1. Introduction

The Logic makes explicit that which is implicit in the Notion of Science, beginning with Being: immediate abstract indeterminacy. The thought of this transforms itself immanently into all of the various categories of pure thought, which, in being identical with Being, are the fundamental structures of the world itself. The movement between these categories throughout the Logic is to a certain extent serial. There is a transition from one category into another, although the precise nature of this transition differs between each of the three books: Being, Essence and Notion. However, this linearity, although necessary both methodologically and stylistically, should not be overplayed. There are two senses in which this becomes important.

Firstly, at different points throughout the movement, there is the appearance (albeit fleeting) of modes of thought that will not be explicitly posited until later. This does not necessarily indicate any kind of 'cheating' on Hegel's part, as it is precisely these aspects of the movement of thought, implicit as they are, which provide the basis for their own positing as explicit and determinate categories. The best examples of these are the Notions of becoming and reflection, which make explicit the implicit nature of the initial transitions of the doctrines of Being and Essence respectively, in turn both initiating and delineating the character of the transitions which will follow.

Secondly, as becomes more evident in the movement of the doctrine of Essence, newly posited categories do not display linearity in terms of their relations to the categories out of which they emerge, and into which they transit. This is to say that there is already a field of implicit connections between the various aspects of thought prior to their exposition, and that it is not held together through serial links alone (e.g. diversity–opposition–contradiction), but has a multiplicity of connections between different Notions that are not made explicit in a serial order (e.g. determining reflection's reflective reconstitution of determinate being and relation to other categories of Being such as quality and negation, while being situated within the complex relations of the doctrine of Essence). However, in indicating these implicit connections we should not go so

1 It must be pointed out that my use of the term positing here is somewhat awkward, given that the determinations which give rise to the different categories are not all immanently speaking moments of positing, as this only appears within the doctrine of Essence, as will be explained below. However, in a similar fashion, none of the categories themselves are determined as Notions until the positing of the Notion as Notion, despite being implicitly such, and from a retrospective or external perspective (necessary for commentary upon the text), legitimately thought as such (for instance, my reference to the Notion of Being above). Similarly, my use of 'positing' and 'posited' can be split between the immanent and the retrospective, and although I have not taken pains to differentiate them, I take it that the context of use does so sufficiently in each case.

2 This implicit appearance of categories before they are themselves explicitly posited should not be confused with the deployment negative deployment of categories in order to cancel themselves out and prevent illicit determination (The Opening of Hegel's Logic, pg 79-83). This latter use is best displayed by the negative use of indeterminacy and immediacy to enable the thought of pure Being itself.
far as to simply claim that the whole, and fully interconnected structure of the Logic is present in advance, and that the Logic's exposition is simply a regurgitation of this structure in its entirety. To claim this would be to undervalue the necessity of the Logic's linear exposition to which we just referred. It would be to deny the proper individuality or determinateness that each posited Notion gains through its positing in the movement of thought that constitutes the Logic. It would also undermine the immanence of the development itself by subordinating the movement of the content at each moment to the pre-given structure of the whole. There must be a real distinction between that which is implicit and its explicit positing, indeed between the implicit and that into which it unfolds in its own self-positing. This must not only be made in order to understand the movement of the Logic, but is itself posited within this movement.

It is in this way that the two senses of non-linearity we outlined above come together: the distinction between form and content that is posited in the doctrine of Essence makes explicit this very movement of self-explication, but it does so as the making explicit of the implicit content of the logical movement up until that point. This takes place because the Logic does not separate its method, as a set of formal operations which can be applied to given content (e.g. rules of inference), from the content which is to be thought. The forms through which the content is thought are not applied to it externally, requiring it to be fixed as a static, abstract self-identity, but rather flow from the content itself; the forms or determinations it undergoes themselves providing new content. Again, although Hegel specifies this unity of method and content at the beginning of the movement, it is not part of the initial content thought, but emerges itself within thought's own development as the speculative form/content distinction. The task of this essay will be to explain the content of this distinction, so as to make sense of the above considerations about the role it plays within the Logic as a whole. Firstly, we will examine the way in which the form/content distinction is manifest in the Phenomenology in its role of justifying the standpoint of the Logic, and how this throws light on the Logic's own structure. Secondly, we will go over dialectic of the doctrine of Essence leading up to the emergence of ground, thus providing the basis for an interpretation of the dialectic of form. Thirdly, we will provide this interpretation of the dialectic of form, which culminates in the positing of the form/content distinction, and conclude by applying the results of this to the earlier considerations on the structure of the Logic as a whole.

2. From Phenomenology to Logic

The movement of the Phenomenology itself both displays and explicates the form/content distinction. This is because the Notion of natural consciousness with which it begins, and whose

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3 SL, pg 27
content unfolds into the progression of the *Phenomenology* itself, is itself the form/content distinction posited. Of course, it is not the form/content distinction as posited in the movement of the *Logic*, as this would not only jump the gun, as it were, but also beg the question as to why its immanent development diverged from that of the *Logic*. Rather, the distinction is posited as it is contained in natural consciousness, as the distinction between *subject* and *object*, *certainty* and *truth*, or *knowing* and *known*. This is the crude form/content distinction which leads to the formalist or external thought of the understanding typified by the Kantian philosophy, which provides the major target of both the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*. The Notion of natural consciousness, through the culmination of the *Phenomenology*, transforms itself into the Notion of Science in sublating the distinction.

What relevance does this have to the *Logic* however? Firstly, Hegel explicitly describes the method of the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic* as the same “immanent development of the Notion”.

Of course, this does not mean that they are exactly the same - both the dialectic of the *Logic* and its relation to its own method will be far more complex - but any description of the dialectic of the *Logic*, and the way this is itself posited in the *Logic*, must be compatible with that of the *Phenomenology*. Secondly, because the *Logic* takes up from the *Phenomenology* as the development of the Notion of Science, the moments of form and content, or subject and object, whose opposition was sublated in the culmination of the *Phenomenology*, are implicit within this Notion itself. It is the recapitulation of these moments which generates the split between the 'objective' and 'subjective' logics.

Hegel describes it thus: “logic [is] divided primarily into the logic of the Notion as *being* and of the Notion as *Notion*”. This is the primary divide into content and form, the first seen as the Notion as it is *in-itself* before it becomes the latter as it is *for-itself*. It might seem strange to apply the form/content distinction to this division, given that not only does the division itself not yet include the Doctrine of Essence, which stands between that of Being and the Notion, but that the very Notion of the form/content distinction is itself only posited within this intermediate section.

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4 Ibid., pg 44
5 Robert Pippin provides an analysis of the centrality of form in the Kantian philosophy in *Kant's Theory of Form*. Curiously enough, it is the form as posited in the form/matter distinction which plays the great role in the Kantian philosophy. This is not to say that Kant did not deploy the form/content distinction, or that he did not do so in important ways (the definition of Transcendental Logic is a key example), but rather that he never thematized the distinction in the precise fashion he did with form and matter.
6 SL, pg 28
7 (Ibid., pg 60-61) One should be careful here not to think that Hegel is introducing external content into the immanent development of the *Logic*, somehow tainting the purity of the thought of indeterminate Being from which it starts. Although the *Phenomenology* has the status of justifying the *Logic*, precisely by justifying the standpoint of Science, it does not thereby introduce any content from the development of phenomenal consciousness into Being, it is merely one way of reaching this standpoint, which nevertheless exists independently of it. The division of the *Logic* into objective and subjective logics arises immanently within the *Logic* itself, and only retrospectively can it be seen that this does indeed correspond to the structure of the *Phenomenology*.
8 Ibid.
This will not entirely make sense until we can go over the dialectic of this very positing, which will only then enable the retrospective understanding of the larger movement, but we can begin to make sense of this by examining the mediating role of the Doctrine of Essence itself:

“But in accordance with the fundamental element of the immanent unity of the Notion, and hence with the inseparability of its determinations, these latter, when distinguished from each other in the positing of the Notion in its difference, must at least also stand in relation to each other. There results a sphere of mediation, the Notion as a system of reflected determinations, that is, of being in process of transition into the being-within-self or inwardness of the Notion. In this way, the Notion is not yet posited as such for itself, but is still fettered by the externality of immediate being. This is the doctrine of essence which stands midway between the doctrine of being and that of the Notion.”

As Hegel shows in the passage above, the very determination which distinguishes Being and Notion cannot itself be a merely immediate determination, which would itself be a determination of Being; rather, it must also relate them, but as relating them it is a mediation which establishes the very sphere of mediating relations, or the sphere of Essence and its relational determinations. However, such relational determinations “are not yet as reflected strictly within themselves; that is why the [Notion] is not yet for-itself.” This is to say that although these determinations are self-determined determinations, they are not yet self-determined as self-determined: “Essence is being-in-and-for-itself, but in the determination of being-in-itself”, meaning that it is only when it has posited “within itself the negation or determination, thereby giving itself determinate being that is equal to its being-in-itself [that it] becomes Notion.” Essence is the “first negation of being” into which the determinatenesses of being have returned, thus determining Essence as undetermined (but not indeterminate), such that the unfolding of its content will reflectively reconstitute them as posited and relational determinations. Essence is as such the mediation of Being and Notion as the development of not just the specific determinations (of Being) but the very form of determining itself into explicitly self-determining determination (Notion) by means of itself, which is to say via implicit self-determining determination (Essence). We can thus reaffirm the division of the Logic we described above, in that the movement of the Logic is the self-explication of the content of the Notion of Being, which is only implicitly Notion, into form as fully explicit self-determining

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9 Ibid.
10 EL, pg 175
11 (SL, pg 391) Richard Den Winfield makes a similar point, but rather describes the division of Being, Essence and Notion as that of determinacy in general, determined determinacy, and self-determined determinacy (Winfield, pg 39). The way the distinction is laid out here is entirely compatible with this description, but attempts to stress the character of Essence as implicit Notion by describing it as self-determined but not yet explicitly self-determined.
12 SL, pg 391
determination or Notion as Notion. It thus makes sense that part of this development would be the positing of the Notion of this very distinction, which could not come after the positing of the Notion as Notion, given that it must be a moment in the Notion's own self-positing.

There is thus a distinction between the form/content distinction as posited Notion, and the Notion as including form and content as moments in its own self-positing. Although the former is not as yet the fully explicated form of determination, this still legislates its application to the whole proceeding development of the Logic as the self-unfolding of the Notion of Science. Returning then to the comparison with the Phenomenology and what it can teach us about the Logic, we can see that although we can have some understanding of the way the Logic moves with respect to form and content, it will not have the same neat pre-established pattern that the Phenomenology displays. The Phenomenology thinks through the method of the formalist understanding (as the Notion of natural consciousness) to the point whereby it undermines itself, but in doing this it does in fact have a method, which, although not distinct from the content thought, does not itself develop in the course of that thought. As such, it was only clearing a space for the more radical Logic, whose method is not distinct from its content in the more extreme sense, being developed in the very same movement as the content, as this movement of the content itself. The Logic's structure is thus completely fluid in its immanent development of itself. However, from the above considerations it can be seen that the nested structure of the Phenomenology is also a feature of the Logic in that form is not abstractly self-identical, meaning that form itself can provide the content of new form. As such, the self-explication of the content can be seen not just as a linear or serial advance, but as the progressive uncovering and positing of deeper determinations of form. It is for this reason that Hegel claims that “the advance is a retreat into the ground, to what is primary and true, on which depends and, in fact, from which originates, that with which the beginning is made”.

Hegel explicitly indicates that this is the case for the whole of the Logic, as it was in the Phenomenology, in the sense that the whole development forms a circle that returns to its beginning, its result providing the ground of this beginning. However, the claim should be read as applying to the development in its parts and not just as a whole. This can only properly be shown after further examining the emergence of Essence within the Logic.

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13 This claim that the pattern or form of the Phenomenology's development is pre-established or contained in the content of the Notion of natural consciousness in advance should not be taken as denying the immanence of the development of the Phenomenology, it is precisely only in following this method out to its immanent conclusion that it is itself overcome, this is the whole point of the work.

14 There is not here space to give a description of the whole structure of the Phenomenology, but this nested structure is apparent from a careful reading of §84 of the Introduction (PS, pg 53-54)

15 SL., pg 71

16 Ibid.

17 This is indeed also the case with the Phenomenology, where Hegel indeed describes self-moving thoughts, or Notions as circles, giving the Phenomenology the character of circles within circles (PS, pg 20).
3. The Determinations of Essence

As has been explained, Essence mediates between Being and Notion. But, Essence is also the truth of Being, as that which Being has shown itself to be in its own immanent development\textsuperscript{18}. It is Being that has returned-into-itself. It has sublated all of its determinations such that, now providing the content of Essence, they will be reflectively reconstituted as mediated determinations. The form/content distinction will be one of these determinations, but Essence must first pass through illusory being (or seeming), reflection, the determinations of reflection (or essentialities) and into ground before the dialectic of form can begin. However, the dialectic of Essence also displays the structure of the logical 'advance' as a 'retreat into ground' that was discussed above. Not only does it display this structure implicitly, but it then makes this very structure explicit in the dialectic leading up to, and in, ground itself\textsuperscript{19}. Due to limitations of space, we must provide only the most cursory description of this dialectic.

In the culmination of the doctrine of Being, Being has shown itself to mediate itself through the reciprocal mediation of quality and quantity in measure. As such, it shows itself to be Essence or that which is mediated in itself. This determination of Essence is precisely the determination that it is not Being, as not immediate. However, this determination is an immediate determination, and as such Essence has determinate being, thus still belonging to the sphere of Being. It is thus distinguished from Being as the essential over against the inessential. It is only in negating this determination, and as such being not just not Being that Being returns-into-itself and constitutes Essence. This return-into-self is the prime example of the logical advance being itself a retreat-into-ground, as it constitutes a circular movement analogous to the movement of the Logic as a whole. We can see from this that the negation of Being which constitutes the first determination of Essence is not added to Being externally, but is the culmination of the movement of Being itself:

\begin{quote}
“the progress from that which forms the beginning is to be regarded as only a further determination of it, hence that which forms the starting point of the development remains at the base of all that follows and does not vanish from it. The progress does not consist merely in the derivation of an other, or in the effected transition into a genuine other; and in so far as this transition does occur it is equally sublated again.”
\end{quote}

In the doctrine of Being, Being passed over into nothing, becoming, and all of the other determinations of Being. However, each individual transition, although relatively independent of

\textsuperscript{18} SL, pg 390
\textsuperscript{19} This is not to mention its positing of the very structure of positing (See footnote 1).
\textsuperscript{20} SL, pg 71
Being, was not independent in the way of a formal inference of the understanding, leaving each moment isolated and linked only to that before and after it, but rather was still a determination of Being itself. The negation of Being which distinguishes it as inessential relative to Essence is not separate from all of the individual movements or determinations of the understanding, but is them taken together. However, to properly retreat-into-ground the progress cannot “consist merely in the derivation of an other” but must sublate this transition. Essence, which is at this point a determination of Being, negates itself, constituting Being's return-into-self as Essence: its ground. Of course, the determination of Essence as ground is not posited in the immanent development, but rather as was indicated in the introduction, this is a moment at which a category which has not yet appeared is present implicitly in the movement. This can be seen at the beginning of the section on ground where Hegel states: “[Essence] is determined in itself, or for us, as ground in which being is dissolved. But this determinateness is not posited by essence itself”\(^\text{21}\). Also, ground is not the only category implicitly present, but as the first double negation this transition is implicitly reflection, at the same time deploying all of the determinations of reflection (essentialities or essential determinations) in falling-to-ground. These implicit moments will constitute the content that will be unfolded in the initial dialectic of Essence, just as the transition from Being to nothing provides the content of Becoming.

The essential determinations are determinate beings but as reflectively reconstituted by Essence. As opposed to the immediate determinations of the sphere of Being, they do not merely pass over into each other, being exhausted in this transition but for their status as a moment of the ensuing category, but rather maintain themselves in this relation to their other. Thus they are self-subsistent as relations. As Burbidge points out, this means that: “They are objective criteria which, when clearly distinguished, also apply to the intellectual process of formulating them as criteria. It is this self-referential structure that complicates their analysis.”\(^\text{22}\) The essential determinations are both relation as a self-subsistent unity and as a relational form, which while applying to themselves can also be taken up and deployed within subsequent reflections (as a 'criteria'). So, identity is itself self-identical, difference is self-different, opposition is both the opposition between the positive and the negative, and an opposition between a positive and a negative; most importantly, contradiction is self-contradictory. However, these two sides are not yet separate, they are not even a unity as sublated separation, as the distinction between universal and particular instance has not yet been posited, they are simply immediately both\(^\text{23}\).

The dialectic itself is as follows. Essence in relating to itself by negating itself is equal to

\(^{21}\) Ibid., pg 444
\(^{22}\) On Hegel’s Logic, pg 71
\(^{23}\) If it seems strange to think of such basic relations in the same way as universals such as ‘man’ or ‘animal’, it is useful to think of more determinate relations like 'love', which is a universal instantiated in particular loves between individuals (‘A loves B’). Of course, unlike the essential determinations, love is not itself a love.
itself, much as Being was equal to itself. However, this equality with self is mediately constituted and is thus not just immediate equality but equality which maintains itself as equal with itself. This is identity, which actively maintains itself in the face of change. Identity as criterion of reflection is that which confers upon the following determinations the self-subsistent relational status indicated above. Now, as maintaining itself through self-relating negation, identity must be identical with itself through negating what is not identity. But what is not identity is difference, and as such identity posits difference. Difference is as such already implicitly related to identity when it is posited; it is as criterion what makes the relational moment implicitly different from the self-subsistent moment. It is initially posited as absolute difference, the simple not which is without related terms, but shows itself to maintain itself as difference through differing from itself, thus being identical with itself in its maintaining of itself. It thus becomes the relation between itself and identity explicitly, as well as being itself as self-subsistent: it is a moment of the relation and the relation as a whole. Posited as such it becomes the second moment of difference: diversity. The remaining determinations of reflection are the subsequent moments of difference as this relation between identity and difference: opposition and contradiction, as well as the self-subsistent moments as they are posited in this relation: likeness and unlikeness, positive and negative. The relation is only complete when the two sides become identical in their difference and vice-versa in ground.

4. Variations on Form

Ground is the culminating determination of reflection, but its positing is also the sublation of determining reflection as such; the subsistence of the essential determinations is thus dissolved into the self-identity of ground itself, the determinations becoming grounded by it. This is just to say that ground retains the character of excluding reflection, and thus it only subsists in its identity through excluding that which it grounds: it comes to be that which grounds the grounded. However, insofar as ground is posited as ground, this positedness is sublated in its very positing, because the positing of ground simply is the sublation of determining reflection. Thus, there is a dual movement

24 We can here disagree with Mure when he claims that in the Science of Logic the unity of identity and difference is found in contradiction, whereas the Encyclopaedia Logic posits this in ground (Mure, pg 103). Mure has failed to see that contradiction as posited is the unity of identity and difference as the negative or null moment of contradiction, whereas ground is their positive moment, falling-into-ground as the positing of ground itself.

25 Burbidge makes the point that the essential determinations or determinations of reflection have their independence sublated by the move from contradiction to ground, then becoming persistent, but posited, determinations of form (On Hegel's Logic, pg 86).

26 Excluding reflection is the reflection through which the positive and negative in opposition posit themselves as self-subsistent through negating the non-being of their other, thus containing this non-being, but thereby in excluding their other from themselves exclude this non-being, thereby excluding their own self-subsistence from themselves. This reflection as a mutual exclusion on behalf of the positive and negative is what characterises the negative moment of contradiction, the positive moment being the self-subsistent ground posited thereby (SL, pg 431).
in which the ground is posited as itself not-posited, non-determined, immediate self-identity, and any initial immediacy which reflection presupposed in positing the ground is itself sublated and posited as grounded. The posited determinations, or the grounded, thus retain a self-identity as the negative moment of contradiction, the ground being self-identical as the positive moment.

Just as with Being and the determinations which lead to its self-mediation in measure, this sublation of determining reflection is the sublation of Essence itself, any intermediate immediacy having itself been sublated. Essence as self-sublating “has not proceeded from another, but is, in its negativity, self-identical essence.” Just as Being did then, Essence has returned-into-itself, the essential determinations, just as those of Being, folding up within the implicit content of ground as that which Essence has become. This content will again unfold, as can be seen by returning to the ground-grounded distinction above. Because, as excluding reflection, ground is only positively self-identical through being the self-identity of the negative moment (it is ground only through grounding), the two moments are unified in a single identity. Yet, because this identity is not itself posited as not-posited in distinction to positedness, it cannot itself be ground. As distinct from ground it is “essence as such.” This is however distinguished from that which mediates this identity, or the reflective determination of the difference between ground and grounded. Given that the subsistence of the posited or grounded determinations is itself posited, and thus determined, it is thus distinguished from the simple identity of essence, which is determined as undetermined. The two moments are thus distinguished as essence (undetermined) over against form (determination).

We have thus seen the initial essential determinations recapitulated, because although ground is indeed their unity, being both identical with and different from that which it grounds, these two moments are themselves distinct (as essence and form, respectively).

However, essence as such is not distinct from the reflection which distinguishes the moments of the determinate form. As Hegel notes: “we cannot really say that essence withdraws into itself, that essence inwardly reflects itself, because it is not before or in its movement, and this has no substrate on which it runs its course.” Yet, the related determinations of the posited form are only

27 SL, pg 444-445
28 Ibid., pg 444
29 Ibid., pg 447
30 (Ibid.) From here on I will distinguish between Essence as it is initially posited and as it is in its distinction from form (simple essence), by refraining from capitalising the latter. I have retained capitals for the primary concepts: Being, Essence and Notion, in order to distinguish their importance and to separate them from their everyday uses. Essence and essence are not fully distinct, but this distinction is useful in plotting the movement of the dialectic of form.
31 Hegel notes that this difference as the relation between the ground and grounded is distinct from both the pure relation or pure reflection, and the determinate relation of determining reflection (Ibid., pg 445) in that it is a relation between self-subsistent terms that subsist in this relation. As such the reflection which posits this difference is the unity of pure reflection and determining reflection (Ibid., pg 448).
32 However, we should not expect the essential determinations to simply reappear in a linear fashion, each returning in an uncomplicated way. Although there is nothing in principle that prevents such re-occurrences, there is nothing that mandates it either.
33 Ibid.
in relation to “the moment of sublated reflection”\(^{34}\), or the sublation of the essential determinations that is ground. This is to say that essence, as just the reflection which sublates itself, must be itself the substrate to which the positedness that is sublated (the determinations of form) is related. So, although essence as such is initially distinguished from ground, it is now related as substrate and thus determined as ground. This is to say that essence has form – that form is the form of essence, as that which is grounded by essence.

Form is determination as it has shown itself to be. Whereas determinate being was simply at one with that of which it was the determination, in form the determinatenesses of Essence are posited as distinct from that of which they are the form: essence as ground. However, all determinateness as such belongs to form, including the determinate difference between ground and grounded. Form is not only possessed by essence, it also forms essence in its determination as ground\(^{35}\). As Burbidge notes, this means that: “thought cannot keep essence distinct from form; every attempt to define it slips over into the opposite.”\(^{36}\) They enter into a state of “absolute reciprocal relation”\(^{37}\). Form ceases to be only a side of the relation and becomes the relation as a whole, as the very activity of distinguishing them. Likewise, simple essence is also a moment of the relation, but it is also the self-subsistent identity of the activity as a whole. They are thus identical as forming activity\(^{38}\). This activity is the reflection which dissolves the posited (essential) determinations into an identity while maintaining these determinations as formal determinations\(^{39}\). However, this movement has also collapsed the distinction between ground and grounded\(^{40}\), and essence is thus no longer the substrate of form.

This means that although essence no longer has form, form as forming activity still sublates its determinations (as was the case with the essential determinations and their subsistence in ground) and in this sublating relates to that in which it subsists, but it relates to it as an other – its self-identity is other than it\(^{41}\). This moment of identity is thus presupposed by form, and as such it is no longer essence but matter: the passive substrate of the forming activity\(^{42}\). Matter is purely abstract identity, it is form that has abstracted from all form-determinations, including that it is

\(^{34}\) Ibid.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., pg 449
\(^{36}\) On Hegel's Logic, pg 87
\(^{37}\) SL, pg 449
\(^{38}\) Interestingly this point at which form and essence are identical is the position which Aristotle takes (De Beistegui, pg 44-45). Moreover, Hegel's own interpretation of Aristotle understands Aristotle's form to be a forming activity, rather than a static determination (LHP2, pg 138-140). Of course, Aristotle's form is such an activity as actuality over against matter as potentiality. In the Logic, form as it is initially posited is not as yet actuality, which it will become later (SL, pg 451).
\(^{39}\) On Hegel's Logic, pg 87
\(^{40}\) On Hegel's Logic, pg 87
\(^{41}\) SL, pg 450
\(^{42}\) Here the tacit distinction drawn earlier between Essence and simple essence has collapsed, essence once more being identical with absolute reflection (Ibid., pg 451), its status as positive moment over against the negative determinations of form being posited as explicitly positive and as such now matter.
form. Matter is as such a purely indeterminate identity. Not only does form presuppose a matter to which it relates itself, but because matter is distinguished from the simple essence which was identical with the reflective forming activity itself, matter is, rather, only through this activity. It thus presupposes form. However, as each presupposes the other, they posit themselves as not-positing each other. Therefore, neither can be the ground of the other, and as such they both reciprocally presuppose one another while being mutually indifferent to one another. These two moments of the overall form-relation are themselves the posited moments of form and matter respectively. The reciprocal presupposition, in relating the two sides as distinct, is itself the determination of form (essential difference), whereas the mutual indifference, as itself the abstraction or separation of all form from matter, is itself the determination of matter (essential identity). In this way, the form-matter relation has regained the self-reflexivity of the form-essence relation, but its two sides have retained their distinction as indifferent and diverse.

Form and matter, in their positing, have received a certain externality in relation to one another (diversity): matter is formed, and form is materialised, but neither is yet intrinsically so. The self-reflexive form relation identified above maintains this externality as their indifference to one another. However, this self-reflexive relation does so through being self-contradictory. As forming activity it contradicts itself perpetually, in what Burbidge calls a “restless intellectual somersaulting.” Hegel describes the activity thus: “first, it sublates its self-subsistence, converts itself into something posited, into something that is in an other, and this its other is matter. Secondly, it sublates its determinateness relatively to matter, its relation to it, and consequently its positedness, and in doing so gives itself a subsistence.” This means that form, as not grounded by matter, is self-subsistent, but it sublates this self-subsistence in abstracting from itself and positing matter as its identity; in positing matter, however, it must posit it as not-posited or indifferent, this being the sublation of its own determinateness relative to it, making itself once more not grounded by it. This simply indicates that the moments of reciprocal presupposing and mutual indifference contradict one another, each turning into the other in a self-perpetuating cycle. This is a continuous alternation between form as a moment of the relation determined over against matter, and form as the whole determining process, which has sublated this determinateness.

However, while this activity of perpetual self-contradiction is itself taken as form, the moment of externality is taken to be this movement as passivity, or, rather, it is again matter. Alternatively, the forming activity can be understood as a bad infinite, over against finite matter as the simple non-

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43 This is just the structure of presupposing reflection, which, although it posits that which it negates in its positing of the posited, posits this immediacy as not-posited by it (Ibid., pg 401-402).
44 Ibid., (pg 451)
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 On Hegel's Logic, pg 88
48 SL, pg 452
iterated movement\textsuperscript{49}. It is as such that the contradiction that is form is \textit{implicit} within matter itself\textsuperscript{50}. This means that matter is no longer indifferent to form, but is intrinsically \textit{to be formed}\textsuperscript{51}. We could characterised this as the fact that it is not merely indeterminate but now properly \textit{determinable}\textsuperscript{52}. Now, since form sublates its subsistence in determining itself as a moment against matter, but then sublates this determinateness, regaining its subsistence as the whole determining process, it is a reflection-into-self that proceeds through matter, as “a union with matter”\textsuperscript{53}. This is to say that form must materialise itself in determining matter, thus giving itself self-identity or subsistence. As a \textit{determination} it can only be itself in having determined the determinable. The diversity of matter and form has thus collapsed, leaving us with a matter that is intrinsically formed and a form that is essentially materialised – the two sides of the form relation have thus sublated their self-subsistence, falling-into-ground as their unity: \textit{formed matter}, or \textit{content}\textsuperscript{54}.

The dialectic of form and content is the culmination of the first moment of ground – \textit{absolute ground} – in that it has both reintroduced the ground relation which was lost in matter, and given this ground determinate content, thus positing \textit{determinate ground}\textsuperscript{55}. However, we will not continue to follow the dialectic through these moments, but will conclude by giving an account of the nature of form and content as they are posited, and the way they make explicit the movement of the Logic itself.

\section*{5. Conclusion: The Self-Movement of Content}

As was noted, form just is what determination has become. As forming activity, it deploys the various essential determinations as criteria in its differentiating and determining activity. However, the subsistence of these determinations has proceeded through various moments: ground, simple essence and matter\textsuperscript{56}; each having a corresponding moment of form: form as grounded, form as ground-relation, and form as determining activity or reflection. However, in each case the moments

\textsuperscript{49} Although it would be prudent here to explain the relation of the finite, bad infinite and true infinite, there is again no space to give such an account. I can simply refer the reader to the positing of these Notions within the doctrine of Being (Ibid., 136-156).
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 451-453
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pg 451
\textsuperscript{52} This is of course Kant's static understanding of matter in opposition to form as determination (CPR, pg 280; LL, pg 338-339).
\textsuperscript{53} SL, pg 452
\textsuperscript{54} (Ibid., pg 454) Another way of looking at this is to say that form, as a bad infinite, is itself limited by matter through its presupposition of matter, and is such finite. Matter and form are thus both finite over against each other and thus sublate their self-subsistence, falling-into-ground in their original unity as the \textit{truly} infinite content.
\textsuperscript{55} Determine ground itself is composed of the moments of formal ground, real ground and complete ground. These correspond roughly to the distinction Kant draws in the Blomberg Logic between logical ground, which can be neither sufficient nor insufficient (despite Hegel's attribution of sufficiency to it here, this is not in the full Kantian sense), insufficient ground and sufficient ground (Lecture on Logic, pg 29). Although there is not time to fully discuss it here, it is interesting to note that formal ground is the explicit positing of the \textit{abstract} application of the form/content distinction criticized both here and in the Phenomenology, as opposed to its proper \textit{speculative} usage.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., pg 455
of identity (subsistence) and difference (determination) that make up the unity of ground are distinct, although this distinction takes various forms. It is only in content that self-identity or subsistence “comes under the dominance of form and is once more one of its determinations.”

This is to say that the identity of the determinations ceases to be something which is other than them, neither undetermined (essence) nor indeterminate (matter), but rather formed within itself. The determinations of content are not other than its subsistence, rather its determining is itself its positing of its self-identity. However, content has not for that matter subsumed form entirely. Form and matter have sublated their self-subsistence and posited it in content as their unity. As this unity, content is that which is identical between form and matter, but the determinate differences between them are now a positedness to which content is indifferent. This moment of positedness is then the moment of form over against content, form now retaining both form as it was (determining reflection) and matter as moments. This moment of form as indifferent is elsewhere called external form. But, this does not exhaust the determinateness of content, the opposing moment of content as unity is itself still internally formed. This external form, as positedness, is sublated in the positing of the unity of form and matter, and this sublation is its reflection-into-self as ground. As such, content as unity has two distinct moments: it is “first that identity which is indifferent to the form; but secondly, it is the identity of the ground.”

Importantly, these moments of unity are not abstractly identical, but become identical through the process of positing the second moment. The first is the original unity, the second the restored unity, and the process of restoration is the content's uniting with itself, in which it “has just as much repelled and determined itself.” This movement is the self-explication of content that was discussed earlier. We are thus now in a position to reconstruct the way in which the Logic moves with regard to the posited distinction of form and content. Returning to the transition from Being to Essence, and its relation to the transition from Being to Notion, we can characterise the way that content unfolds itself. Essence is the return of Being into itself, insofar as the negation of Being is Being's negation of itself. This negation must be the culmination of all of the intermediary moments or determinations which Being has passed through. Of course, each of these moments were not Being. However, they were not absolutely not Being, but were also at the same time the movement of Being itself, or the unfolding of Being's own content. In other words, they were determinations of Being to which Being as content was indifferent. Yet, at the same time, many of these determinations related back to Being in their very positing. Being was at once a determination of its external form and the underlying indifferent content. This is more pronounced in the dialectic of

57 Ibid.
58 EL, pg 202
59 SL, pg 455
60 Ibid., pg 454
Essence, in which, despite being Being's own return-into-self, it is distinct from Being as Essence. This initial moment of externality from which a given dialectical movement proceeds is the moment of matter still retained in form, whereby the content is treated as abstractly self-identical. This is the moment of the abstract understanding as outlined in the First Preface to the Logic.⁶¹

So, Being's content is indifferent to its moments, which are as such the moments of its external form, which take place between it and its return-into-self as Essence, which is the restoration of the indifferent unity as ground of this form. Being as external to its (indifferent) content is the moment of matter, but as such it is implicitly contradictory; this becomes explicit through the first negation of Being as inessential over against the essential. This explicit contradiction is the moment of form as “self-resolving, self-repelling and self-determining.”⁶² Following the understanding, this is the moment of dialectical reason. The self-resolution of the contradiction, being of the content despite its indifference to it, just is the uniting of the content with itself, as it is also self-repelling and self-determining.⁶³ In this resolution, the external form is folded back into the internal form (as was seen with the determinations of Being in Essence). The determinate difference between the original content and the restored content is only in the configuration of its internal form. The return-into-itself has simply uncovered a deeper, implicit layer of internal form, posited it as external form, and then reintegrated it into the internal form as its own explicit moments of determination. The determinations that were posited in the external form are as such now at the surface of the internal form. This is all that its self-determining consists in. The restoration is as such the moment of speculative reason. Of course, the first two moments together are simply the forming activity as a whole, over against the indifferent content; this forming activity's culmination is nothing but the falling-into-ground that restores the indifferent unity.

This general movement from (indifferent) content, through form (as form and matter), back to content as ground of the whole process, is the general pattern of all immanent thought; as such, it is the structure of all movement in the Logic.⁶⁴ However, as has been noted, these movements do not just proceed serially, one from the other, but also contain further movements as their moments. This is demonstrated if we remember that, despite itself being the reflection of Being into itself (a double negation), Essence is only the first negation of Being in relation to the Notion. The whole of the doctrine of Essence constitutes the second negation, Being thus once more returning-into-itself in the Notion through Essence. It is the moment of indifference which enables the content of Being to both sublate itself into Essence, producing a new content as ground, and yet still, being indifferent

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⁶¹ Ibid., pg 28
⁶² Ibid., pg 451
⁶³ Ibid., pg 454
⁶⁴ As was noted earlier, this means it is also the way in which the Phenomenology moves, the latter being the immanent thought of the Notion of natural consciousness.
to this content as a moment of its external form, sublate itself *through it* into Notion. Indeed, this structure is repeated within Essence: its return-into-self as ground both constitutes ground as ground and posits it as a moment of the external form over against the indifferent content of Essence, which remains indifferent throughout the doctrine of Essence, even while the content of Being is indifferent to it. This is what was meant by the different *layers* of internal form above – the different levels of indifference which the self-determining activity of form uncovers and sublates. The sublation of a higher level of indifference is itself part of the forming activity, which in contradicting itself, sublates a deeper level of indifference, incorporating the determinations of this forming activity within the internal form of the content as ground. These determinations are now ‘at the surface’ of this internal form, precisely in the sense that they are still bound up with the dialectical process of sublating a yet deeper indifference. This multi-layered dialectic displays the true nature of the *speculative* form/content distinction: all content is form and all form is content, not in a uniform way, but through being always more or less *relatively* indifferent or posited. The only absolute indifference is that of the content of Being itself in returning-into-itself in Absolute Idea, and the only truly absolute ground is Absolute Idea as the ground of the whole movement of the *Logic*.

Finally, we may reinterpret the structure of the *Logic* as a whole. Not only is the *Logic* divided into objective (content) and subjective (form), but it constitutes this distinction as matter (Being), form (Essence), and content (Notion). This is so because the moments of matter and form together compose form over against content, and as such are the *content* of form (objective), and form is the form *of* content (subjective), but also because the Notion is the unity of Being and Essence as ground of their determinations, the content of each and every movement being its ground as a self-determining Notion. The Notion is thus the moment of restored content, but as the restored content of form; now self-determined as self-determined. However, this form is also simply a moment of the larger absolute dialectic, itself passing back into restored content in Absolute Idea. The *Logic* is like an intricate piece of clockwork, and the process of opening it up and taking it apart is itself the process of reassembling it in a different place, leaving it just as it was, the movement from one place to another *producing* nothing more than the knowledge of how it works. Of course, this analogy portrays the movement as one that is external, whereas in truth the movement of dismantling and reconstituting is simply the movement of the *Logic* itself, the immanent thinker who has traversed the movement being left with an understanding of the various different Notions that are its (*relatively* external) moments, much as the prospective watchmaker develops an understanding of the different clockwork parts.