idealism collapses into scepticism precisely because perception's manifoldness, "the representations of the monad," although it arises out of the monad (the equivalent to Hegel's "something"), is supposed to have an immediate being that is indifferent to, not representative of, the monad.[8] This happens because monadic representations are, according to Leibniz, "distorted" by the cognitive subject. This "distortion" is the cause of the unchanging and logically indiscernible essence of a thing being manifested as a plurality of continually changing properties (L, p. 245).

Thus, ancient, Kantian, and Leibnizian scepticism share, Hegel avers, the feature of dividing something into (a) a hiddenness, the "reality" or "nature" or "in–itself" of something, and (b) an "appearance" which seems to be something but is not. It is clear from the text, though, that Hegel wants to ascribe to these "scepticisms" not only the belief in a contrast between hiddenness and seeming, but also the belief that seeming or "appearance" is a field of determinacy, a qualitative–quantitative manifoldness:

> H_7: That seeming and this appearance are immediately determined as a manifoldness. (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

There is nothing to object here; ancient, Kantian, and Leibnizian scepticism do indeed conceive what–seems–to–be as a rich determinacy, a qualitative–quantitative manifoldness.[9]

The identification of essentialist scepticism with these historical forms of scepticism starts withering, however, as soon as Hegel claims further that they behave as if the determinacy contained in seeming is something's *whole* determinacy. He moves, in other words, from a claim about a belief that seeming is a manifoldness to a claim about a belief that seeming is the whole manifoldness:

> H_8: At the same time, however, scepticism allowed seeming to be a manifoldness of determinations, or, rather, it allowed it to have as content the *whole* manifold richness of the world. (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

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8 Cf. Ingram (1985, p. 434): "[According to Hegel,] Leibniz was not fully cognizant of the contradictions implicit in his notion of the monad and generally tried to suppress them by sundering being into two disparate regions, a world of immutable essences and a world of appearances."
9 Cf. Iber (1990, p. 79): "The [...] expression 'immediately' here denotes the empirical giveness of pre–found contents."

H₉: The appearance of idealism, too, contains in itself the *whole* range of these manifold determinacies. (WL.II, p. 20/SL, p. 396)

This is a mistaken diagnosis by Hegel, for the "scepticisms" he discusses do not take seeming as containing something's whole determinacy, but only a part of it. Neither ancient nor Kantian nor Leibnizian scepticism takes something to be bifurcated into (a) an indeterminate something and (b) something's determinacy, but rather into (a) the objectively *determinate* something and (b) the subjectively *determinate* something.[10] Objectively determinate something contains determinations that are not mediated by the subject; subjectively determinate something contains determinations that are so mediated.

This shows that d–seeming does not correspond to the scepticism represented by the above figures. In d–seeming something posits its *whole* determinacy as what–seems–to–be–but–is–not. In ancient, Kantian, and Leibnizian scepticism, something posits a determinacy that is left outside of seeming because the subject interferes on its way to seeming. The "nature," the "in–itself," and the "reality" of something are constituted by the determinacy left outside of seeming; *they are not indeterminacies*. How much does this matter, though? Does it not suffice for Hegel's purposes that these historical "scepticisms" at least distinguish between seeming and hiddenness, that "they isolate and one–sidedly emphasize seeming and hence detach it from that relation to essence […]?" (Iber 1990, p. 78). Is this not enough a reason to identify d–seeming with these "scepticisms"?

For the following two reasons, the answer must be negative. First, the logical structure of those "scepticisms" does not allow them to develop into m–seeming in the way Hegel envisions, and thereby be resolved as manifestations of scepticism. Even if the seeming of a determinate something is turned upon itself, and thereby cancels immediate seeming out, this would still not be a structure of absolute sublation, a structure in which something incorporates its *whole* determinacy and leaves no *residue* of itself behind. Something's objective determinacy would

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10 For Leibniz, monads are "complete concepts," concepts that contain all properties or "determinations" of the monad. These properties are "folded up" within the monad and unfold when they have sufficient reason to do so (M, par. 61). They comprise the monad's "reality," which is distorted when it is described from the perspective of the cognitive subject. As far as Kant is concerned, Langton (1998) has convincingly argued that Kant's "things in themselves" are not indeterminacies but rather objective (non–subjective) properties. Ingram (1985, p. 431) attempts to justify Hegel's view by writing the following: "Scepticism maintains that appearances, or empirical descriptions of identity, are only subjective and stand in no relation to the substratum to which they refer. A corollary to this kind of nominalism is the idea that substances are 'bare particulars' […]." The problem is that this "corollary" is invalid, since it cannot be derived from the claim that appearances are only subjective.

still remain outside of the circle of seeming; there would still be a hidden part of something. This is necessarily so because for those "scepticisms" seeming is the product of the involvement of the cognitive subject, an element that can never be removed. The established circle of seeming would always be on the one side of something, the side mediated by the subject. This is not what m–seeming is about; it is supposed to unite something as a whole, and thereby lead any "residue" of something to extinction.

Second, the logical structure of the "scepticisms" under discussion does not follow immanently from Hegel's explanation of the "transition" from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence. The "transition" is explained by staying solely within the sphere of a single something, to wit, without employing as an explanans *another* something. For the logical structure of those forms of "subjective scepticism," though, what explains seeming, and hence "the phenomenon of scepticism," is the involvement of a "third" element (an element that is neither the something needing explanation nor its determinacy), namely the subject of cognition. What–seems–to–be is not the result of something's positing, but rather the involvement of an other of something that "distorts" that positing. Without this other, the cognitive subject, the "scepticisms" in question would *not* distinguish between seeming and hiddenness, which is what is shared between their logical structure and the logical structure of d–seeming. So, it is the notion of *cognitive subject* that is fundamental in their structure, and not the notion of something's positing *its own* seeming.

Based on these two reasons, I must conclude that Hegel's identification of d–seeming with ancient, Kantian, and Leibnizian scepticism is, by his own standards, mistaken. This, of course, undermines neither the logical structure of d–seeming nor its possible identification with a scepticism that does *not* involve the notion of a subject of cognition and does *not* bifurcate something into a hidden determinacy and a seeming determinacy. This would be a scepticism for which something *itself* posits its *whole* determinacy as what–seems–to–be–but–is–not. Whether there has been such a kind of scepticism in historical actuality is an inquiry which I cannot pursue here.

4 An objection and a rejoinder

Robert Pippin has developed an interpretation in which seeming fits well with subjective scepticism. For him, the notion of cognitive subject is present in Hegelian Logic from the beginning, so it is neither arbitrary nor unexpected to situate a scepticism based on it at the start of the Logic of Essence. Pippin thinks so because he takes Hegelian Logic "to preserve […] a Kantian project" (Pippin 1989, p. 176),

in the sense that its purpose is defined as "thought's attempt to determine a priori what can be a possible thought of anything at all," or the specification of "how thought on its own can determine objects of thought" (Pippin 1989, pp. 188–189, 204). Thus, for Pippin, Hegelian Logic is solely about cognition in the Kantian sense of the mind's being aware of a determinate object (a "determinate something," in Hegel's terminology). It has nothing to do with the object determining *itself* independently of knowledge (Pippin 1989, pp. 177, 181, 193).

Pippin understands the "transition" from one super–determination to another in terms of a defeatist experience, on the one hand, and a correction, on the other hand. The "transition" from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence, in particular, occurs because the cognitive subject (a) finds its "intention" to think a determinate object by means of "precritical realism" (Pippin 1989, p. 201), that is to say, in terms of determinations of immediate being, defeated (it cannot achieve this thought by these determinations alone) (Pippin 1989, p. 209), and (b) corrects this defeat by proposing a new "conceptual scheme" that employs a different structure of cognition, one in which the "unity" or "identity" of a determinate object is owed to the involvement of a synthesis belonging solely to the mind, not to the object itself (Pippin 1989, pp. 201, 203; 2013, pp. 80, 83). This synthesis, Pippin maintains, is what Hegel calls "reflection" (Pippin 1989, pp. 201, 205; 2013, p. 77).

Hegel's reference to scepticism in the Logic of Essence is explained by Pippin in terms of the above process of defeat and correction. The Logic of Being fails to explain the thought of determinate object because its "resources" are limited; what it generates is only the thought of qualitative–quantitative manifoldness. Reflection unites this manifoldness under the conceptual form of objectivity, and the end–product is meant to be the thought of determinate object. This move, however, results in scepticism because the object thought is now something mediated by the cognitive subject (Pippin 1989, p. 210; 2013, p. 75). This something that is not an in–itself but rather a mediation–through–the–subject–of–cognition is, Pippin believes, what Hegel means by "seeming." In his words, seeming is "an object that cannot be grasped without being [. . .] referred beyond itself to a mediated, thought–determined structure of explanation" (Pippin 1989, p. 204). Thus, for Pippin, seeming results from the "corrective" move of thought to "mediate" the thought of determinate object with reflection, the subject's synthesizing function.

This interpretation, which fits indeed well with Hegel's identification of dualistic seeming with subjective scepticism (but not well at all with Hegel's logic of seeming), is problematic for three reasons. *First*, Hegel derives reflection from seeming and not, as Pippin assumes, vice versa. This mistake prevents Pippin from recognizing that reflection is nothing but the reflexivity of seeming (in Hegel's words, "for seeming that has withdrawn into itself and so is estranged from its immediacy, we have the foreign word *reflection*" (WL.II, p. 24/SL, p. 399), and

not the cognizing mind that synthesizes the object's manifoldness. If reflection were the subject's function of synthesis, it would correspond to what in Hegelian Phenomenology is called "consciousness," the equivalent of the Kantian cognitive subject or "understanding." Hegel, however, states that reflection should be identified with neither consciousness nor understanding:

> H_{10}: But what is under discussion here is neither reflection at the level of consciousness, nor the more specific reflection of the understanding, […] but reflection in general. (WL.II, p. 30–31/SL, p. 404)

Additionally, in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel speaks of reflection as what is *in* "the living substance," a "self–restoring sameness [out of substance's] otherness *within itself*" (PhdG, p. 23/PS, p. 10). Thus, as Houlgate notes, "reflexion as such, as it is thematized in the *Logic*, must […] be an ontological structure, not just an operation of the mind" (Houlgate 2011, p. 142). I find H_{10} incompatible with Pippin's understanding of "reflection," and hence damaging to his defence of Hegel's identification of seeming with subjective scepticism. Of course, passages such as H_{10} undermine also Hegel's own attempt for such an identification.

Second, even if one accepts Pippin's grounding of the "transition" from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence in thought's defeatist–corrective "experience" of its own "resources," one fails to find either in Pippin's interpretation or in Hegel's text an explanation of the *necessity* of moving from the thought of being–that–is–immediate to the thought of being–that–is–mediated–by–cognitive–reflection. Pippin never considers the possibility that the "transition" from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence represents the move from the thought of being–that–is–immediate to the thought of being–that–is–mediated–by–itself (cf. Baur 1998, p. 147). He does not do this because he takes the Logic of Being as thematizing being's "immediacy" not simply as the thing's qualitative–quantitative manifoldness but rather as the "giveness" of this manifoldness to the cognitive subject. In his view, the immediacy of being corresponds to "the facts of consciousness," what is believed (by "precritical realists") to be present in the mind before reflection's involvement. Thus, for Pippin, the Logic of Being is nothing but a "logic of the given" (Pippin 1989, pp. 210, 212–213), and its collapse establishes "the myth of the given."

The problem with this approach is twofold. First, nowhere in the *Science of Logic* being's "immediacy" is identified with either consciousness or "the given." Second, there is explicit evidence that undermines such an identification. Hegel distinguishes sharply between consciousness and pure thought, placing the former in the domain of Phenomenology and the latter in the domain of Logic. Consciousness is defined as the mind's relation to an external other, which is given to it for

cognition (WL.I, p. 17/SL, p. 28). It follows that externality and givenness are foreign to Logic. Hegel writes explicitly that pure thought "frees itself from [the] immediacy and external concreteness" of consciousness (WL.I, p. 17/SL, p. 28), and that "pure science presupposes its being freed from the opposition of consciousness" (WL.I, pp. 43, 45/SL, pp. 49, 51). The term "opposition of consciousness" refers to the relation between the cognitive subject and an external object that is given to it (WL.I, p. 57/SL, p. 60); hence such a relation is *absent* from Hegelian Logic. Concerning particularly "the given," Hegel writes that "philosophy [including Logic] does not make nature, conceived of as a sensible given to perception, the ground of science; it rather cognizes its determinations from the absolute concept" (WL.I, p. 201/SL, p. 179). Specifically with regards to the Logic of Being, he remarks that "in its true presentation this exposition is the preceding whole of the logical movement of the spheres of being and essence, the content of which has not been brought in from the outside as something given (WL.I, p. 189/SL, p. 532). I find this evidence overwhelming and incompatible with the attempt to identify the Logic of Being with a theory based on either "the facts of consciousness" or "the given".[11] There is, then, no justified reason for Pippin to have ignored the possibility of an "ontological" reading of the "transition" from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence.

Third, it is not only that the text supports neither Pippin's understanding of "reflection" as a cognitive subject nor his understanding of the Logic of Being as a "logic of the given"; it is also that it does not support his overall conception of the Logic of Essence as a theory of Kantian cognition, namely as a theory aspiring to explain how the thought of determinate object derives from the "unification" of qualitative–quantitative manifoldness by the mental function of reflection. In H_{11} Hegel explicitly denies this understanding of the Logic of Essence:

> H_{11}: When this movement [from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence] is pictured as the path of knowledge, then this beginning with being, and the development that sublates it, reaching essence as a mediated result, appears to be an activity of knowledge external to being and irrelevant to being's own nature. But this path is the movement of *being itself*. It

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11 Vieweg (2007, p. 122–123) identifies the Logic of Being with "a dogmatic realism that teaches pure immediacy, that posits the world as a given." It is "a theory of a knowledge through intuition." The immediacy of being is an exemplification of "the facts of consciousness" and "a variation of the myth of the given as described by Wilfrid Sellars." The "transition" to the Logic of Essence signals the emergence of a new "theory of knowledge" in which immediacy and mediation "prove to be in an inseparable connection." Yet, Vieweg derives this conclusion about the Logic of Being from what Hegel says about "immediacy" in the *Differenzschrift*, and provides no evidence from the *Science of Logic* that the Logic of Being has anything whatsoever to do with "the facts of consciousness" and "the given.

was seen that being inwardizes *itself* through its own nature, and through this movement into *itself* becomes essence. (WL.II, p. 13/SL, p. 389)

H₁₁ does not mean to say that the determinations described in the Logic of Essence are not structures of knowledge. Yet, it certainly means to say that they are not structures of Kantian cognition, for they exemplify determinations of being *itself*. They do not signify the relation a cognitive subject has with an external object, but rather thought's understanding of those objective structures, structures in the object *itself*, that unify the object's qualitative–quantitative manifoldness. In H₁₁ Hegel tells us that seeming, the structure emerging from the collapse of immediate being, stands for the "self–inwardization" of being itself "through *its own nature*" and "through a movement *into itself*". I find H₁₁ incompatible with Pippin's interpretation of the Logic of Essence.

5 Conclusion

I have argued that Hegel's identification of d–seeming with subjective scepticism must be rejected. This does not mean that d–seeming cannot be associated with some other scepticism. The latter, however, *cannot* be a scepticism that involves objects being given to subjects. It would rather be a scepticism that employs something's projection of its own qualitative–quantitative manifoldness as what–seems–to–be–but–is–not. We may call it *objective* scepticism. Its various manifestations would correspond to the various expressions of d–seeming in the whole Logic of Essence, and the various manifestations of its resolution would correspond to the various expressions of m–seeming therein. Yet, the details of this yet another complicated story must await for a future occasion.[12]

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