

The Way Past the Stripping Argument in Hegel and Aristotle

Joshua Mendelsohn

1. Introduction

In the preface to the first edition of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel introduces his project by discussing the displacement of traditional metaphysics,¹ claiming that his logical science “makes up metaphysics proper [*eigentliche Metaphysik*].”² Later we are told that its first part, the objective logic, “takes the place . . . of the former metaphysics [*vormaligen Metaphysik*].”³ In his preface to the second edition, Hegel praises Plato, “and Aristotle especially” for having “liberated [*befreit*]⁴ the forms of thought from their instrumental role in fulfilling human needs, and having begun to investigate them for their own sake.

Despite these prominent references to Aristotle and traditional metaphysics, there have been few studies devoted to exploring whether substantive connections exist between Hegel’s *Science of Logic* and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Klaus Hartmann is dismissive of any such connection,⁵ and those who do explore Hegel’s reading of Aristotle in depth tend to focus on his interpretation of *De Anima*.⁶ In this paper I want to suggest that there are non-trivial parallels between Hegel’s *eigentliche Metaphysik* and the fourteen books attributed to Aristotle that established metaphysics as a topic.

Due to the scope of this paper, I will only be able to provide a sketch of what I take to be some fruitful comparisons. I will argue that Hegel and Aristotle both rely on a version of the so-called “stripping” argument in order to raise problems for a certain conception of determinacy. Aristotle’s theory of predication in the *Categories*, I will argue, represents an attempt to solve

these problems. Hegel criticizes the type of solution that the *Categories* offers in ways that point in the direction of Aristotle's later view expressed in *Metaphysics* Zeta 6.

2. Determinacy and the limits of the logic of being

At the beginning of the first book of his *Science of Logic*, the *Doctrine of Being*, Hegel famously presents being as “pure indeterminacy and emptiness [*reine Unbestimmtheit und Leere*].”⁷ In thinking pure being without any further qualification, Hegel claims that we think nothing determinate, and so nothing at all. Nonetheless, some measure of determinacy is supposed to be awarded to the concept of being by thinking through its very indeterminacy. Having seen that pure being is an empty concept, we no longer simply *fail to think anything* in thinking being, but instead *recognize* our failure to have any thought. As such, we move from thinking nothing in the sense of having no thought, to thinking nothing in the sense of having a thought whose content is the concept “nothing.” Our thought of being thereby gains some determinacy, if only a little, for now we are at least thinking some thought, even if the content of that thought is “nothing.” Hegel purports to extend this procedure of determination to derive ever more determinate concepts such as number, measure, and infinity by self-consciously thinking being and the concepts that this thinking gives rise to.

This process is carried through until Hegel reaches the concept of a “real measure:” the idea of a system of related quantifiable attributes inhering in space and time.⁸ At this point, however, Hegel indicates that the process of attaining successively more determinate thoughts from reflection on being has reached an impasse. Under the heading of “Absolute Indifference”, he writes:

Being is abstract indifference, for which, since it is supposed to be thought in its own right as being, the abstract expression “*indifference*” has been used – in which there is not supposed to be as yet any kind of determinateness. Pure quantity is this indifference in the sense of being capable of taking on any determination, but in such a way that these are external to it and that quantity itself does not have any link with them originating in it.⁹

Hegel here acknowledges that the hard-won concept of a physical quantity is still no concept of a determinate particular. The idea of a quantity, Hegel explains, is simply the idea of something being able to receive any determination on a scale. To say that a teacup has a quantitative attribute such as a specific *diameter* is to conceptualize it as possibly having any diameter at all: to think of it as occupying a particular place on the scale of all possible diameters. This way of thinking of the teacup’s diameter makes its diameter “external” to the teacup itself in the sense that we must, for the purposes of placing it on a scale of possible diameters, think of the teacup in abstraction from the diameter it actually has. We thus conceive of the teacup as a determinable capable of being determined by any possible diameter.

Hegel continues: “Determinateness is in it still only as a circumstance, that is, something *qualitative* and *external* which has indifference as a *substrate*. But what has in this way been determined as qualitative and external is only a vanishing thing.”¹⁰ Hegel’s point is that if *all* features of objects are thought of as qualitative or quantitative determinations, then the teacup itself all but vanishes, for the following reason. Take anything that determines or distinguishes the teacup (its diameter, its size, its color, etc.). By hypothesis, we think of this determination as a position or point occupied by the teacup on a particular scale or in some space of possible

determinations. In order to do this, we must think of the teacup which occupies this location on the scale as determined by features *other* than the one in question. Consequently, in order to think of *all* of the features of the teacup as determinations of measure, we must abstract from *every* remaining property of the teacup in the same way. When we do this, we find ourselves left with the thought of a bare substrate. In place of the teacup, we think of a generic bearer of properties which must be determined by something else. But if *all* features of *all* objects are thought of in the same way, then the same argument can be run on the saucer, the spoon, or anything. In this way, we come to think of the world as made up of indeterminate substrata occupying positions on various scales. But then, what is left to determine that the teacup has the diameter it has, or even to individuate it? Nothing can, because everything – just like the teacup – is thought of as determined by something else.

At this point, it becomes evident that if we think of all the properties of a thing on the model of qualitative or quantitative determination, we fail to account for the determinacy of any particular. What we thought was progress in determining the content of our thought turns out to have just been passing the buck: everything needs to be thought of as determined by something else. The objection is not that this itself is incoherent: reciprocal determination of all properties by one other, for instance, is not ruled out, and Hegel will eventually consider this possibility.¹¹ Rather, this argument shows that the concept of a determinate particular is not reducible to the concepts of qualitative and quantitative determination. Qualitative and quantitative determination need to be placed into a broader framework which affords us a concept by which to understand the subjects of such determination.

3. Determinacy and matter

It is useful to compare this to an early argument in Book Zeta of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.¹² In his first venture to "say in outline what substance is"¹³ Aristotle offers four preliminary glosses on the notion of substance: "(a) what being is for that thing, (b) its universal, (c) its genus, and fourthly (d) what underlies [*to hypokeimenon*]."¹⁴ He then proceeds to offer what has come to be known as the "stripping argument." The argument concerns substance in the fourth sense of "what underlies," which Aristotle glosses as "that of which other things are predicated while it itself is predicated of nothing further."¹⁵ Aristotle writes:

If matter is not substance, it is hard to see what else could be; for when all else is taken off, nothing apparent remains. For while other things are attributes, products, and capacities of bodies, length, breadth, and depth are quantities and not substances (for quantity is not substance). Rather, the substance is that primary thing to which these quantities belong. And yet when length, breadth, and depth are taken away, we see nothing remaining unless there be something which is determined by these. So on this view it must appear that matter alone is substance.¹⁶

Shortly thereafter, Aristotle disavows the conclusion that matter is substance, for which reason commentators take this argument to be a *reductio* against the characterization of substance as "what underlies."¹⁷

Overtly, the structure of Aristotle's argument differs from Hegel's. Hegel starts from the nature of quantitative determination and argues that such determination taken across the board forces us to think of indeterminate substrata in place of concrete particulars. Aristotle, by

reflecting on the requirement that substance be what underlies all else, observes that this characterization of substance equates it with matter. However, closer examination reveals some important similarities.

First, the conception of substance characterized solely as a *hypokeimenon* shares the key property of objects given by pure quantitative determination that Hegel's argument turns on. It was essential to Hegel's argument that we think of the thing determined, on the one hand, and the qualities and quantities which determine it, on the other, as having asymmetric ontological roles. The teacup *sits somewhere* on a scale of possible radii (or diameters, heights, etc.), while the quantitative properties which determine it are understood on the model of locations which the teacup can occupy. As such we establish an asymmetry between the teacup itself -- which is treated *merely* as a subject of predication -- and its properties, which are not treated as possible subjects but only as things which could be said about something else. This is also how Aristotle glosses substance in the sense of *hypokeimenon*: "that of which other things are predicated while it itself is predicated of nothing further."¹⁸ Like Aristotle, then, Hegel considers the consequences of thinking of objects as only having the possibility of being determined but not themselves determining what properties they have.

What was objectionable about this way of thinking for Hegel was not that all things were reduced to *substrata*, but that it made them *indifferent substrata*, substrata which have no intrinsic reason for being determined in one way and not another. Put this way, the upshot of Hegel's argument is that if nothing contains the ground of its own determination, then an account of external determination does not, in the absence of further explanation, give us any grip on determinacy. From this perspective, Aristotle's reasons for rejecting the conclusion that "matter alone is substance" are akin to Hegel's reason for taking the determinacy given by thinking

through being to be limited. Immediately after his *reductio* argument, Aristotle gives the following gloss on “matter”: “By matter I mean what is not said to be in its own right any thing, or a quantity [*hē kath’ hautēn mēte ti mēte poson*], or anything else by which being is determined [*hōristai to on*].”¹⁹ This helps explain why Aristotle takes it to be “impossible” for substance to be matter.²⁰

What makes the conclusion objectionable for Aristotle, as for Hegel, is that matter lacks determinacy. We can see this in Aristotle’s treatment of matter in *Metaphysics* Zeta 10, where he claims that, while the parts of a thing’s form occur in its formula, “matter in itself is unknowable [*hē d’ hylē agnōstos kath’ hautēn*].”²¹ Here Aristotle cannot mean that all matter has a mysterious nature that human reason is powerless to cognize: He gives examples of matter as mundane as bronze, flesh, and bones.²² Rather, we can grasp what Aristotle means by noticing that he is at this point treating form as the aspect of a thing which is captured by a proper account of it (its *logos*). To say that something is matter, by contrast, is not to give it any determinate characterization, but rather to treat it as an object *qua* determinable thing.²³ Therefore, like Hegel, Aristotle’s reasons for rejecting the conclusion of the stripping argument concern the indeterminacy of the candidate that it offers.²⁴ Substance cannot be matter because it is a central component of the concept of substance to be a determinate particular (*a tode ti*), but to call something matter is to characterize it as determinable rather than determinate.

Thus far I have identified three affinities between Hegel and Aristotle. Both are concerned to account for the determinacy of particulars, both are driven to consider the possibility that bare substrata are, strictly speaking, all there is (Aristotle seems to take this as a starting point in *Metaphysics* Zeta; Hegel claims it is the result of his Doctrine of Being), and both argue that this can’t be right, or at least can’t be the whole story, by using a version of the

stripping argument. In what follows, I will suggest that the ways Hegel and Aristotle respond to the predicament generated by the stripping argument also show parallels.

4. Essence as a Condition of Determinacy

Above I glossed Hegel's argument at the end of the Doctrine of Being as consisting, first, in a recognition that quantitative and qualitative determination treats subjects as indifferent bearers of possible determinations, different in kind from the things that determine them; and second, in the claim that qualitative and quantitative determination fails to determine what these subjects are. We might put the point by saying that if our account of determination makes the things determined indifferent to their determinations, then we have failed to give any account of determination at all, for we have said nothing about why or how anything should be one way and not another. As a sort of a last-ditch effort, the Doctrine of Being moves to consider qualitative determination brought about by discrete quantitative changes, which Hegel associates with "nodal lines." Examples are the ratio at which harmony is produced and the sudden state-changes of water from solid to liquid to gas.²⁵ This, however, also fails as an account of determinacy in so far as the determination is supposed to be *gradual*, with each small change making no essential difference to the character of the thing to be determined, and yet must bring about some qualitative "leap" when a specific quantity is reached, "without having passed through the in-between stages and displaying qualities characteristically its own."²⁶ With the failure of nodal lines, we come to realize that the whole framework of measure amounts only to the recognition *that* things are determined by others, but we have given no account of *what* this determination consists in. Nor have we offered any way to understand what the subjects of determination are, if we reduce them to bare substrata.

In opening the Doctrine of Essence, Hegel puts this by saying that determination within the categories of being alone is “immediate [*unmittelbar*].”²⁷ Determination by a real measure, the crowning achievement of the Doctrine of Being, offers little insight into the nature of determination itself. It remains to flesh out that picture, or, as Hegel says, to “mediate” it. The characterization of the limits of the logic of being just given indicates what this mediation must provide. In addition to the truism that things are the subjects of determinations, we require an account of what it is to be such a subject of determination.

Another feature of Hegel’s argument is helpful for understanding how an account of determination must proceed. One of the problematic features of the Doctrine of Being’s model of determination was that it established too sharp an asymmetry between the things determined and the things which determine them. By treating subjects as pure *determinables*, containing none of their determinations within themselves, the Doctrine of Being robbed the thing to be determined of any ground it could have to be determined in one way rather than another.²⁸ Perhaps we can avoid reducing everything to indifferent and indeterminate substrata if, instead of treating subjects only as determinables, we can find a model of determination which treats the thing that is determined as a thing of the same type as those which do the determining, each with their own principles of determination.

Aristotle offers such an account of determination in the *Categories* with his theory of substantial predication. Unlike something which is merely “in” Socrates, like his pallor, the relationship which “human” bears to Socrates is strictly speaking no *relationship* at all.²⁹ When we say that Socrates is a human, we do not name *something else* that inheres in Socrates, but rather give *what Socrates as such is*. Thus, the predication of a substance by a secondary substance cannot, like the teacup with its particular diameter, be thought by abstracting from the

property in question and treating the particular quality that the subject has as one of many possible determinations of that property (one of many possible diameters). We can strip Socrates of his color, but if we cease to think of Socrates as a human, we have ceased to think of Socrates at all. In this way, the *Categories* does not allow the sort of abstraction that fuels the stripping argument to proceed all the way down to a bare substrate. Strip as we will, we still strip properties off a *human*; *human* is not merely an attribute of the underlying subject, but what this underlying subject itself is, and hence represents no strippable property.³⁰

In the first section of the *Doctrine of Essence*, under the heading “The Essential and the Inessential [*Das Wesentliche und das Unwesentliche*],”³¹ Hegel considers a similar distinction between essential and inessential properties. This is presumably meant as a first pass at remedying the problems with the being-logical model of determination. Now, instead of supposing that all properties determine their subjects as indifferent measures, we suppose, in addition, that each thing has a determinate essence which describes the identity of the thing determined. This essence is defined to be whatever the thing is *apart* from its being-logical determinations: In Hegel’s words, “simple equality with itself but in so far as it is the *negation* of the sphere of being as such.”³² Since the thing’s essence, by definition, cannot be abstracted away from it, it forms an impenetrable core of determinacy which is immune from the stripping argument.

Hegel is quick, however, to highlight the shortcomings of this attempt to advance beyond being. He points out that this differentiation between a being and its essence induces a second distinction between the essential and inessential properties or aspects of any given thing.³³ If we distinguish Socrates himself from the pale walking thing, then we must also distinguish his inessential traits (his pallor, his perambulation) from his essential ones (his humanity, his

animality). A problem arises, Hegel suggests, when we ask after the relationship between what is essential and what is inessential about Socrates. What makes it the case that these, together, are all properties of a particular pale, walking man? It cannot be his essence: the point of positing an essence was to identify a non-contingent core of Socrates which does *not* determine him to be either walking or not-walking, either white or not-white, etc. And it would be striking to say that it is these accidents themselves which explain their inherence in him. It seems that the ground of the essential and inessential properties of Socrates then “falls in a *third* [*in ein Drittes fällt*].”³⁴ But this third thing to which both the essence of Socrates and his present accidents belong is something that we have given no account of. So, the account of determinacy by appeal to essence is at best incomplete: We have still given no account of how the essential and inessential properties are determined to coexist in a particular. Furthermore, like the account of determinacy given at the end of the logic of being, what appears to be an answer here really just pushes the problem elsewhere. Instead of essence accounting for the determinacy of the thing, as it was intended to do, the positing of essence defers the question of determination to whatever unites the thing’s essential and inessential properties.

Aristotle was familiar with an argument like this. In fact, it is widely thought that at least one motivation of Aristotle’s theory of predication was the so-called “third man” argument that Plato sets out in *Parmenides* 132a–b. G.E.L. Owen glosses this argument as follows:

Plato had said: “When I call *A* a man and *B* a man, what does this common label ‘a man’ stand for? Not for the individual subject I apply it to, else it would stand indifferently for any such subject; but *A* and *B* cannot both be the single common thing we are after. So ‘a man’ stands for some third thing.” But then, it is objected, *ex hypothesi* this third thing is

a man. And thus we have three men where before we began with two, and by similar manipulations we can generate a fourth and a fifth.³⁵

As Alan Code points out, the problem that this argument raises is not a problem with the infinity of men as such.³⁶ The problem is rather that this argument shows a way that the theory of predication might fail to do its job. We want to understand how it is that *man* applies to this particular man as well as that one. If, in order to answer this question, we need to appeal to a third man, and yet another man to explain the applicability of that man, and so on, then we will never get to the point of explaining how *man* applies to the man that we started with. Instead, we defer the question to that of the applicability of ever more abstract men.

Now, the theory of predication in the *Categories* was surely intended to address this problem. By distinguishing between *being in* and *being said of*, the *Categories* rejects the assumption that the “man” which is said of A and B must be a third thing. Rather, man just is what they each are. But, as Owen comments, the *Categories* represents “an early and interesting stage of Aristotle’s pondering on the third man. It has seized the difference between the two sorts of predicate, but it has not yet swallowed all the implications.”³⁷ If Hegel’s argument succeeds, then it shows that the *Categories* theory of predication does not get around the Third Man so easily. In effect, Hegel resurrects the problem at the level of a thing’s relationship to its own essence. We no longer need to appeal to another man in accounting for the fact that this man and that man share something in common, but even on the *Categories* view we do need to appeal to a third thing when we account for what unites what is merely “in” Socrates with his essence. This, also, is to defer the original question, and hence indicates a deficiency in the account.

In *Metaphysics Zeta*, Aristotle expresses greater acuity regarding this concern. He opens Chapter 6 by saying: “We must consider whether a thing is the same as, or different from, what being is for it [*to ti ēn einai*]. This is relevant to our investigation of substance, for a thing is thought to be no different from its own substance.”³⁸ Aristotle states that he recognizes a hazard in allowing a gap between a thing and what it is to be that thing. One reason for wishing to avoid such a gap is the reason that Hegel has given. If we make the essence of a man anything other than that very man, then we seem to risk raising the third man problem again at the level of a thing’s essence and its accidental properties. It seems that if man is to be essentially, rather than accidentally predicated of a thing, then man must be that very thing, in all its contingency.³⁹

Of course, to say this on its own is equally unsatisfactory. If each thing’s essence simply is that thing, then we will have a hard time explaining how essences can still be shared by multiple particulars, and how inessential properties can exist at all. I do not have space here to go into Aristotle’s treatment of these problems, nor the progression of Hegel’s account. However, I hope what I have said so far has been enough to show that Aristotle and Hegel are attempting to navigate similar terrain in giving their respective accounts of essence.

5. Concluding Remarks

My object in this paper has been to highlight similarities between Hegel and Aristotle in their respective metaphysical projects. Needless to say, there are important differences between Hegel’s and Aristotle’s treatment of these issues that I have left untouched. Whereas Aristotle’s arguments concern in the first instance beings, Hegel’s arguments concern in the first instance thoughts. Whereas Aristotle endorses the law of non-contradiction, Hegel can seem eager to embrace contradictions.

Despite these differences, the depth and significance of which must be evaluated elsewhere,⁴⁰ I believe the kinship between Hegelian and Aristotelian metaphysics is substantial. Hegel and Aristotle both confront issues about determinacy: for Aristotle, the determinacy of substance, for Hegel, the determinacy of thought. Both employ a version of the stripping argument to show how a certain type of determination -- the determination of a thing by external qualities and quantities -- is not fully intelligible in isolation from an account of essential determination. Hegel, like Aristotle, recognizes two competing claims on an account of determination: first, what determines something must be sufficiently separate for appeal to it to count as *determination*. At the same time, if a thing's principle of determination is external to it, then we can ask how that thing is related to its principle of determination in such a way that we are led to a regress. This presents a serious problem for how we are to give an account of determination. While I have not had space to argue the point in full, I think that navigating these pressures remains a driving force behind both Hegel's Doctrine of Essence and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as they each treat topics like form, matter, and activity.

Apart from these specific points of contact, I have aimed to illustrate a broader methodological similarity. Aristotle and Hegel both proceed by considering successive candidates for characterizing their topic, and show the limitations and contradictions associated with each one, advancing piecemeal to a better understanding.⁴¹ The problems that Aristotle and Hegel raise for each candidate are not problems in the sense that they show certain characterizations of determinate particulars to be outright incorrect. Rather, the problems Hegel and Aristotle raise are problems with the independent intelligibility of each candidate.⁴² Things have quantities, but to understand what it is to have a quantity, it does not suffice to understand measurement alone. Substances underlie -- but what is it that underlies? And what is it *to*

underlie? If we want to understand *Sein*, Hegel finds, we must understand *Wesen*; if we want to understand *hypokeimena*, says Aristotle, we must investigate *to ti ēn einai*.⁴³

Works cited

- Burnyeat, Myles. *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*. Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 2001.
- Bostock, David. *Aristotle. Metaphysics. Books Z and H*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Code, Alan. "On the Origin of Some Aristotelian Theses About Predication." In *How Things Are: Studies in Predication and the History of Philosophy and Science*, edited by James Bogen and James E. McGuire, 101–31. Dordrecht: Springer, 1984.
- Dangel, Tobias. *Hegel und die Geistmetaphysik des Aristoteles*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013.
- Ferrarin, Alfredo. *Hegel and Aristotle*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Gill, Mary Louise. *Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Hartmann, Klaus. *Hegels Logik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- Hartmann, Nicolai. *Aristoteles und Hegel*. Erfurt: Verlag Kurt Stenger, 1933.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *The Science of Logic*. Translated by George di Giovanni. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Werke in 20 Bänden*. Edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by Friedrich Hogemann and Walter Jaeschke. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968.
- Jaeger, Werner. *Aristotelis. Metaphysica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.
- Kern, Walter. "Die Aristotelesdeutung Hegels." *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 78, no. 2 (1971): 237–59.

- Lewis, Frank. *How Aristotle Gets By in Metaphysics Zeta*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Loux, Michael J. *Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H*. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Mure, G. R. G. *A Study of Hegel's Logic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.
- Owen, G. E. L. "The Platonism of Aristotle." In *Articles on Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield and Richard Sorabji, 14–34. London: Duckworth, 1975.
- Santoro-Brienza, Liberato. "Aristotle and Hegel on Nature: Some Similarities." *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 26, no. 2 (1992): 13–29.
- Schofield, Malcolm. "Metaph. Z 3: some suggestions." *Phronesis* 17, no. 2 (1978): 97–101.
- Sellars, Wilfrid. "Aristotle's Metaphysics: An Interpretation." In *Philosophical Perspectives: History of Philosophy*, 73–124. Atascadero, California: Ridgeview, 1967.
- Stahl, Donald. "Stripped Away: Some contemporary obscurities surrounding Metaphysics Z 3 (1029a10-26)." *Phronesis* 26, no. 2 (1981): 177–180.
- Theunissen, Michael. *Sein und Schein: die Kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978.

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21.5. Henceforth cited as SL. German quotations follow the text of G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).

² SL, 9; *Werke* 5: 16.

³ SL, 42; *Werke* 5: 61.

⁴ SL, 14; *Werke* 5: 22. My translation.

⁵ Klaus Hartmann asserts rather bluntly that even though one can “read Hegel’s insights back into Aristotle”, Aristotle’s concept of essence lacked the intricacies that Hegel wished to capture with his concept of *Wesen*. See Klaus Hartmann, *Hegels Logik* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 166.

⁶ See Walter Kern, “Die Aristotelesdeutung Hegels,” *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 78, no. 2 (1971): 237–59, esp. 243–248, for a dated, but thorough, review of literature on Hegel’s interpretation of Aristotle. Kern himself also focuses on Hegel’s reading of *De Anima*. The trend seems to have continued in more recent decades. Tobias Dangel, *Hegel und die Geistmetaphysik des Aristoteles* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), treats Hegel’s reception of Aristotelian metaphysics, but focuses on how Hegel’s metaphysics of spirit takes up Aristotle’s concept of *nous*. He has less to say about how Hegel engages with Aristotle’s concepts of substance and essence as treated in the core books of the *Metaphysics*. Alfredo Ferrarin, 2001, *Hegel and Aristotle*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 2001), likewise spends more time on Aristotle’s psychology, and although his book contains a considerable discussion of “the Aristotelian Heritage in the *Science of Logic*” (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, 129–148), he still maintains that “we find no extensive reference to, let alone a discussion of, Aristotle in the Logic of Essence” (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, 189). Like K. Hartmann, *Hegels Logik*, 166, he attributes this to the fixity and stability of Aristotle’s conception of essence which Hegel apparently sought to undermine (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, 192).

⁷ SL, 59; *Werke* 5: 82.

⁸ SL, 302; *Werke* 5: 412.

⁹ SL, 326; *Werke* 5: 445. Translation modified.

¹⁰ SL 326; *Werke* 5: 446. Translation modified.

¹¹ See, for example, SL 399; *Werke* 6: 99, SL 403; *Werke* 6: 102–103, SL 429–30; *Werke* 6: 137–138, SL 503–505; *Werke* 6: 237–240.

¹² English quotations are from the translation of David Bostock, *Aristotle. Metaphysics. Books Z and H* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). For the Greek text I have used Werner Jaeger, *Aristotelis. Metaphysica*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

¹³ *Metaphysics* 1028b32.

¹⁴ *Metaphysics* 1028b34–35.

¹⁵ *Metaphysics* 1029b36–37.

¹⁶ *Metaphysics* 1029a10–19. Translation modified.

¹⁷ For example, Myles Burnyeat, *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta* (Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 2001), 15.

¹⁸ *Metaphysics* 1029b36–37.

¹⁹ *Metaphysics* 1029a20–22. For our purposes, we can leave aside the two interpretative issues usually raised in connection with this passage: Whether Aristotle is discussing his own conception of matter here, and whether this is well described as “prime” matter. On the former, see Frank Lewis, *How Aristotle Gets By in Metaphysics Zeta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 43–59. Some important questions about whether the latter debate is productive are raised in Donald Stahl, “Stripped Away: Some contemporary obscurities surrounding *Metaphysics Z* 3 (1029a10-26),” *Phronesis* 26, no. 2 (1981): 177–180.

²⁰ See *Metaphysics* 1029a27.

²¹ *Metaphysics* 1036a8.

²² See *Metaphysics* 1029a4, 1034a5–8.

²³ See Wilfrid Sellars, “Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: An Interpretation,” in *Philosophical Perspectives: History of Philosophy*, (Atascadero, California: Ridgeview, 1967), 73–124.

²⁴ Note Aristotle’s use of the verb *horidzesthai* at 1029a18 and 21. Malcolm Schofield suggests “made determinate” as a possible translation for the former occurrence, and we can carry over his suggestion to the latter occurrence as well. See Malcolm Schofield, “Metaph. Z 3: some suggestions,” *Phronesis* 17, no. 2 (1978): 98–101.

²⁵ SL 320–321; *Werke* 5: 438–440.

²⁶ SL 321; *Werke* 5: 440.

²⁷ SL, 337; *Werke* 6: 16.

²⁸ Hegel makes a similar point when he describes essence in its initial guise as the “*caput mortuum* of abstraction” in a remark on §112 of the *Encyclopedia* logic. On this, see G. R. G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel’s Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 80–81.

²⁹ Cf. G.E.L. Owen, “The Platonism of Aristotle,” in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield and Richard Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1975), 22–23. The background is the account of change as the departure or perishing of particular abstract *quales* (hots, colds, larges, smalls) in the *Phaedo* (102–106). Robert Pippin has suggested this to me as a possible shared origin for Aristotle’s and Hegel’s thinking about the stripping argument. On this, see also Michael Theunissen, *Sein und Schein: die Kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 322.

³⁰ Cf. Michael J. Loux, *Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 61–64.

³¹ SL, 341; *Werke* 6: 18.

³² SL, 341; *Werke* 6: 18. Translation modified.

³³ SL, 341–342; *Werke* 6: 18–19.

³⁴ SL 342; *Werke* 6: 18. My translation. Hegel's emphasis.

³⁵ Owen, "Platonism of Aristotle", 22–23.

³⁶ Alan Code, "On the Origin of Some Aristotelian Theses About Predication," in *How Things Are: Studies in Predication and the History of Philosophy and Science*, ed. James Bogen and James E. McGuire (Dordrecht: Springer, 1984), 101–31.

³⁷ Owen, "Platonism of Aristotle", 23.

³⁸ *Metaphysics* 1031a15–16.

³⁹ On this, see Code, "Some Aristotelian Theses", 50.

⁴⁰ One of the best studies to consider how deep the differences between Hegel and Aristotle run is still Nicolai Hartmann, *Aristoteles und Hegel* (Erfurt: Verlag Kurt Stenger, 1933). N. Hartmann finds in Aristotle's empiricism the "genuinely Hegelian thesis [*echt Hegelsche These*]" that universals are immanent in particulars (N. Hartmann, *Aristoteles*, 6), and also considers the relationship of logic to metaphysics in both thinkers (see N. Hartmann, *Aristoteles*, 17ff.).

⁴¹ See N. Hartmann, *Aristoteles*, especially 7–9, also on the relationship of Aristotle's method of *aporia* to Hegel's philosophical method. See also Liberato Santoro-Brienza, "Aristotle and Hegel on Nature: Some Similarities," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 26, no. 2 (1992):

13–29, on the ways that Aristotle’s engagement with his predecessors prefigures Hegel’s dialectical method.

⁴² A similar conclusion is reached by Mary Louise Gill, *Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 18–19.

⁴³ I would like to thank Robert Pippin, Anton Friedrich Koch, Hannah McKeown and the audience at the 2016 Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America for feedback on earlier drafts that led to important clarifications and improvements.