

# Sublating Kant and the Old Metaphysics: A Reading of the Transition from Being to Essence in Hegel's *Logic*

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## 1. Introduction: The Problems of Kant and the "Old Metaphysics"

Kant's "transcendental" or "critical" philosophy is an instance of what can be called the "critique of immediacy."<sup>1</sup> As part of his critical project, Kant argues that one cannot merely assume that there is a preestablished harmony between thought and being. Instead, one must effect a "return to the subject" and examine the forms of thought themselves, in order to determine the extent to which thought and being are commensurable. As a result of his "transcendental turn," Kant concludes that what at first appears as *immediately* given to thought is always already (at least partly) the result of some kind of activity or *mediation* on the part of thought itself.

Hegel approves of Kant's critical orientation: Kant correctly demanded to know "how far the forms of thought were capable of leading to the knowledge of truth," and correctly concluded that "the forms of thought must be made into an object of investigation."<sup>2</sup> However, for Hegel, the problem with Kant was that he aimed to examine the forms of thought as if they were necessarily separated from being itself. Thus the Kantian strategy, for Hegel, led to a twofold absurdity.

First of all, Kant was led to the untenable position that one could come to know the forms of thought before actually engaging in knowing. Thus Kant “. . . demanded a criticism of the faculty of cognition as preliminary to its exercise.”<sup>3</sup> The absurdity of this demand is obvious:

the examination of knowledge can only be carried out by an act of knowledge. To examine this so-called instrument is the same thing as to know it. But to seek to know before we know is as absurd as the wise resolution of Scholasticus, not to venture into the water until he had learned to swim.<sup>4</sup>

The second untenable implication bound up with Kant's critique of immediacy has to do with the alleged unknowability of the things-in-themselves. Because Kant at first conceived of the knowing subject as essentially separate from being itself, he was unable to reestablish a genuine cognitive relation between thought and being. Thus for Kant, all thought and reflection are and must remain purely subjective activities: “Thoughts, according to Kant, although universal and necessary categories, are *only our* thoughts—separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge.”<sup>5</sup> The Kantian dichotomy between what is “for cognition” and what is “in itself” amounts to the contradictory idea that cognition is simultaneously both “outside of the truth,” yet “nevertheless true” as well.<sup>6</sup>

For Hegel, the two absurdities that characterize the Kantian position are related. After all, if the instrument of our knowing prevents us from knowing being in itself, then presumably we would be unable to know the being of the instrument of our knowing as well. In order to avoid the contradiction here, Kant must hold, at least implicitly, that one can come to know at least something (namely, the being of the instrument of our knowing) apart from, or prior to, the distorting effects of the instrument itself. But if this is the case, then the alleged instrument of our knowing is not the instrument of *all* our knowing, but only the instrument of *some* types of knowing; but if this is so, then the Kantian dichotomy between thinking and being ultimately breaks down.<sup>7</sup>

Because of the difficulties in Kant, Hegel argues that there must be some kind of “return”—although not an uncritical return—to “the old metaphysics,” a term which Hegel uses to refer to the metaphysics which preceded Kant's “critical philosophy.”<sup>8</sup> Contrary to Kant, the old metaphysicians were correct in affirming the fundamental commensurability of thought and being:

This metaphysical system took the laws and forms of thought to be the fundamental laws and forms of things. It assumed that to think a thing was the means of finding its very self and nature: and to that extent it occupied higher ground than the Critical Philosophy which succeeded it.<sup>9</sup>

The old metaphysicians, however, were also guilty of a twofold failing. First of all, because of their unquestioning and immediate affirmation of the commensurability of thought and being, the old metaphysicians could not adequately address the critical concerns which were eventually raised by thinkers like Hume and Kant. Thus the “critical turn” in philosophy was both justified and necessary:

A very important step was undoubtedly made, when the terms of the old metaphysic were subjected to scrutiny. The plain thinker pursued his unsuspecting way in those categories which had offered themselves naturally. It never occurred to him to ask to what extent these categories had a value and authority of their own. If, as has been said, it is characteristic of free thought to allow no assumptions to pass unquestioned, the old metaphysicians were not free thinkers.<sup>10</sup>

The second, and related, failing of the old metaphysicians had to do with their problematic conception of the relationship between appearance and essence, between the being of things and their truth. On one level, the pre-Kantian metaphysicians did realize that the immediate appearances of things could not be identified with the truth of things. But in addressing the question of truth, the old metaphysicians tended to characterize the relationship between appearance and truth as a relationship between one “given” objective determination—one kind of being—and another:

. . . man is not content with a bare acquaintance, or with the fact as it appears to the senses; he would like to get behind the surface, to know what it is, and to comprehend it. This leads him to reflect: he seeks to find out the cause as something distinct from the mere phenomenon: he tries to know the inside in its distinction from the outside. Hence the phenomenon becomes double, it splits into inside and outside, into force and manifestation, into cause and effect.<sup>11</sup>

Because of their uncritical reliance on things as given, the old metaphysicians regarded objects as somehow “ready-made” for thought.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the old metaphysicians characterized the truth, or essence, of things as something already “out there,” but only lying behind, or inside, the things themselves. As a result of their precritical conception of truth, the old metaphysicians portrayed the relationship between essence and

appearance (and thus between thought and being) as one of indifference. It is precisely because of this alleged indifference that Hume and Kant could justifiably raise the critical question: if essence and appearance, thought and being, are indifferently related, then how can we know for sure that the essences which we know in thought are actually commensurable with what appears in the realm of being as it is “ready-made,” outside of us?

Against both the old metaphysicians and Kant, Hegel wants to demonstrate that “essence must appear,”<sup>13</sup> or—more fully—that “essence *must* appear and only ever does *appear*.” Hegel’s demonstration of this will consist in his articulation of the fundamental identity-in-difference of “*Schein*” (or “Illusory Being”)<sup>14</sup> and Essence. Hegel’s affirmation of this identity-in-difference entails the following two claims:

(1) First, the *Schein* or “mere appearance” that emerges from the sphere of Being—in accordance with its very own nature—only *seems* to be “mere” *Schein*, but is in fact always the *Schein* of what is essential, the *Schein* of Essence itself. The seeming or showing of Illusory Being is the showing forth of Essence itself.

(2) Secondly, Essence, for its own part, only ever *appears* or *seems*. Essence, in order to be Essence at all, must seem and only ever does seem in the form of Illusory Being. There is nothing “behind” or “beyond” the seeming of Being, since the seeming of Being is simply Essence in its immediacy. Stated differently, there is no “unseemly” being-in-itself left that lies hidden behind the seeming of Being.

Hegel’s two fundamental claims can be encapsulated in one sentence: there is no *Schein* without Essence and no Essence without *Schein*, because the two are identical in their difference. Hegel’s demonstration of this will amount to a simultaneous overcoming of the reciprocal shortcomings of Kant and the old metaphysics. Unlike Kant, Hegel does not begin with the separation of being and thought. Thus unlike Kant, he does not need to argue that there is a privileged kind of self-knowledge that allegedly “precedes” other acts of knowing. And unlike the old metaphysicians, Hegel is not committed to an uncritical acceptance of immediacy, or being as given. While Hegel does, indeed, begin with being in its immediacy, he effects a critique of immediacy (yet without buying into the Kantian subject-object dichotomy) insofar as he shows that being as immediate is inadequate on its own terms. Stated differently, Hegel shows how being, as immediate, *critiques itself*. The net result is that Hegel combines a critique of immediacy

with a critique of the problematic subject-object dichotomy that had characterized Kant's critique of immediacy.

Hegel's demonstration that "essence must appear" is to be found in the transition from Being to Essence in the "Objective Logic" of his *Science of Logic*. Thus Hegel can write that "The objective logic . . . takes the place rather of former *metaphysics* which was intended to be the scientific construction of the world in terms of *thoughts* alone."<sup>15</sup> Within the limited scope of this essay, it will not be possible to provide a full account of the categories that constitute the Objective Logic. But it will be possible to offer a discussion of the crucial transition from Being to Essence. If one can show why, for Hegel, "essence must appear," then *eo ipso* one will have demonstrated the basic outlines of Hegel's simultaneous sublation of Kant and the old metaphysics. The present account of the transition from Being to Essence will begin with a brief discussion of the inadequacy of Being as such.

## 2. *The Inadequacy of Being*

The transition from Being to Essence implicates one of the perennial problems of philosophy:

The problem or aim of philosophy is often represented as the ascertainment of the essence of things: a phrase which only means that things, instead of being left in their immediacy, must be shown to be mediated by, or based upon something else. The immediate Being of things is thus conceived under the image of a rind or curtain behind which the Essence lies hidden.<sup>16</sup>

In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, at the conclusion of the section entitled "Consciousness," Hegel had already shown that the truth of beings cannot reside simply in some further, hidden kind of "being" which lies behind the beings which appear to consciousness.<sup>17</sup> Now, in his *Logic*, Hegel seeks to show that the truth of Being cannot be found within the sphere of Being itself, but in the sphere of Essence; however, the realm of Essence is not simply external to that of Being. Instead, the logical movement from Being to Essence must equally be "the movement of Being itself."<sup>18</sup> Now, since the transition from Being to Essence cannot be imposed from without, the transition must be motivated by an internal lack or inadequacy which belongs to Being itself. This internal failing becomes manifest when Being itself reveals itself as "*in and for itself* a nullity."<sup>19</sup>

But how can Being turn out to be a nullity? The inadequacy of Being will reveal itself as the same basic inadequacy that infects all less-than-complete mediations of what is at first simply given as immediate. The term “immediacy” (like potentiality in Aristotle’s sense) is a relative term. What is on one level mediated may be on another level merely immediate; or, expressed in epistemological categories, what is understood or explained on one level may become on another level mere data for further explanation. The Doctrine of Being in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* is nothing other than the story of such relative mediations. As *relative* mediations, however, they remain always mediations of one thing in relation to another, that is, one thing in relation to what the thing is *not*. As we learn in the *Logic*, the sphere of Being is constituted by a series of relative mediations that cannot ultimately be contained or explained in terms of Being itself.

Within the sphere of Being, the only absolute immediacy is “Pure Being,” from which the *Science of Logic* makes its beginning. However, this first and most pure immediacy is unstable on its own terms, because Pure Being—precisely because of its immediacy—is indistinguishable from Pure Nothing. The instability and inadequacy of Pure Being, considered on its own, is made explicit through the recognition of its equivalence with Nothing, an equivalence which requires further explication in the category of Becoming. Every other category within the sphere of Being will represent one or another type of relative mediation under the general rubric of Becoming.

The category of Becoming reaches further articulation as the category of Determinateness *per se* [*die Bestimmtheit als solche*].<sup>20</sup> Since such Determinateness is presented in its immediate unity (i.e. Becoming as the *immediate* unity of Being and Nothing), and since simple unity always bears the form of Being, this Determinateness must be articulated as the category of Determinate *Being* [*Dasein*], or Quality (as opposed to Determinate Nothing). The category of Quality soon demonstrates its own inadequacy in the infinite progression of “qualified” Somethings and Others. This bad infinite of endless qualitative variability is remedied temporarily by the genesis of Being-for-self, a more highly mediated form of self-relation, in which the equivalence of affirmation and negation (the original equivalence of Being and Nothing) is apparently restored. The desired stability seems to reach its consummation in the substrate of Quantity, whose featureless unit is indifferent to an infinitely variable qualitative content. However, this category also reveals its own inadequacy when the limits which are meant to distin-

guish one quality-less unit (Quantum) from another are shown to be fluid and arbitrary. With this, the sphere of Being once again finds itself in the throes of a bad infinite regress.<sup>21</sup>

The relativity endemic to this quantitative bad infinite seems to be overcome with the genesis of Measure, a category which “attempts” to incorporate into itself the previous categories of both Quality and Quantity. This synthesis, however, generates the Nodal Line of Measure Relations, which involves thought in an endless alteration between qualitative and quantitative phases of change. In the Nodal Line, when Quantities alter beyond a certain limit, each Measure-relationship (upon which a corresponding Quality is based) becomes what appears to be absolute Measurelessness. But any Measurelessness merely provides the grounds for the generation of a new set of Measure-relations. This new set persists until its Quantities once again change beyond a certain point to produce yet another apparent Measurelessness. The process repeats itself indefinitely, and so Measure, too, has developed a bad infinite oscillation, only this time between Measure and the Measureless.<sup>22</sup>

At this stage, the sphere of Being has exhausted all of its resources in its search for internal normativity. In its attempted flight from the relativity of its own mediations, it has merely achieved within itself progressively higher, though always short-lived, stages of mediation. The inadequacy of all the categories within the sphere of Being becomes explicit when Being turns upon itself, attempting to flee relativism by resorting to its original categories and introducing new permutations and combinations. But even the final set of permutations and combinations (namely the category of Measure, which combines the previous categories of Quality and Quantity) can result only in new kind of infinite regress. It is quite true that, in order to transcend its own relativisms, the sphere of Being must turn back upon itself. But this *turning back* can offer a way out of relativism only if it succeeds in propelling the sphere of Being *beyond* itself. In other words, the final bad infinite in the Doctrine of Being is not to be overcome by any recourse to Quality or Quantity, or to any combination of these categories. But it is not clear yet just how this overcoming is to be achieved.

The necessity of Being's own failing can be expressed if we recall the mandate with which the *Science of Logic* began: to comprehend what it means just *to be*, simply, stably, and apart from all distinctions, mediations, and qualifications. As we saw, “to be” means “to be determinate,” and “to be determinate means “to be in relation.”<sup>23</sup> Thus even Being as immediate

cannot “just” be; and so the entire sphere of Being has implicitly contradicted itself. Hegel’s task in what follows will not be to avoid the contradiction, but rather to comprehend it, and this will consist in showing how Being, precisely *because* of its sheer immediacy, is not *simply* immediate but *always already* a function of what *was* (or Essence).<sup>24</sup> The point of Hegel’s task here is indicated by a phrase that we have already seen: “essence must appear.” In other words, what immediately appears in the form of Being is always already just the showing forth of Essence; and conversely, Essence *is* Essence only to the extent that it shows itself in the form of immediate Being.

Hegel’s demonstration of this amounts to a critique of immediacy. However, unlike Kant’s critique of immediacy, Hegel’s critique does not depend on a problematic dichotomy between thought and being. Hegel begins with immediate Being, but goes on to show how Being, as immediate, critiques itself. But just how does Being’s self-contradiction or self-critique point *beyond* immediate Being itself?

Before answering that question, it bears emphasizing just what the overcoming of Being may *not* be. As we have seen, all mediations within the sphere of Being are *relative* mediations. Accordingly, every determinate Something within the realm of Being is seen to depend upon, or be conditioned by, some determinate Other; but any such determinate Other depends upon some further determinate Other, and so on *ad infinitum*. In the long run, the sphere of Being as such yields only an infinite regress of mutually related and dependent Determinate Beings. Thought finds itself condemned to a perennial and arbitrary interplay of qualitative and quantitative alterations which lack any stable substance or truth of their own. In order to overcome this bad infinite regress, one cannot appeal to yet another kind of external determination, for the mere appeal to another determination as such can only perpetuate the infinite regress. The problem can be overcome only when one succeeds in articulating a kind of relation which is not a relation to an Other at all, but rather a kind of self-relation.<sup>25</sup> That is, once the sphere of Being has shown itself in its nullity, one must enter a sphere where all transition is no transition at all.<sup>26</sup> The external and relative determinations of all Somethings and Others must ultimately be grounded in that which is not relative. Accordingly, the problem which has characterized the whole sphere of Being can be summarized as follows:

things really are not what they immediately show themselves. There is therefore something more to be done than merely rove from one quality to another, and merely to advance from qualitative to quantitative, and vice



versa: there is a permanent in things, and that permanent is in the first instance their Essence.<sup>27</sup>

The movement from Being to Essence cannot be a movement which is imposed from without, but must result instead from the internal inadequacy belonging to the sphere of Being itself. But at first glance, it does not seem that the emptiness of Being, as we have seen it thus far, can propel Being beyond itself into the sphere of Essence. In other words, the emptiness of Being at first appears as a perfectly inert and self-contained emptiness that does not point beyond itself at all. After all, the equivalence of Being and Nothing issued forth in the category of Becoming, and the story of Determinate Being within the "Doctrine of Being" is nothing other than the story of this Becoming. A closer look at the source of this Becoming, however, will reveal that this Becoming has been one-sided and unstable from its very inception. The story of Determinate Being is indeed the story of Becoming, but it is the story of Becoming in the (one-sided) *form* of *Being*. The equivalence of Being and Nothing was responsible for the genesis of Becoming, or, more precisely, of Determinateness *per se*. But because Being and Nothing, as equivalent, were presented in their *immediate unity*, Becoming received further articulation as Determinate *Being*, and not as Determinate Nothing. This was necessary, because immediate unity must take the form of Being: "The more precise meaning which Being and Nothing receive, now that they are *moments*, is to be ascertained from the consideration of Determinate Being as the unity in which they are preserved."<sup>28</sup>

The transition from "Determinateness *per se*" to "Determinate Being" was a necessary transition. At that stage, the progression of the *Logic* stood at a threshold. The equivalence of Being and Nothing was too immediate to receive any further qualification or nuance.<sup>29</sup> Thus the *immediate unity* of Being and Nothing (in the form of Determinateness) *had* to take on the form of Determinate *Being*.<sup>30</sup> This one-sidedness has finally revealed itself in the bad infinite regress that the entire sphere of Determinate Being has become. Being's turning back upon itself may thus be represented as its return to that threshold of Determinateness *per se*, where it made that necessary "decision." In anticipation of what is to follow, one might say that Essence is Being's reinstatement of its own Determinateness, yet no longer in the form of Being or immediacy, but in its negativity.<sup>31</sup>

The move to Essence is a move beyond Being as we have known it thus far, but it cannot be a move which is external to Being itself. Essence must be the self-sublation of Being. This self-sublation is one which retains Being's

determinateness, for Being's return upon itself need not go all the way back to the very beginning (i.e. to the empty equivalence of Being and Nothing). Instead, the return must extend only to that point where the crucial "decision" was made, a point at which Determinateness had already been achieved. In other words, the determinations which constitute the sphere of Being have not been forgotten, and so Being's return into itself (*Er-in-nerung*) is just as much a remembering (*Erinnerung*).<sup>32</sup>

Hegel gives technical formulation to this necessary "decision," in his discussion of the threshold of Determinateness *per se*. According to Hegel, Essence characterized as Essential Being plays the role of only the first negation, the kind of negation which is the Determinateness that makes any Being a Determinate Being. Negation as Determinateness in this sense is "negation posited as affirmative and is the proposition of Spinoza: *omnis determinatio est negatio*."<sup>33</sup> Negation which is determination in this immediate sense, however, is such only in relation to an Other. The negation which Essence is must be purged of simple Otherness; this kind of negation must be "the absolute negativity of Being."<sup>34</sup> Since Essence is not the Other of Being, it follows that Being cannot be the Other of Essence. The kind of Other which stands opposed to all Determinate Somethings is to be outlawed in the sphere of Essence. In other words, Being and its determinations must be preserved in the sphere of Essence and must be distinguished from Essence, but not as the simple Other of Essence.

### 3. *Schein and Essence*

If the Doctrine of Being has been the story of Becoming, then the Doctrine of Essence is the story of becoming intelligible. It must be shown, of course, that the story of becoming intelligible is continuous with the story of Becoming *per se*. The first chapter of the Doctrine of Essence (entitled "*Schein*" or "Illusory Being") is an attempt to begin articulating the nature of the relation of Being to Essence. Since Essence is the truth of Being,<sup>35</sup> this relation may likewise be called that of Being to its truth, the datum ("the given") to its intelligibility, appearance to reality, explanandum to explanans. The Doctrine of Essence thus cannot involve a complete obliteration of the determinations of Being; for no theory can be wholly indifferent to the evidence for it. On the other hand, the move into the sphere of Essence cannot be simply a matter of adding new determinations to those in the sphere of Being; for intelligibility is a function, not of the

presence or absence of more or less data, but of the meaning, truth, or significance of those data that are already given.

The first section of the first chapter in the *Book of Essence*, the section entitled "The Essential and the Unessential," presents the relation between Being and Essence in its most obvious immediacy. Here Hegel tells us that "Essence is *sublated Being*."<sup>36</sup> Grasped in its immediacy, Essence presents itself as the negation of Being in the same manner that the Other is the negation of the Something. Conceived in this way, Essence is not the immanent truth of Being. Rather, both Essence and Being are two immediacies, two differently determined beings.

This distinction between the Essential and the Unessential has once again made the basis of discourse the sphere of Determinate Being. Yet Determinate Being, inasmuch as it is constituted by Being with negation, is an inherently unstable foundation. In fact, it is no foundation at all, for it is the source of the bad infinite regressions that have already been encountered within the sphere of Being. Just as there is nothing to prevent the Something from passing over into the Other, so too there is nothing to prevent the Essential from passing over into the Unessential. On this basis, any distinction between the Essential and the Unessential remains a matter of perspective, and so "the same content can therefore be regarded now as Essential and again as Unessential."<sup>37</sup>

This spurious distinction between the Essential and the Unessential (Essence and Being) is the common source of both dogmatism and relativism in metaphysics.<sup>38</sup> Because the sphere of Determinate Being remains the basis of the discussion here, the distinction between the Essential and the Unessential will have to be rooted in some further determination imposed from without. The distinction is then not made immanently, but "has its origin in a *third*,"<sup>39</sup> and so is external, non-rational, arbitrary, and dogmatic. Inasmuch as Essence is opposed to Being as the Something is opposed to the Other, both Essence and Being remain "equal in value."<sup>40</sup> After all, the Something and the Other are, according to the Doctrine of Being, "both Determinate Beings or Somethings," but "each is equally an Other."<sup>41</sup> The distinction between Essence and Being therefore remains purely perspectival, relative, and so is no distinction at all. "Such a division does not settle what is Essential and what is Unessential."<sup>42</sup> For Hegel, both dogmatists and relativists consider the relationship of Being to Essence to be that of the Something to the Other. Dogmatists privilege one instance of givenness over another (the Essential Something over the Unessential Other) because

they believe that they possess some external, non-relative perspective by which they can justify such a distinction. By contrast, the relativist insists—correctly, in Hegel’s view—that all such attempts at privileging one instance of givenness over another fall prey to the general critique of givenness that has been displayed thus far.<sup>43</sup> All such attempts are based on the appeal to some external, “third” Something—a Something that is itself merely given or immediate, and thus always relative to some Other.

But then how is it possible to articulate the *true* relation of Essence to Being? The two must be distinguished, but this distinction cannot bear the form of the Something-to-Other relationships that have characterized development in the realm of Determinate Being. The true relation of Being to Essence is articulated more adequately in the section entitled *Schein*. In this section, we learn why the relation of Being to Essence is different from the relation of the Something to the Other; by the same token, we also learn why this difference is grounded in the immanent movement of Being itself. Being is preserved in the sphere of Essence; but it is preserved only inasmuch as it is negated. This is not the negation of the Something over against the Other, but rather a negation which refers to the nullity or emptiness which the *entire* sphere of Being has become *of its own accord*.<sup>44</sup> This nullity or emptiness cannot be indeterminate; for such an indeterminate emptiness would refer to the pure Being with which the entire *Science of Logic* began.<sup>45</sup> The nullity which is the *result* of the “Doctrine of Being” must preserve the determinations which have been developed in the sphere of Determinate Being. That which belongs to the sphere of Essence, but preserves the determinations of the sphere of Determinate Being, is at first given the name of *Schein*. Depending on the context, Hegel refers to *Schein* also as sublated Being, negated Determinate Being, or Determinate Nothing.

In its immediacy, *Schein* appears simply as Illusory Being. As immediate, *Schein* appears simply as the Other of Essence, free-floating, insubstantial, and lacking any truth of its own. *Schein* therefore bears the unique character of “*immediate, negated Determinate Being*.”<sup>46</sup> Since this is a unique type of immediacy, “immediacy which is only by means of its negation,” Hegel gives it the special name of “reflected immediacy [*reflektierte Unmittelbarkeit*].”<sup>47</sup> Since *Schein* is reflected immediacy, that which *is* only in its negation, it depends on an Other for its being; it cannot be self-subsistent. As immediate, *Schein* is dependent upon some Other, but the true character of this Other is yet to be articulated.

What is immediate takes on the form of Being, but reflected immediacy is that which is only in its being negated. Reflected immediacy is not immediacy in the sense of what is simply "there." Immediacy in this sense would belong to the sphere of Being. Reflected immediacy, rather, is the immediacy which is *known* to be immediacy; it is the immediacy which is still given, but not accepted in the unquestioning manner of the naive realist. It is not the immediacy which "*simply is*." It is the immediacy which is, but is not true. In the sphere of Being, the question of truth was not yet explicitly raised, and so it could not be answered. At this stage in the sphere of Essence, the question of truth has been raised, but not yet answered. Reflected immediacy, therefore, is not the immediacy that *simply is*, but is the immediacy that *was*.<sup>48</sup> It is the immediacy which may have at one time passed for the true, but which can no longer do so. It is the immediacy now *known* for what it is: immediate, not automatically true by virtue of its givenness alone, and therefore negated. But nothing more can yet be said of it.

Reflected immediacy corresponds to the given datum which is now known to depend on some Other for its truth. It is the datum which is now known to require some explanation, but for which an explanation cannot yet be given. This phase in the progress of the *Logic* has revealed explicitly for the first time that being is not *only* immediate. The question of truth has been raised explicitly; intelligibility has become a concern; and more is demanded than what is merely immediate. Nevertheless, insight into the illusory, or insubstantial, nature of the immediate cannot alone point to what is not illusory, or what is substantial. Knowing that knowing is not merely a matter of immediacy does not yet tell us what it is. Consequently, *Schein* as reflected immediacy is the phenomenon of the skeptic and the appearance of the subjective idealist.

In its immediacy, *Schein* is the Illusory Being which is dependent upon some Other whose character is yet unknown. It is at this stage in the progress of pure thought that the skeptic despairs. For the skeptic, the notion that *Schein* should depend on some Other leads thought only to the consideration of a "know-not-what" as substrate, and so *Schein* appears to "lack any foundation" whatsoever.<sup>49</sup> For this reason, "Skepticism did not permit itself to say 'It is.'"<sup>50</sup> Subjective idealism, for its part, failed to get very far beyond the standpoint of skepticism. In its immediacy and therefore as separate from Essence, *Schein* was seen to depend on some Other; for the subjective idealist, this Other was to be identified as the knowing subject, which was conceived as an externally, indifferently related Determinate

Being. For this reason, "Modern idealism did not permit itself to regard knowledge as a knowing of the thing-in-itself."<sup>51</sup>

Both skepticism and idealism do admit, however, that—in spite of its illusory nature—*Schein* embraces within itself a multitude of determinations which, in fact, constitutes "the entire manifold wealth of the world."<sup>52</sup> The skeptic, in denying the reality of any substantial foundation to *Schein*, cannot explain the fact of such a manifoldly determined immediacy. The subjective idealist, on the other hand, identifies the subject as the source of such determinatenesses. At first glance, it may appear that the subjective idealist has advanced well beyond the skeptic, but Hegel argues that this is not so. Phenomenologically, *Schein* as a manifoldly determined immediacy might be identified with the given contents of one's consciousness. In attempting to explain the genesis of such manifoldly determined conscious contents, the subjective idealist has merely cited as their source some feature of consciousness itself. But this does not help at all. If the subjective idealist should appeal to any specific psychological or cognitive determinations of subjectivity in order to account for the variety of conscious contents, then these so-called "subjective" determinations themselves would also have to be relegated to the realm of mere *Schein*. The very idea that the determinations of subjectivity can account for the illusory contents of consciousness is itself just another conscious content. For this reason, Kant is forced to argue (implicitly, if not explicitly) that one can know, prior to knowing, the subjective determinations that allegedly account for the determinate contents of consciousness.

*Schein*, grasped in its immediacy, is non-self-subsistent and therefore has its being in an Other. Subjective idealists have identified this Other as the determinate, cognitive apparatus of the finite subject. The problem with all such subjective idealists, however, is that they implicitly conceive of the relation between thought and being, or knowing and known, in the same way that they conceive of the relation between one Determinate Being and another. The representations of the Leibnizian monad, for example, "are indifferent and immediate over against one another and the same in relation to the monad itself."<sup>53</sup> The Appearance of Kantian idealism likewise "presupposes affections, determinations of the subject, which are immediate relatively to themselves and to the subject."<sup>54</sup> In a similar fashion, Fichte's *Anstoss*, though a determinateness in the ego,

is at the same time *immediate*, a *limitation* of the ego, which it [the ego] can transcend, but which has in it an element of indifference, so that although the limitation is in the ego, it contains an *immediate* non-being of the ego.<sup>55</sup>

The subject and its object, or consciousness and its conscious content, are therefore related to one another as two finite beings, as the Something to the Other. The infinite, consciousness, is thereby finitized, and we are left with another version of the bad infinite. In the case of Kant, any alleged determination of the “really real” subject must remain just another Appearance. In the case of Fichte, the ego can never understand the nature of the non-ego; as a result, the ego is forever condemned to limitation, to an insurmountable Ought. More generally speaking, such subjective idealisms cannot explain how consciousness is the infinite which can accommodate any conscious content whatsoever, but which is itself not just another conscious content.

Both skepticism and subjective idealism take as their theoretical basis *Schein* as it is grasped only in its simple immediacy. The *Schein* of the skeptic and of the subjective idealist is “immediate, negated Determinate Being.” But as such, *Schein* is an inherently contradictory category; for immediacy takes the form of Being, and we are speaking here of an immediate negation. By the same token, the claims of the skeptic and subjective idealist are implicitly contradictory. Both positions present themselves as critiques of immediacy, and yet they must also accept as their own starting point the *given* fact that *Schein* has for its content a manifold wealth of differently determined illusory beings.<sup>56</sup>

As implicitly self-contradictory, both skepticism and subjective idealism contain within themselves the grounds of their own reversal. Because both the skeptic and subjective idealist apprehend *Schein* only in its immediacy, as the Other of Essence, neither can grasp the basic truth which lies hidden in the notion of *Schein* as “immediate, negated Determinate Being.” As we shall see, the nature of the solution is implicit in the problem. In effect, both skepticism and subjective idealism take their questions from the sphere of Essence, but both seek answers still in the realm of Being. An adequate solution will consist in seeing how immediacy and negation, Being and Essence, are not indifferently related at all but rather identical in their difference.

Inasmuch as *Schein* is apprehended in its immediacy, answers are still being sought in the sphere of Being. Nevertheless, the discussion is already

taking place within the realm of Essence, and Hegel says that there can be no need of demonstrating this fact.<sup>57</sup> For inasmuch as the immediate has been shown to be inadequate, and the question of truth has been raised explicitly, the foundation of the discourse has already become that of Essence. Being has shown itself to be a nullity (Illusory Being), and the articulation of this fact means that the sphere of Being has already (minimally) transcended itself. *Schein*, precisely as a nullity and thus as that which is distinct from Essence, “sublates itself and withdraws into Essence.”<sup>58</sup> Even if the immediate has been shown to be untrue, it must be presupposed that at least *something* is true. The exact nature of this truth, of this “withdrawal into Essence,” has eluded both the skeptic and the subjective idealist. At this stage in the discourse, the precise nature of such truth becomes the next topic for further explication. In Hegel’s words, it must now be shown that “the determinations which distinguish it [*Schein*] from Essence are determinations of Essence itself.”<sup>59</sup>

#### 4. *Schein Becoming Essence*

The course of the discussion thus far has indicated, at least implicitly, that *Schein* contains within itself two moments. First, as independent of Essence, *Schein* contains the moment of negated Determinate Being. This is the “nothingness which yet is,” the nothingness to whose realm the skeptic relegates all experience and thought.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, *Schein* includes a moment of immediacy, but since this is a special type of immediacy—immediacy which is only by means of its negation—it is given the special name of “reflected immediacy.” Such immediacy imparts to *Schein* a type of Being, but “Being as a moment.”<sup>61</sup> It is the combination of these two moments that explains the paradoxical character of *Schein*.<sup>62</sup> *Schein* is the Being which in Essence is non-Being. *Schein* corresponds to the given, the datum which is “there” (immediate, Being), but which is untrue or illusory (negated, Nothing). In spite of the fact that *Schein* is illusory, untrue, and negated, it must also *be* in some sense if it is to appear as *Schein* at all. The raw datum, although it cannot be accepted as true, still cannot be ignored; it is undeniably “there.” Hence, one must take account of *Schein*’s moment of Being just as much as its moment of negation.

To treat a single moment of any category as if it were the whole is to fail to grasp the category in its truth. Yet even if both moments in a category are given equal attention, there is still no guarantee that the category will be



seen in its truth. One may acknowledge both moments of a category, yet fail to see them in their necessary unity. It is just such an apparent disconnect-ness between two moments which allows one moment to take precedence over another. Thus when *Schein* is presented only in its immediacy, its two moments of negated Determinate Being and reflected immediacy seem to be stuck together forcibly, indifferently, and non-rationally. For the two are, by nature, contradictory. The origin of *Schein's* two moments is clear enough: when grasped in its (1) *immediacy*, *Schein* appears as the Other of Essence, and as the Other of Essence, *Schein* retains a moment of (2) *negated Determinate Being*. Each of these two moments represents, respectively, what appears to be a moment of Being and a moment of Nothing. It is not yet clear how these two can be united in the same category. Of course, here one cannot simply appeal to the primordial unity of pure Being and pure Nothing; for the moments now in question do not represent Being and Nothing in their original purity.

As noted briefly before, the category of *Schein*, insofar as it is grasped in its immediacy, will inevitably remain contradictory, incomplete, untrue, unstable, and one-sided. Yet this one-sidedness is not merely the result of the failure to see that *Schein* has two moments; even *Schein* in its one-sided immediacy manifests two moments. Rather, the one-sidedness of *Schein* as it now stands resides in the apparent *opposition* of the two moments to one another. At this stage, it is not yet clear how, or even whether, these two moments are intrinsically united. *Schein*, when still present in its immediacy, marks the stage at which one may understand that the data are somehow "there," but not true; but one is still not able to say how or why this can be so. The answer to this question will be found in the demonstration of how the two moments of *Schein* are necessarily united. Yet to understand the two moments as united is to comprehend *Schein* as it is no longer immediate; and to comprehend *Schein* in this way is to comprehend that it is no longer the Other of Essence; but this, finally, is the same thing as seeing *Schein* as it passes over into Essence. In short, to resolve the inner contradiction in *Schein* is to demonstrate how and why *Schein* is really Essence.

Closer consideration of the two moments of *Schein* will reveal that they are not indifferent to one another. The first moment of *Schein* is negated Determinate Being. Since every determination is a negation, negated Determinate Being is really a negation of a negation. But negation of negation is self-negation, or self-relation of a purely negative sort.<sup>63</sup> And

self-relation bears the form of immediacy, even if it is a purely negative type of self-relation. The reflected immediacy of *Schein*—i.e. the immediacy which is only by means of its negation—is therefore the type of negative self-relation already implicit in the moment of negated Determinate Being. The two moments of *Schein*, when understood in their truth, are seen to be necessarily united. The explanation of how *Schein* is “there,” but not true on its own, is thus beginning to fall into place. Since immediacy represents Being and negation Nothing, Being and Nothing reach a stable, more highly mediated unity in *Schein* as it is thus understood.

In its immediacy, *Schein* appeared as the Other of Essence; it appeared to have its “Determinate Being only in relation to another, only in its negated Determinate Being.”<sup>64</sup> For this reason, *Schein* was seen as a mere non-self-subsistent, inexplicable Appearance. It still appeared in the “determinateness of Being,” and its reflected immediacy bore the strange character of an immediacy which *had been*, i.e. an immediacy that is only in its negation, in its relation to an Other. At the time, the character of this Other was still unknown. Closer consideration has shown that the negation in *Schein* must be a type of self-negation. All negation by, or relation to, an Other has thus been banished from the sphere of Essence. Illusory Being thus becomes intelligible Being on its own, without the help of any external Other. This, of course, is the very possibility that the skeptic and the subjective idealist had denied; for the Other which these two sought was not the absolute Other-in-self characteristic of the sphere of Essence, but rather the Other imported from the realm of Being—the relative Other “out there.”

*Schein* becomes intelligible on its own, through its own self-negation. *Schein* thus becomes self-subsistent, absolute negativity. But *Schein*, characterized in this way, is not *Schein*, but Essence. In other words, *Schein* is Essence, but Essence as it is grasped in its most immediate, unarticulated form. “*Schein* is Essence itself in the determinateness of Being.”<sup>65</sup> For Essence is absolute negativity, pure negative self-relation. But this negativity, as self-relation, is also immediacy. The two moments of *Schein*—“implicit negativity” and “reflected immediacy”—are therefore identical to the two moments of Essence.<sup>66</sup> *Schein* is thus *immediacy* which has as a moment *negated* Determinate Being; it is the Being which is non-Being, the datum which is *there* but not true. Essence is the absolute *negativity* which has as a moment *immediacy*; it is the non-Being which is Being, the negativity which, as self-related, must take on the form of Being. As the Other of Essence, *Schein* has become—or is always already becoming—Essence itself.<sup>67</sup>

It follows from this that Essence is the “unity of absolute negativity and immediacy.”<sup>68</sup> For one moment of Essence is absolute negativity, absolute negative self-relation. The other moment is immediacy, the reflected immediacy which is nothing other than Essence’s self-relation, or self-equality. Only the necessary combination of these two moments can explain how *Schein* is immediate, “there,” and apparently underived, but at the same time determinate, negated, and therefore derived. For the immediacy of Essence is not just any immediacy, but reflected immediacy, the immediacy which is only as the result of some “prior” activity.<sup>69</sup> This “prior” activity is the absolute negativity of Essence, which, since it is a type of self-relation, issues forth in the form of immediacy, or Being. Thus, the immediacy of *Schein* (as Illusory Being) is a derived, determined immediacy. The negativity of Essence is “negative self-relation, a negating that is a repelling of itself, and the intrinsic immediacy is thus negative or *determinate* in regard to it.”<sup>70</sup> Since the immediacy of Essence is a reflected immediacy, Essence preserves within itself the determinations of Being, but without their basis in Being itself. For the basis of the determined immediacy is no longer Being, but absolute negativity:

The immediacy of the determinateness in *Schein* over against Essence is consequently nothing other than Essence’s own immediacy; but the immediacy is not simply affirmative, but is the purely mediated or reflected immediacy that is *Schein*—Being not as Being, but only as the determinateness of Being as opposed to mediation; Being as a moment.<sup>71</sup>

Essence preserves within itself the determinations of Being, but these determinations have not yet been made explicit in the realm of Essence:

Absolute Essence in this simple equality with itself has no Determinate Being; but it must develop Determinate Being, for it is both in itself and for itself, i.e., it differentiates the determinations which are implicit within it.<sup>72</sup>

These implicit determinations become explicit only in the later chapters of the Doctrine of Essence.

As negative self-relation, Essence appears as the infinite, self-subsistent basis of all forms of non-self-subsistent, determined *Schein*. But one should not be misled into thinking that *Schein* is a merely residual, nonessential expression of Essence. Essence shows itself through *Schein* because it *must*. As Hegel writes, “*Essence must appear.*”<sup>73</sup> Essence and *Schein* “need” each other, and, in fact, are each other; the two moments of absolute negativity

and reflected immediacy are necessarily united. Since absolute negativity is negative *self-relation*, it is impossible to have absolute negativity (Essence) without some form of immediacy or Being (*Schein*); and conversely, it is impossible to have Being or immediacy without negative self-relation. With this, Hegel has demonstrated his two fundamental claims:

(1) The *Schein* that emerges from the sphere of Being only *seems* to be “mere” *Schein*, but is in fact always the *Schein* of what is essential, the *Schein* of Essence itself. To speak of *Schein* as the indifferent or inessential expression of an underlying, essential substrate would be to plunge the discussion once again into the realm of Determinate Being and into the bad infinite that inevitably results therein. Thus “*Schein* in Essence is not the *Schein* of an Other, but is *Schein per se*, the *Schein of Essence itself*.”<sup>74</sup>

(2) Essence, in order to be Essence at all, must seem and only ever does seem as Illusory Being. There is no thing-in-itself beyond the seeming. According to Hegel, Kant was right to argue that *Schein*, or illusion, is necessary; however, Kant was wrong to think that such illusion is relative to the finite subject alone, rather than a function of Essence itself.<sup>75</sup>

### 5. Conclusion

The identity-in-difference of *Schein* and Essence, of immediacy and self-relation, implies that all determinate immediacy, as given, is equally a function of the negative self-relation known as Essence. In the final part of his *Science of Logic*, in the “Subjective Logic,” Hegel goes on to show that the negative self-relation that constitutes Essence must ultimately be comprehended in terms of subjectivity, or the unity of self-consciousness.<sup>76</sup>

Now without delving further into the subjective logic, it is possible briefly to summarize the lesson contained in the transition from Being to Essence (that “Essence *must* appear”) as it speaks to both Kant and the old metaphysicians.

The common failing of Kant and the old metaphysicians was their inability to comprehend the identity-in-difference of *Schein* and Essence, immediacy and negative self-relation (or subjectivity). The old metaphysicians regarded Seeming and Essence as two ready-made, given kinds of being, indifferently and externally related to one another, and indifferently and externally related to thought as well. The alleged indifference and externality between thought and being ultimately undermined the old metaphysicians’ claim to know that being and thought are, in fact, commensurable

with one another. Kant was right to criticize the old metaphysicians and to problematize the relation of being to thought. He correctly concluded that the universality of thought could be defended (e.g. against the Humean skeptic) only if it could be shown that the *knowing* and *what is known* are not externally or indifferently related to one another. Along these lines, Kant's transcendental deduction aims to show that the conditions of the possibility of experience are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience;<sup>77</sup> in other words, the knowing and what is known are not externally or indifferently related to one another. However, because of his subjectivistic starting point, Kant was forced to conclude that what is known—although intrinsically related to the knowing—is not being in itself.

For Hegel, the proper solution beyond these dual failings is to start—like the old metaphysicians—with being itself (and thus to refrain from presupposing any necessary dichotomy between being and thought), but to show how being is incomplete on its own terms, and calls for negative self-relation (subjectivity) in order to *be* itself.<sup>78</sup>

## NOTES

1. Another instance of the critique of immediacy is Wilfred Sellars' famous attack on the "myth of the given." See Wilfred Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," in Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven, eds., *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 253-329. More recently, William Maker has made an argument (with which I agree) that Hegel's entire *Phenomenology of Spirit* might be understood as an extended attack on the "myth of the given." See William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994). My aim in this paper will be to show how the transition from Being to Essence in Hegel's *Science of Logic* can help illuminate how Hegel aims to unite a "critique of immediacy" (following Kant) with the pursuit of speculative metaphysics in the grand tradition.

2. *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), § 41, p. 66. All subsequent references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *Enc. I*, followed by the section number and page number. For the original German, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8: *System der Philosophie. Erster Teil. Die Logik*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964), § 41, *Zusatz-1*, pp. 124-125. All subsequent references to this German text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *Enz. I*, followed by the section number and page number.

3. *Enc. I*, § 41, p. 66; *Enz. I*, § 41, *Zusatz-1*, p. 125.

4. *Enc. I*, § 10, p. 14; *Enz. I*, § 10, p. 54.

5. *Enc. I*, § 41, p. 67; *Enz. I*, § 41, *Zusatz-2*, p. 127.

6. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 47. All subsequent references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *PS*, followed by the page number. For the original German, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede, Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften and Hegel-Archiv der Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1980), p. 54. All subsequent references to this German text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *PdG*, followed by the page number. Recently, contemporary Kantians have argued that Hegel's criticisms of Kant rest on a misinterpretation. See, for example, Karl Ameriks, "Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1985): 1-35. The present paper does not aim to provide an Hegelian rejoinder to the Kantian defenses by Ameriks and others.

7. For a related account of the inherent limitations of transcendental philosophy, see Richard Dien Winfield, "The Route to Foundation-Free Systematic Philosophy," in *Overcoming Foundations: Studies in Systematic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 16-19.

8. *Enc. I*, § 27, p. 47; *Enz. I*, § 27, p. 99.

9. *Enc. I*, § 28, p. 48; *Enz. I*, § 28, p. 100. See also *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1989), p. 45. I have changed all of Miller's British spellings to American spellings. All subsequent references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *SL*, followed by the page number. For the original German, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Georg Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1967), vol. I, p. 25. All subsequent references to this German text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *WL*, followed by the volume number and page number.

10. *Enc. I*, § 41, p. 66; *Enz. I*, § 41, *Zusatz-1*, p. 124.

11. *Enc. I*, § 21, p. 33; *Enz. I*, § 21, *Zusatz*, p. 78.

12. *Enc. I*, § 31, p. 51; *Enz. I*, § 31, *Zusatz*, p. 105.

13. *SL*, 479; *WL*, II, 101.

14. The term *Schein* is notoriously difficult to translate. For A. V. Miller's account of his decision to translate *Schein* as "Illusory Being," see A. V. Miller, "On Translating Hegel," *Owl of Minerva* 14 (1983): 6. In *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) and *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), G. R. G. Mure and Errol Harris, respectively, translate *Schein* as "show." By contrast, John Burbidge argues in favor of Miller's rendering of *Schein* as "seeming," rather than "Illusory Being" (see *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* [Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981], pp. 63-67 and 248, notes 4 and 7). More recently, Daniel Dahlstrom has argued that Hegel's use of the term *Schein* is meant to convey a *double entendre*, which can be conveyed by the English terms "guise" and "disguise." See Daniel Dahlstrom, "Between Being and Essence: Reflection's Logical Disguise," in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 99-111. In order to preserve the richness and flexibility of this term as it occurs in the changing contexts of the *Science of Logic*, I have decided to leave it untranslated throughout most of my analysis here.

15. *SL*, 63; *WL*, I, 46. See also *SL*, 27; *WL*, I, 5-6; as well as *Enc. I*, § 24, p. 36; *Enz. I*, § 24, p. 83; and *Enc. I*, § 114, p. 166; *Enz. I*, § 114, p. 267.

16. *Enc. I*, § 112, p. 163; *Enz. I*, § 112, *Zusatz*, p. 262.

17. See *PS*, 103; *PdG*, 102.

18. *SL*, 389; *WL*, II, 3.

19. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 9. The fact that Being turns out to be a nullity parallels the fact, in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, that the allegedly external objects of consciousness turn out to be empty if they are regarded as simply external to consciousness. See *PS*, 102-103; *PdG*, 101-102.

20. *SL*, 79; *WL*, I, 64.

21. *SL*, 227 ff.; *WL*, I, 223 ff..

22. *SL*, 371 ff.; *WL*, I, 384 ff..

23. Thus, as Stephen Houlgate notes, Hegel denies that there can be any ultimate, fixed distinction between reality and negation: ". . . what is real and determinate must itself be construed as the *negation* of other real, determinate things and as the negation of sheer non-being." See Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel, Kant, and the Formal Distinctions of Reflective Understanding," in *Hegel and the Modern World*, ed. Ardis Collins (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), p. 132.

24. As Hegel points out, the German word for "essence" (*das Wesen*) is related to the German past participle of the verb "to be": *gewesen*. See *SL*, 389; *WL*, II, 3.

25. Hegel makes an analogous point at the end of the section on "Consciousness" in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. At the end of the section on Consciousness, all objects that present themselves as external to consciousness are shown to be empty when regarded as simply external to consciousness. One cannot remedy this emptiness by positing some other kind of object or essence that allegedly stands "behind" the veil of appearances. Instead, consciousness itself has to "go behind" the veil of appearance itself, "as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen." See *PS*, 103; *PdG*, 102. In other words, the truth of consciousness (the self's relatedness to objects) will have to reveal itself ultimately as a form of self-consciousness (a kind of self-relatedness).

26. *Enc. I*, § 111, p. 161; *Enz. I*, § 111, *Zusatz*, p. 260.

27. *Enc. I*, § 112, p. 163; *Enz. I*, § 112, *Zusatz*, pp. 262-263.

28. *SL*, 107-108; *WL*, I, 95.

29. Thus one can *intend* the unity of Being and Nothing at this stage, but cannot quite *articulate* it. See *Enc. I*, § 87, p. 128; *Enz. I*, § 87, *Zusatz*, p. 208.

30. Thus I agree with Cynthia Willett's contention that Being is given priority over Nothing at *this stage* in the *Logic*; however, I disagree with her claim that this prioritization is the result of an arbitrary or non-necessary "choice." See Cynthia Willett, "The Shadow of Hegel's *Science of Logic*," in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 85-92.

31. Thus I agree with George di Giovanni when he argues, in his critique of Cynthia Willett, that Hegel's *Logic* does, indeed, give due weight to negativity: "The *Logic* practices negativity . . . from beginning to end," and it is in the Doctrine of Essence that Hegel explicitly thematizes this negativity for the first time. See George di Giovanni, "A Reply to Cynthia Willett," in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), p. 97.

32. *SL*, 389; *WL*, II, 3.

33. *SL*, 113; *WL*, I, 100.

34. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 9.

35. *SL*, 389; *WL*, II, 3.

36. *SL*, 394; *WL*, II, 7.

37. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 8.

38. For a related set of issues (i.e. the debate between the dogmatists and the skeptics), see *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), p. A ix-x. All subsequent references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation, *CPR*, followed by the page number(s) of the original A and/or B edition(s). It is worth noting that both Kant and Hegel want to cancel yet preserve something of the positions represented by dogmatism and skepticism; however, they aim to do so in rather different ways.

39. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 8.

40. *SL*, 394; *WL*, II, 8.

41. *SL*, 117; *WL*, I, 104.

42. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 8.

43. In a similar vein, William Maker explains that "antifoundationalism" has attacked the "foundationalist" belief that "*certain* givens can be isolated as privileged." See William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 6.

44. I find that John Burbidge's account of this is clear and succinct: "Speculative reason takes a closer look at this debate [between Being as the Unessential and Essence as the Essential]. *Essence* was called *essential* because in it the immediacy of *being* was dissolved. This meant that it was simply different from *being*. But in dissolving this immediacy it did not become something else. Indeed, it was *being* itself that initiated the intellectual movement of its dissolution; and *essence* does nothing but signify the process by which the concept of *being* cancels its own immediacy in thought." See John Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), p. 64.

45. If the sphere of Being were reduced to an indeterminate emptiness, or Nothing, then the dialectic of the entire sphere of Being would resume.

46. *SL*, 395; *WL*, II, 9.

47. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 9.

48. As John Burbidge illustrates, the German language itself implies that the movement into "reflected immediacy" is equally a movement into essence: "... one passes beyond simple immediacy. Central to the thinking of each term is its relation to a counterpart. What is present immediately in the term is set in context so that its essence can be discerned. The German term for essence, *Wesen*, captures this; for it is the root of the past participle of 'to be,' *gewesen*." See John Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), pp. 63-64.

49. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 9-10.

50. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 9.

51. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 9.

52. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 10.

53. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 10.

54. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 10.

55. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 10.



56. Robert Pippin claims (quite rightly, I believe) that this paradoxical unity of immediacy and determinacy (in *Schein*) is “the source of all the problems, since, according to Hegel, determinacy must be a result, or mediated.” Both skepticism and subjective idealism ultimately fail to explain how “any immediate datum can be determinately identified as such.” See Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 210. The problem can be stated in slightly different terms: if what is simply “given” to thought is already determinate and thus mediated, then it would seem that the given must always already be determined and mediated by some agency that is *other* than thought itself. But if that is the case, then thought, it seems, can never liberate itself from its dependence on the given, and thus can never become fully self-determining and self-critical. In grappling with this dilemma, Hegel does not deny that what is immediately given to thought is always already determinate and thus mediated by that which is apparently independent of thought itself. However, Hegel aims to show that thought's *apparent* dependence on an independent other is not itself proof of thought's heteronomy, but rather the best evidence for thought's actual autonomy. Precisely because thought is absolute and not *already* determined, but radically self-determining, it does not and cannot first *find* itself as a “ready-made” actuality alongside the actualities which it happens to know. Because of this, thought cannot, in the first instance, recognize the role of its own spontaneous activity in constituting the objects that exist for it. Accordingly, thought and thought's own determinations must *at first* appear as *other* to thought. As a result, the “determinate given” must at first appear as wholly other to thought.

57. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 10-11.

58. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

59. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

60. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

61. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

62. For more on the paradoxical character of *Schein*, see Dieter Henrich, “Hegels Logik der Reflexion: Neue Fassung,” in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 18: *Die Wissenschaft der Logik und die Logik der Reflexion* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1978), pp. 237 ff. Precisely because the notion of *Schein* is an internally unstable, or oscillating, notion, it makes good sense to translate *Schein* (as Daniel Dahlstrom does) with the oscillating pair of terms, “guise” and “disguise.” See Daniel Dahlstrom, “Between Being and Essence: Reflection's Logical Disguise,” in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, ed. George di Giovanni (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 99-111.

63. Thus when one gets beyond thinking in terms of merely external relations here, the resulting thought must be that of a doubled negation. As Dieter Henrich writes, “Wo Äußerlichkeit entfällt, da muß also die verdoppelte Negation gedacht werden. . . . So kann das Wesen ‘absolute Negativität’ genannt werden. . . .” See Dieter Henrich, “Hegels Logik der Reflexion: Neue Fassung,” in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 18: *Die Wissenschaft der Logik und die Logik der Reflexion* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1978), p. 238.

64. *SL*, 396; *WL*, II, 9.

65. *SL*, 398; *WL*, II, 11.

66. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

67. As Hermann Schmitz writes, "Das Entscheidende ist die Zweideutigkeit abgesonderter und übergreifender Einheit des Wesens, es selbst und über sich hinaus zu sein." See *Hegels Logik* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1992), p. 105.

68. *SL*, 398; *WL*, II, 11-12.

69. As Peter Rohs notes, "Die Rückkehr ist ursprünglicher als das Unmittelbare, die Bewegung als das, was in die Bewegung eingeht. . . . Dies alles ist dasselbe, was man gewöhnlicherweise unter der 'Vernichtung des Dings an sich' im Idealismus versteht." See *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 6: *Form und Grund: Interpretation eines Kapitels der Hegelschen Wissenschaft der Logik* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1969), p. 60.

70. *SL*, 398; *WL*, II, 12.

71. *SL*, 397; *WL*, II, 11.

72. *SL*, 390; *WL*, II, 4-5.

73. *SL*, 479; *WL*, II, 101.

74. *SL*, 398; *WL*, II, 11.

75. See, for example, *CPR*, A 293, B 350.

76. See, for example, *SL*, 585; *WL*, II, 255.

77. *CPR*, A 111.

78. I would like to thank Stephen Houlgate and Kenneth Schmitz for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Of course, I am solely responsible for the remaining shortcomings of my analysis.