The Necessities of Hegel's Logics

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Introduction

In the preface to the second edition of his *Science of Logic*, Hegel wrote

> Anyone who labours at presenting anew an independent structure of philosophical science may . . . be reminded of the story that Plato revised his Republic seven times over. . . . However, the author, in face of the magnitude of the task, has had to content himself with what was possible to achieve . . . even under the doubt whether the noisy clamour of current affairs . . . leave any room for participation in the passionless calm of a knowledge which is in the element of pure thought alone. (SL 42/21:21)[1]

Hegel knew his task was daunting. He intends "to exhibit the realm of thought philosophically, that is, in its own immanent activity or what is the same, in its necessary development" (SL 31/21:10). For "no subject matter is so absolutely capable of being expounded with a strictly immanent plasticity as is thought in its own necessary development; no other brings with it this demand in such a degree" (SL 40/21:18). In an addition to the *Encyclopedia* Hegel is reported as having said: "It is precisely the business of the Logic . . . to exhibit the thoughts that are merely represented, and which as such are not comprehended nor demonstrated, as stages of self-determining thought, so that these thoughts come to be both comprehended and demonstrated" (E 121z).

Hegel is often labeled a historicist these days, and it is true that he was one of the nineteenth century analysts of historical development through different structures of culture, art, politics, and thought. But he also writes a non-historical self-development of logical categories. His logic aims to transcend history by showing the basic structure of thought and possibility. The basic categories of thought have become evident through history, according to a sequence roughly necessitated by the way more developed logical categories follow out of lesser ones. The result is to be a non-perspectival science, an immanent self-development of the content of pure reason independent of any determining given or starting point. The resulting science does not affirm the existence of any particular beings, but it establishes the categories within which beings can be and be thought.

Stephen Houlgate is a leading proponent of this way of expounding Hegel. He discusses

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[1] In this essay the *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*) is referred to as SL followed by page numbers in the English Miller translation and then volume and page numbers in the German (*Gessammelte Werke)* edition. The *Encyclopedia* is referred to as E followed by the paragraph number in the 1830 edition. EL refers to the logic section of the *Encyclopedia*. An appended *z* refers to material from student notes of Hegel's lectures that was added to the *Encyclopedia* after his death. I use the capitalized word Logic to refer to Hegel's project when there is no need to distinguish between the SL and the EL. The names of categories from the Logic are capitalized when they are explicitly discussed as categories.

the process of the Logic and he works through sections of its argument. His most recent book (Houlgate 2005a) explains his views about how the Logic is to be read, then reads in detail the first sections of the logic of Being. In this essay I will be citing his views as representative; others such as Kenley Dove, Richard Winfield, William Maker, and William Dudley have developed similar positions on the the nature of Hegel's system, as well as updated re-workings and corrections of Hegel's necessary dialectical progressions.[2]

Current analytic philosophy ideas about modal necessity tend to be Leibnizian: What is necessary is what is true in all possible worlds, however one cashes out "possible worlds" ontologically. Hegel's necessity is more Kantian. That is, he tells us what must be thought, and therefore what must be true in any thinkable world. The Logic provides no empirical truths, only a general categorial structure.

However, Hegel's process of developing the categories is not like Kant's. Beginning from the special indeterminate beginning of the Logic, thought's content is to develop on its own. Incomplete structures of thought reveal their inadequacies, and when the flaws of the previous category become evident, that becomes the transition to the more adequate category. There is to be no phase of indeterminate searching for new categories. The sequence should then be unique and self-determining.[3]

I want to question this idea of a pure presuppositionless self-developing sequence of logical categories. This is part of a larger investigation of the inherence of Hegel's

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[2] See the references at the end of the essay. This has been called a non-metaphysical reading of Hegel, because it neither asserts nor presupposes the existence of any particular entities. It is, though, quite metaphysical in Heidegger's sense of the term (see below, and Kolb 1987 as well as Heidegger 1969 and 1998). Maker and Winfield (though not Houlgate and Dudley) seem at times to dispense with Hegel's historical preparations for the project of pure thought. They describe the project in ways that suggest a conceptual maneuver that could have been possible at any time. Hegel claims that a specific modern form of subjectivity had to develop that was capable of the requisite abstraction and purification, and this in turn demanded various social developments.

[3] Winfield and Maker call the purely self-developing Logic a non-foundationalist view because it does not develop its system from any presupposed given. However, in the analytic philosophy sense it is a deeply foundationalist enterprise, since it provides categories that are supposed to be guaranteed norms for thought in the spheres of art, politics, science, and so on. It is no surprise that the interpreters who read Hegel this way see what many analytic and continental philosophers call non-foundationalism -- Heidegger, Dewey, Rorty, Derrida, and others -- as foundational in a special sense, that is, as presupposing that thought is determined by some social or historical givens. (Whether this is true in every case I doubt; for instance, the notion of decision in Derrida can be read otherwise. Also the accusation misses the almost-dialectical relation of historical determination and revision in Heidegger and Dewey.)

thought in historical language.[4] Concerning the necessary self-development of thought, I have three objections to propose. The first concerns the difficulty of recognizing a uniquely correct sequence of categories, when the various versions all express positive insights. The second concerns the very idea of a unified sequence. The third concerns the goal of pure self-development.

Comparing Versions of Hegel's Logic

Hegel recognized that there was more work to do on his Logic.

> When I undertook this fresh elaboration of the *Science of Logic* of which this is the first volume, I was fully conscious not only of the inherent difficulty of the subject matter and of its exposition, but also of the imperfection of its treatment in the first edition; earnestly as I have tried after many years of further occupation with this science to remedy this imperfection, I feel I still have reason enough to claim the indulgence of the reader. (SL 31/21:10)

The Logic moves through three large phases: the logic of Being (categories of immediate existence, quality, quantity, measure), then the logic of Essence (pairs of categories for thinking entities as based on some inner principle), then the logic of the Concept (triplets of categories for thinking entities as internally related wholes, systems and totalities). The sections have different textual histories.

During his Jena period Hegel envisioned his system differently than he did later on. He wrote several attempted "logics" that had more of a critical than a speculative function. After he came to his mature notion of self-developing thought Hegel published the first edition of the *Science of Logic* in 1812 through 1816. Later he revised the logical sequence of categories as he published different versions of a shorter presentation of the Logic in the three editions of his *Encyclopedia*. The 1817 edition's Logic was substantially revised and lengthened in the 1827 edition, and this was somewhat altered again in the 1830 edition. In 1831 he prepared a significantly changed and much longer version of the logic of Being for the second edition of the *Science of Logic*. He was revising the other two parts when he suddenly died. The SL that we read combines the 1832 longer first part with the 1816 versions of the other two parts.

So for the first part, the logic of Being, we have two different long treatments plus the shorter treatments in the three editions of the *Encyclopedia*. For the logic of Essence and of the Concept, we have the initial long publication and the *Encyclopedia* shorter versions. Also we have some student notes from various years, including a recent edition of notes taken by Hegel's son from Hegel's last lectures on the logic in 1831.

The mature versions of the logical sequence are not vastly diverse -- the differences from

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[4] In another essay (Kolb forthcoming) I argue that the categorial transitions Hegel studies cannot be identified with changes in the structure of language systems seen as inferential networks. The Hegelian categories and their movements must be embodied in language -- Hegel says that language is the *Dasein* of spirit -- but they are not identical with any particular detail of language structure.

the Jena trials are much deeper. But nonetheless the different versions do diverge, especially in the logic of Essence. In what follows I compare the 1816 *Science of Logic* version (SL) of the logic of Essence with the 1830 *Encyclopedia* logic's version (EL).

Some sub-sequences in the logic of Essence remain almost identical and stay in the same place in the two versions. For example, the discussion of relations (*Verhältnis*) contains more or less the same categories in the same order, and occurs in the same place, at the end of the Essence section, where it forms the transition to the third major section of the logic.[5]

Other sequences remain the same internally but are located differently. The important section on the determinations of reflection (*Wesenheiten* or *Reflexionsbestimmungen*) that discusses identity and distinction, is in the EL the first major topic in the Essence section, whereas in the earlier SL it is much more elaborate and it occurs second, after a discussion of appearance (*Schein*), thus making it not the immediate beginning that Essence section starts from but the first self-division within a prior immediacy. The content of the section is also changed, since the subsection on Ground (Grund) ceases to be the major topic it was in the SL (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Comparing the EL and SL placement of the section on the determinations of reflection. In these figures the EL is on the left, the SL on the right.

After the relocated sequence on the determinations of reflection, there are many significant changes in the EL version.

Recognizing the Correct Version

In the SL the discussion of the pair Form/Matter occurs in a sequence of three form pairs, and is placed before the introduction of the category of Thing (*Ding*). In the EL the discussion of Form/Matter occurs after the development of the category of the Thing, and it is not tied to the other form-categories developed in the SL. Of those, one, Form/Essence, has disappeared while the other, Form/Content, has moved from the first major sub-section of the Essence section into the second, where it occurs as a subcategory of

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[5] Hegel is not as rigid about his famous triplicity as are many commentators and diagram builders. For example, the third part of the EL logic of Essence has no obvious triple structure. One can be imposed, but in several ways. The Intellex electronic edition that indexes Hegel's texts with elaborate triple subordinate structures gives up on that long section and just lists the sequence of paragraph numbers and titles.

Appearance as a transition to the discussion of substantial relations (see Figure 2).
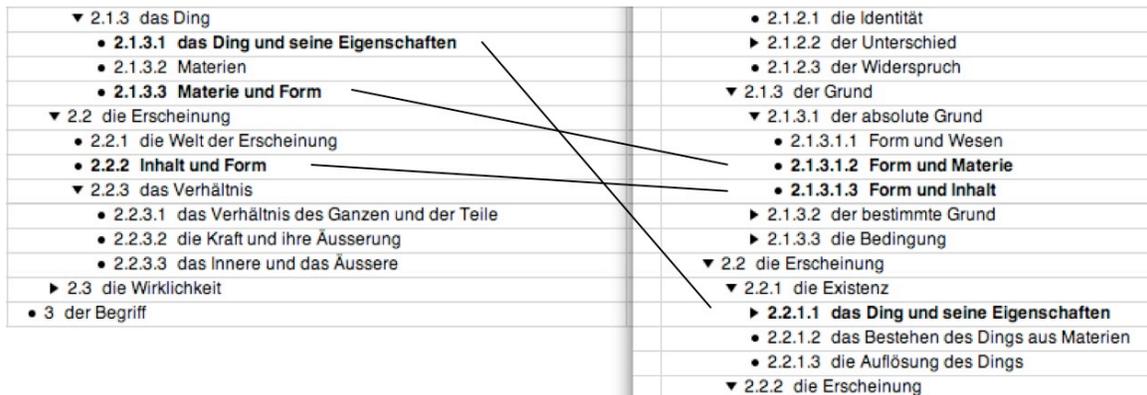
Figure 2: Comparing the location of Form categories in EL and SL.

In SL the category pair Form/Content (*Form/Inhalt*) expresses the identity of content that emerges from the inability of thought to make either form or matter primary in their relation. An example of such content would be the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, which can appear in various combinations of forms and matters as a poem, a ballet, an opera, a play. This notion of Content is part of the development to the notion of Ground. Thought's search for the inner source of a being's determination cannot be satisfied with the distinction of form from matter, because each of the pair finds itself containing the aspect supposedly found only in the other. When each turns out to implicitly contain the whole relation, the new category of Content captures that unity. This all happens *before* the development of the category of the Thing.

On the other hand in EL the pair Form/Content occurs *after* the notion of Thing is developed. It is part of the development of the notion of Appearance (*Erscheinung*). Form/Content provides a moment of division within the notion of a world of appearing things, stressing now the difference between their appearing form and their inner content. The divided moments come together in the various kinds of inner related totalities (Whole/Part, Force/Expression, Inner/Outer) and lead on to the notion of Hegel's special notion of Actuality (*Wirklichkeit*).

In both these sequences there is a larger movement from Form/Matter to categories of relation, passing through the categories of Form/Content and Appearance. But the sequence and details of the movement are different.

Looking both over you can see that each of these sequences makes good points. For instance, Form/Content can indeed be seen as a richer notion than Form/Matter, a deeper kind of unity that leads on to the still richer notion of a Thing and its qualities. On the other hand it can also be seen as following on the notion of a Thing, describing a deep division within the world of appearance whose notion is more complex than that of a thing and its qualities.

Each way of viewing the relation of the categories offers significant insights. But in the

reading of Hegel that I am discussing here, the categories are not supposed to be viewed this way or that way. They are supposed to develop on their own in a necessary sequence.[6]

So how do you show which version is the one where Form/Content is correctly derived? Even if there were only a single published version, the question would remain: How would we know when the logic is done correctly? Hegel said it is a hard task that needs to be worked on and revised. How do we know when the revision is finished? A putatively correct version is expounded, and we are asked to appreciate, or to further revise, its supposedly necessary self-development. But how do we tell?

There can be no outside criterion guiding this examination, for that would undermine the endeavor. The aim is a pure necessary self-development. We are to watch carefully, making sure that there is no extrinsic influence on the developments within the sequence of categories. Houlgate quotes with approval the following statement by Winfield:

> So long as examination shows that not one of the development's determinations owes its character or order of presentation to introductions of extraneously given material or the stipulating of an extraneous determiner, the development can be said to exhibit the radically independent immanence that alone can signal its freedom from arbitrary direction and dogmatic foundations. (Houlgate 2005a, 41)

Winfield and Houlgate presuppose the internal development must be unique. Why should it be so? And even if it were, what if two versions of the development both seem plausible? How do we conduct their "examination"? How do we tell which is right? Essentially, we are told to just look. Performing the examination properly, we can just see which version is right, or necessary, or truly self-developing.

There is a good deal of visual imagery in Houlgate and the others' discussions of the Logic. We are to look and see the necessity happening, while we keep ourselves passive and become aware (Houlgate 2005a, 35, 40, 62, 125, 130). Eventually Houlgate says that thought is intellectual intuition of pure being and its self-development (125-127). But what if I see something different than you do? Appeals to intuition always have trouble when they yield divergent results. Houlgate is forced into the position Husserl found himself in: one of us lacks sufficiently clear sight. We must purify our intuition. Rather than Husserl's endless preparatory reductions, Houlgate opts for the strength of a "resolve" to see only what is internal and its (presumed) unique necessary development. Later I will have more to say about this resolve and its pure gaze.

The self-developing sequence is presented in language, and it is read. Its language is not a formalized calculus with a decision procedure. Hegel and his interpreters are not manipulating a formal scheme, they are telling a story. There are choices in writing and

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[6] It is possible to argue that the label "Form/Content" is being used to name two quite different categories in the two editions. The difficulty with this view is that then each edition leaves out a significant category developed in the other, and the EL never gets around to addressing the ordinary meaning of the category pair in the way done in the SL.

construction, and there are diverse readings. So there are judgments to be made among them. What would count as telling us that we have got it right? We are told that we are to look at the results and judge them. But how is the work presented and how is that judgment made, and in what language? Where is the purity? How do we know who has the truly pure insight?

Houlgate points out that Hegel says while thought is not identical with language, we think only in language (Houlgate 2005a, 74f, 79). In his philosophy of spirit Hegel insists that there is no presence of thought to itself without language (see his discussion of thought and habit at E 410 and E 462). For Houlgate, inadequate linguistic expression of logical categories is to be critiqued not by being measured to some thought behind language but by being replaced by a better verbal formulation (75). But how do we know which formulation is better? Do we compare them with the intellectual intuition Houlgate later asserts? He seems to presuppose that such intuition reveals itself when we handle language in a complex self-qualifying way (79ff).

Besides the difficulty in determining the correct version of the Logic, I will mention three related difficulties that could be developed further concerning the supposed complete, unique necessary sequence of categories. The first is that the sequence is by definition closed, with no room for categories developed later or found in other traditions. Where should we insert new ontological concepts that were not inventoried in the Logic? The ontology of events found in Whitehead or in Deleuze cannot be adequately analyzed in terms of Hegel's categories. Plotinus' One, Shankara's non-dual Brahman, Nagarjuna's void, Wittgenstein's Tractarian objects, the ontology of quantum mechanics (whatever it may be), all these are difficult to describe using categories from within the Logical sequence. (Hegel tried to fit in the Indian notions, but he misunderstood them.)

A defender of the completeness of the sequence could respond that if a category is not already in the logical sequence then it is not a true ontological category. Another reply would be to claim that the supposed categories are parasitic extensions of true categories. However, both these replies beg the question by presuming that the criterion of what counts as a pure thought category is already established. One might also argue that the Logic needs to be revised, but this returns to the issue of knowing when the sequence has been completed successfully. One could also claim that the logic is open to perpetual revision, to take into account the historical generation of new categories. However this would be to give up Hegel's idea of necessary self-development and put the Logic into reactive mode, dependent on developments from outside its pure thought. This may have merit as a way of trying to grasp of one's time in thought. But as an interpretation of Hegel it runs against Hegel's claim that the Logic is to be a necessary a priori sequence.

The second problem is the difficulty of deciding just what piece of the logical sequence is the appropriate one to cite as essential to some concrete phenomenon that embodies multiple logical categories. Discussing political arrangements, for example, you say that the category pair Mediated/Immediate is the key to the notion of political self-government, while someone else says that Part/Whole is the appropriate contrast to take

as the essential feature of that political notion. Similarly, you say your conceptual development of the notion of a bicameral legislature is pure and internal, while someone else accuses you of bringing in external elements. How do you decide? Both kinds of disagreement raise issues similar to those of deciding on the correct logical sequence.

The third problem is that although Hegel wants a strict self-developing logical sequence, his own use of language is more complex than a linear development. He feels free to make expository use of many terms that come from different areas of the logic, not just from that previous sections. For instance, he uses the terms *form/matter* and *form/content* well before the categories with those names are expounded in the developing sequence. The word *content* (*Inhalt*) occurs 268 times in the SL, with 37 of those uses occurring in the logic of Being, well before the category has been developed in the sequence. Of the 90 occurrences in the logic of Essence, 39 are before the section where the category Form/Content is developed. In his 1831 lectures on the logic Hegel uses the term *content* to talk about the notion of Ground, though Ground is a primitive version of the Essence categories when compared to the notion of Appearance several mediations later, which is where the EL derives the category of Content. Hegel's freedom to use language in this seemingly undisciplined way points at the issues I have tried to raise.

Houlgate cites Hegel's wistful remark that the Logic should proceed without using any thought-determinations not already derived in the sequence, but that "such abstract perfection must, I admit, in general be dispensed with" (SL 40/21:18, cited at Houlgate 2005a, 84). Houlgate continues, with Hegel, that the exposition demands such extended language use to explain the categories to an audience that is mired in contingent historical assumptions about the ontological concepts. Historical and informal language is needed to keep warding off those impure notions. In fact, though, there are more basic reasons. Especially at the early stages of the logics of Being and of Essence, Hegel would be reduced to monosyllables and gestures if he could not deploy syntactic structures that already express more complex ontological relations. If "ordinary language" remains necessary to the exposition, what becomes of the purity of pure thought?

A More Modest Hegel?

A defender of purely internal self-development could reply that I have been demanding too much of Hegel. We should make modest claims for the success of any particular version of the logical sequence. Pure thought is pure because the sequence starts from no given presuppositions and proceeds by a purely internal necessity. But any statement of pure thought is presented in impure historical language. We work at a presentation of the dialectical sequence, and revise as best we can. Others criticize and we improve the results. We at first see no better way, then perhaps later we do. Hegel did not pretend to have done the logic once and for all correctly. We have no pure access to pure thought and so no pure expression of the sequence of categories.

Sometimes it takes a long time to discover flaws in arguments. This is true even though there are mechanical procedures for checking simpler deductive arguments, and some procedures for checking complex quantified arguments. There is no way to check a very

complex mathematical argument except by working with it. For some mathematical issues, such as Euclid's parallel postulate, it took millennia to discover just what the status of the premise was.

Similarly, with Hegel's Logic perhaps we just give it our best try in fallible, historical language. We put out our version and let others criticize it. Over time we all may come to agree that we have it right. This methodology aims at a convergence of agreement among interpreters. Keep revising, seven, seventy times.

This modest strategy makes good sense. It may develop helpful arguments, since denying that one has achieved final necessity does not deny that some philosophical arguments are better than others. But the modest strategy undercuts Houlgate and others' claims to a priori normative force for the result, which becomes another philosophical argument to be tentatively evaluated, never presented in its purity. Hegel in this reading would not provide the sought-for step back that avoids the hurly-burly of discussion to speak from the authoritative standpoint of pure thought that undercuts all opposed arguments.

Also, while this more modest Hegel acknowledges the impurity of our access to pure thought, it still presumes the goal of pure self-development for discussion to aim at and converge upon. I have already pointed out that various versions of the Logic might have their own insights, so that there is not necessarily one best version. In the remainder of this essay I want to question the goal itself: whether there is a unified sequence and whether the goal of pure internal self-development is itself presuppositionless.

Relocatable Sections

Is what Hegel gives us a sequential self-development or is it a flexible assemblage of detachable insights? I turn to another example, the notion of Matters. This concerns the way in which a thing's properties may be independent of one another and of the particular thing that "has" them. The term *matters* comes from early nineteenth century scientific ideas suggesting that different measurable qualities were due to various types of interpenetrating matters: magnetic matter, electrical, caloric, colorific, etc., which were co-present in a thing. Each matter occupied space but had pores that let the others occupy the same space. This is loosely parallel to today's idea that material things are determined by a number of coexisting fields. Hegel draws an analogy between the co-present matters and the co-present interpenetrating powers of the soul in faculty psychology (SL 498/11:340).

Hegel criticizes this scientific theory as a naive reification of genuine conceptual tensions in the notion of a Thing and its Properties. He sees a Logical issue: both the thing as a whole and each of its properties have a determinate self-identity as well as constitutive connections to others. The issue is how the identity and the connections relate, and which is primary.

Properties (*Eigenschaften*) and Matters (*Materien*) have the same content, but they vary in their relation to the unity of the Thing. Properties are had by a thing that has its own self-relation independent of them. A thing "has" its properties; it is not identical to them

as was the case with the earlier category of Something and its Qualities. Matters, however, are independent; the thing is an assemblage of them. The contrast between the two conceptions is in the relative independence of repeated properties such as electric charge and heat. Hegel says in his 1831 Logic lectures that because a thing is an existent example of identity and difference, it produces contradictions on all sides until the notions of identity and difference have been dialectically refined.

In the immediately previous SL section Hegel argued that if a thing is taken as having a self-identity distinct from its determinate properties, then that self-identity becomes an empty and unknowable thing-in-itself. But Things are not such empty unities; they are distinguished in relation to one another by means of their properties. The properties do the work of identifying and distinguishing and linking. The self-subsistence of the thing is the self-subsistence of its properties.

Yet the properties also have their own independent identities across many things. The self-relation of the thing becomes an unessential "also" or empty form holding the properties together. The freed properties, as Matters, are the immediate existences of qualities (electric charge, heat, etc.) with only quantitative limits. They are indifferent to one another yet they coexist in the thing. In the scientific theory this is expressed by saying that each exists in the pores of the others. Hegel dismisses this self-contradictory image, but points out that what the image is trying to say is that the self-subsistence of one matter is immediately the self-subsistence of the others. But, the notion of something independent yet unessential, self-subsistent yet negated, departs from the notion of an independent unified thing and moves into the richer category of Appearance. This then develops its own version of the splits between relation to self and to other. Once these are properly reunited the sequence moves into categories describing totalities of relations.

The story I just told is taken from the SL, and it can be found more or less the same in the EL. But it occurs in significantly different locations in the two sequences, without itself being much altered by its change of location (see Figure 3).
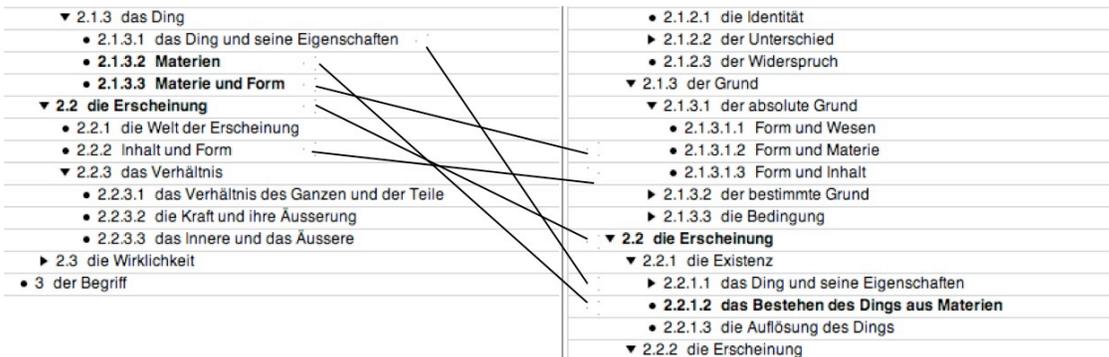

Figure 3: Comparing the location of the category of Matters in EL and SL.

In the SL, this category of Matters is taken as a *more* developed category than the pairs

Form/Matter and Form/Content. As well it should be, since the notion of Matters develops out of issues having to do with the relation of the unity of a thing and the independence of its properties, whereas Form/Matter is an earlier category not yet containing the independent self-unity asserted in the notion of a thing with properties.

In the EL, the category of Matters is taken as *less* developed than the pairs Form/Matter and Form/Content. As well it should be, since the pair Form/Matter develops out of the notion of Matters when the independence yet diversity of separate qualitatively distinct matters leads to the notion of a single basic matter underlying all the determinate properties, and so to the pair Form/Matter in E 128. (The notion of a single basic matter is briefly mentioned in SL discussion of Matters, but without developing into the category of Form/Matter, which had already been already developed much earlier in the sequence.) In the EL the pair Form/Content occurs even later, in the Appearance section as the division of form from content in the appearing world, rather than as applying to single things, as it does in the SL.

In both SL and EL the notion of Matters is used to show how the category of Thing loses its being-in-itself. In the SL that point is made directly through Matters, without developing the category of Form/Matter, and the development takes place in the first sub-section of the chapter on Appearance, which is the middle section of the overall treatment of Essence. The section on Matters is used to show the breakdown of a too immediate notion of a thing as appearance.

In the EL the point is made at the end of the third sub-section of the chapter on Ground, which is the first section of the treatment of Essence. The treatment of ground in the EL is a subsection whereas in the SL it is a chapter on its own, raised in dialectical importance. The SL chapter contains many mediations and discussions that are found -- with pretty much the same content -- scattered into new locations in the EL. The section on Matters is moving towards the unified notion of Appearance, not away from it, and it does so by developing into the notion of Form/Matter.

Here is what seems to me to be going on, and why both versions seem insightful. In the Essence section the self-identity and determination of a being keeps getting separated from its relation to others. The two aspects are kept apart by various maneuvers that make one or the other more fundamental, until there develops a category expressing an identity that is a unity of these two. Then that category in turn develops similar tensions and the process repeats. Hegel says that Ground (*Grund*) is the totality of Essence, a positing of all its moments (identity, distinction, difference, etc.). He says the same thing about Existence (*Existenz*) and Thing (*Ding*), and about Appearance (*Erscheinung*) and Actuality (*Wirklickheit*).

That is, these are all unified positings of the moments discussed in the moments of reflection (*Wesenheiten*). All of them advance and decay through plays of identity and distinction and difference, through tensions in self-relation and other-relation. In the SL Hegel spells out that play in more detail in the Ground chapter. In the EL he moves bits of those descriptions of the play into other places, but they all occur where a positive

affirmation of the unity of all of the Essence moments is breaking down and showing its internal tensions. This explains why Hegel can move those segments around. The same kind of decay is happening to each of the affirmative positings, just on different levels of mediation.

However, this flexibility disturbs the goal of purely internal self-development. For if the logic is a self-development of pure thought and not an assemblage of detachable insights, then those segments should be different when they are relocated on different levels of the self-development. Form/Matter or Form/Content should not be standardized mediation patterns that can be inserted in different locations. They should find their identity through their location in the sequence. When they are moved they should change their nature and meaning. But in fact Hegel treats them as relocatable fragments that make more or less the same points wherever they are inserted.

Elsewhere in his system Hegel uses pieces of the logical sequence (such as the discussion of form/content, the move from formal to concrete universality, the different kinds of ground, the discussions of identity and difference, the syllogisms) as tools that can be invoked on many different levels for many different contents, without feeling the need to reproduce their logical neighborhoods.

But if the versions of the logic are formed by moving relatively stable segments around, then deciding which version is correct begins to look like moving bits of narration around and judging which story has the most verisimilitude or usefulness, without there being one unique and necessary story.

The Larger Sequence Reply

There is a possible reply to my claim that the logical sequence contains independent segments that can be moved around. The reply is that the movement of segments is constrained and guided by a larger movement. For instance, in the section of Essence we have been examining there is a movement from Ground to Appearance to Actuality, and that controls where you can put the fragments. That larger movement remains the same in all versions.

There is certainly a connection to the larger movement. This can be seen by scrambling the logical sequence. Using random numbers, I generated two sequences of Essence categories, one more detailed than the other (portions of each are reproduced in Figure 4).

8 das Verhaltnis des Äusseren und Inneren	▼ 5 das absolute Unbedingte
▶ 9 das Ding und seine Eigenschaften	• 5.1 die Existenz
▶ 10 der bestimmte Grund	• 5.2 das wesentliche Verhältnis
• 11 die Auflösung des Dings	• 5.3 der vollständige Grund
• 12 das Wesentliche und Unwesentliche	▼ 6 die erscheinende und die an sich seiende Welt
• 13 der absolute Grund	• 6.1 das Gesetz der Erscheinung
▶ 14 der Unterschied	• 6.2 der formelle Grund
• 15 der Grund	• 6.3 Form und Inhalt
• 16 das Verhältnis der Ganzen und der Teile	▼ 7 das Wesen der Reflexion in ihm selbst
• 17 Form und Wesen	• 7.1 die Verschiedenheit
• 18 die Identität	• 7.2 das relative Unbedingte
• 19 der Schein	• 7.3 der Widerspruch

Figure 4: Portions of randomly scrambled lists of Essence categories.

These strange sequences resist the kind of narrative that can be given for both the EL and SL versions of the Essence sequence. Neither the step by step transitions nor the overall movement seem to be insightful. It is very unlikely that a comprehensible self-developing narrative could be generated for these sequences.

To say there is a connection leaves it open whether the larger movement is guiding the smaller transitions or is itself being created by them. In truth Hegel's sequences are not one-dimensional; the larger movements are accomplished in and through the smaller steps but are more than simple sums or results of those steps. This complicates rather than simplifies the task of judging between alternate versions of the sequence. Appealing to a larger movement as a guide brings teleological influences on the Logical sequence that, at least in Houlgate's strict view, cannot be allowed. He insists that we must set out with no expectations about goals or methods. Yet this restriction is not easy to maintain when we consider how a sequence of smaller movements itself embodies a larger movement that is being performed in them. The larger movement does influence how one understands each stage of the smaller movements.

Another version of the Larger Sequence strategy would be to retreat from detail. The defender could treat Hegel the way many interpreters treat Kant when they keep his Second Analogy argument for the necessity of causal connection but refuse his further argument that this must be Newtonian science's causality. They try to make room within the Kantian framework for quantum statistical causality, or whatever science will come up with next. If a defender were to do that with Hegel, then the micro-movements of the logic would get treated as culturally and locally revisable expressions of a stable larger sequence. The border between the logic and the philosophy of nature and spirit (*Realphilosophie*) would be located upward. This might be a useful application of Hegel's ideas, but is not his notion of what the system should be. Also, it still avoids the question about how we know which is the correct general movement. And it presupposes the goal of pure self-development.

In any case, appealing to control by a larger movement introduces my third criticism, which starts from the obvious question: Which larger sequence? How do we know *it* is the correct version? That Hegel doesn't alter it in his different versions is a biographical fact, not a justification. Again, do we just look? What if we don't see the same thing? One could say that the larger movement is justified by its place in a still larger movement. Eventually we get to the circular movement of the logic, or of the system as a whole. What justifies that? The defender cannot appeal to the internal necessity of that largest self-development without begging the question.

The Goal of Pure Thought

The goal is purely internal self-determination, from a pure and indeterminate beginning. But is that goal itself pure? What is this purity defined against? The ideal of pure self-

development gets justified in terms of key dualities that are constantly invoked: internal/external, self-determined/other-determined. A common polemic strategy is to lump all rival approaches into one box, while the pure method stands alone in the other box. But where do the boxes come from? Why are there only two? Their strong dichotomies are taken as obvious, but they are part of the presupposition behind the notion of reason as pure thought. To slap one dichotomy on all the varied products of philosophy risks falling into a scholasticism that knows in advance the state of the question and the alternatives available. It is always dangerous to argue that a presented set of alternatives completely exhausts the possibilities for anything, especially method. Hegelians especially should distrust any absolute statement or dichotomy that claims to define forever the state of the question.

In part Houlgate and others take their dichotomies as self-evident, and in part they are argued for as expressions of the goal of modernity: freedom, self-criticism, self-determination. Whether in fact modernity might be more complicated, and its goals more ambivalent, is not sufficiently discussed.

The aim is for total certainty. In combination with the key internal/external duality we can discern the ideal of total self-presence, the "metaphysical" goal par excellence for Heidegger. This is behind the supposedly presuppositionless beginning. It is not a premise or a given entity, but it is a definition of the goal of thought and reason. To take it as the natural and only goal of thought is to miss the limited horizon of the project.

What I am suggesting is a version of Heidegger's claim that there is a horizon of interpretation, a meaning of being and reason, which defines the Hegelian project but is not developed there.[7] The notions of pure presuppositionless beginning and pure self-development involve substantive presuppositions about the nature of being, reason, and self.

Houlgate claims (2005a, 27, 51) that the Hegelian project presupposes no explicit goal. The sequence is not shaped by the anticipation of a particular outcome. His argument is that at the beginning there are no substantive presuppositions, only the resolve to see being purely for what it is. But the resolve and the seeing both contain questionable elements.

Houlgate speaks of the resolve to do pure thought as resulting from the "modern demand for radical self-criticism" (112). This presumes a particular analysis of modernity, one that has been severely questioned by many critics. Heidegger's rival account of modernity has its own problems (see Kolb 1987) but it is just one of many in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Benjamin, and more recently Derrida and Foucault, to name just

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[7] Many of Heidegger's objections to Hegel are mistaken. Catherine Malabou raises strong objections against Heidegger's attack on Hegel's notion of time (Heidegger 1996 and Malabou 2004). I have argued elsewhere against Heidegger's claim that Hegel remains trapped in Cartesian subjectivity (Heidegger 1989 and Kolb 1987). But I accept Heidegger's basic objection (Heidegger 1969 and Kolb 1987) that Hegel's presuppositionless system remains metaphysical, in Heidegger's sense of the term.

some of the thinkers who find the notions of self-present self-determination and total self-criticism questionable and perhaps dangerous.

Houlgate makes a generic response to all such criticisms, that they presuppose more about the nature of thought and being, and so cannot block his more presupposition-free examination.[8] But this appeals to the goal of self-criticism that is being questioned. Also, while it is an accurate description of some attacks, for instance Schopenhauer's, it fails for others, such as those of Derrida and Heidegger. They are not making presuppositions about the nature of the object of the investigation (being, thought); rather they are questioning the immediacy and simplicity of the *act of seeing* that Houlgate recommends. Houlgate insists that we must put aside and abstract from content-ful presuppositions and purely look at the pure object. But what is being questioned is the infrastructure of the supposed intellectual intuition. The issue is not what the content may or may not be presupposed to be, but what the act of seeing is and is made possible by.[9]

In Hegel's text the task of self-determined pure thought requires extensive polemics to clear the way.[10] He offers three ways of getting philosophy headed in the right direction.

The first is the road Houlgate recommends, a firm resolve to deal with thought purely and without presuppositions. I have suggested above that this resolve has its own goal and presuppositions about the nature of modernity and modern freedom. It would beg the question to demand that the Hegelian system be gone through first in order to justify them.

The second road amplifies the first; it is found in the *Encyclopedia* and in Hegel's class lectures on the Logic. Discussing "the attitudes of thought towards objectivity" Hegel surveys rival philosophical programs. His survey does not pretend to be exhaustive. As a justification it is inadequate, since the survey organizes its alternatives using conceptual

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[8] See Houlgate 2005a, 37, 78, 109. Houlgate distinguishes allowable historical preconditions and hermeneutic presuppositions that make the project possible from unallowable substantive or founding presuppositions about the nature of the object and the path of the investigation.

[9] Houlgate might reply to this criticism by pointing out that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is supposed to have eliminated all possibility of a distinction between the act of seeing and the object seen. However, this reply presumes that the *Phenomenology*'s sequence is a necessary and complete inventory of all possible divisions and, more importantly, that Heidegger and related critics such as Derrida are employing some variant of the subject/object division used by "consciousness" in the *Phenomenology*. But their theories are not repetitions of that division. There are other ways off surpassing the subject/object division than those used by Hegel.

[10] Angelica Nuzzo argues that more than polemics are needed; there should be a separate study of the internal "logic" of the Hegelian system, as distinct from the Logic that is a part of the system. She interprets Hegel's self-developing Logic in terms of demands of systematicity and scientificity stemming from a notion of reason that prescribes to the self-developing totality (see Nuzzo 1992 and 2003). She points out that systematicity and self-development are not the same, and that a prior goal of systematicity is needed to clear the way for pure self-development (Nuzzo 1992, 174). She attempts to develop the goal and structure of systematicity out of a presupposed notion of self-reflexive reason.

dichotomies (such as internal/external) that cannot be here taken as ahistorically valid. But while the preliminary survey is only heuristic, it motivates the resolve and the beginning; the logical sequence is then to double back, in its self-description in the Absolute Idea section, and validate the decision made in the beginning. This second road depends crucially on the necessity and uniqueness of the logical sequence.

The third and longest road is the claim that in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel sets up another necessary sequence that works through all the possible attitudes in which "consciousness" confronts some object and tries to appropriate it. In that sequence the attitudes all self-destruct, leading by determinate negation to the final non-position of indeterminacy that opens starting point and goal of the logic.

There are considerable disputes about just how this would be done, and about whether pure indeterminate awareness correctly describes what is reached at the end of the *Phenomenology*.[11] I will not take on the *Phenomenology* sequence here, except to say that the same objections about the unity and necessity of the sequence, about relocatable sections and overall movements can be made there with even more cogency. The *Phenomenology* is in many ways Hegel's richest work, and its usefulness has never depended on the complete success of its overall program.

If the Logic is not a pure or quite so necessary science, if it is in part an assemblage of reusable chunks of insight into relations and conceptual tensions, if it provides conceptual maneuvers that are used in different contexts, then it may not furnish a single unique sequence, but it will still be a treasure-house of conceptual insights that need not be taken up as a whole. Hegel arranges his materials with a view towards an ideal of self-certainty that may have its own presuppositions. But we can feel free to use his insights in other ways and other contexts. This is how many thinkers already use Hegel's insights from the *Phenomenology* and from his treatments of art and society, from which notions such as mutual recognition, symbolic art, the impossibility of pure sense-data, the different kinds of universality, and his attacks on different kinds of atomism and isolation are detached from his systematic ambitions. This Hegel is less austere and authoritative, less absolutely normative, but more useful for projects that can grow from or appropriate his rich insights without being bound to the historical goals he announces.

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[11] Houlgate claims that the long road through the *Phenomenology* is not strictly required (Houlgate 2005a, 89, 145f). Logic requires only the firm resolve to deal with pure thought on its own. The *Phenomenology* is needed for leading to the standpoint of pure knowledge those readers too tied to the standpoint of ordinary consciousness faced with objects. While Houlgate thinks that the sequence in the *Phenomenology* can be shown to be necessary and unique, he disagrees with Maker about just what kind of transition is made from the *Phenomenology* to the Logic (Houlgate 2005a, 162n24). Maker and Winfield might also dissent from Houlgate's strong reading of the identity of logic and ontology.

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