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Hegel's Strategy

Hegel's Critique of Kant's Category of Causality

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Abstract

According to the Kantian *Critique of the Teleological Judgment*, teleology is opposed to the principle of mechanism. However, it is controversial whether the category of causality, deduced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, could be identified with the principle of mechanism. On the contrary, Hegel's *Science of Logic* establishes a dialectical connection between causality and mechanism, within the last part of the "Doctrine of Essence" dealing with substantiality. In this paper I will argue that Hegel's strategy is opposed to Kant's theory not so much because Hegel would have argued the ontological status of causality, as because he found a connection between causality and the mechanical process involved in the arise of the Concept.

I will proceed as follows: first, I will briefly resume the Kantian difference between causality and mechanism. Then, I will reconstruct Hegel's treatment of causality and mechanism in the "Doctrine of Essence" focusing on their theoretical meaning. I will also refer to Hegel's treatment of mechanism in the second part of the *Science of Logic* within the section dealing with Objectivity. Lastly, I will conclude by considering the relevance of mechanism in Hegel's theory of intelligence, which latter makes Hegel's philosophy particularly significant.

Keywords

Causality, mechanism, teleology, reciprocity, self-consciousness, recognition

§1. In §65 of the *Critique of the Teleological Judgment* Kant contrasts two kinds of causal connections. He says that causal connection is linear when a series of cause and effect is always descending, whereas a causal connection is cyclic when the parts of an organism are combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and the effect of their form. The last one characterizes the organism as "self-organizing being". According to Kant, linear causality is precisely an effective causality (*nexus effectivus*) and cyclic coincides with purposiveness (*nexus finalis*). Purposiveness is opposed to effective causality, as it implies that something is comprehended under the concept or an Idea which must determine a priori all that is to be con-

tained in it. Then, purposiveness provides understanding with a regulative use, but it cannot ground any knowledge of empirical objects. By contrast, effective causality is a category of understanding that requires the relation of succession between objects of experience, that is, it implies that something A be such that something else B follows from it necessarily and in accordance with an absolutely universal rule.

Kant's main argument concerning causality is located in the Second and Third Analogy of Experience in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant argues that, to have knowledge of objective succession, the object's states must be subject to a rule that determines them as successive. To have knowledge of the successive states of an object, the object's successive states must be dependent on a cause, that is, must stand under a causal rule. The Analogy assumes that neither intuition nor imagination provide knowledge of temporal relations, but that a category of understanding (causality and mutual interaction) is required to establish the necessity for knowledge of objective temporal relations.

According to Friedman (1992), causality is not simply committed to a rule, but to causal law. In this sense, the possibility of particular causal law is somehow grounded on the transcendental principle: «Empirical laws that somehow fall under these transcendental principles are then necessary and a priori in a derivative sense»¹. Instead, Watkins (2005) correctly points out the distinction between “rule” and “law” in the text of the Second Analogy, thereby he argues that Kant's idea is simply that any determination (and therefore successive determinations as well) requires a ground to posit it, otherwise the object in question will be indeterminate in that respect². The same sort of idea was present in the Third Analogy as well. Since the simultaneity of states of two substances is not immediately given along with the mere existence of substances, mutual interaction is required to ground that relation. In other words, causality does not serve the purpose of interconnecting substances into a whole, as purposiveness does, because causality provides above all the necessity for knowledge of objective succession.

Consequently, the Second Analogy is committed to the idea that a cause brings about its effect when an immutable ground on a substance determines the successive states of (another) substance³. In order to avoid the infinite regress of causality there must be a permanent substance, which cannot be altered. This means that substance cannot change in itself, since it cannot be active and passive towards itself in one and the same respect. Hence, the mutual interaction established in the Third Analogy seems to hold only for spatial substances (second edition of Third Analogy)

1. FRIEDMAN (1992: 174)

2. WATKINS (2005: 215)

3. KANT (1965) A 205/ A 206.

From this necessarily brief reconstruction one might draw the following conclusions: (1) the principle of causality is not the same as the principle of mechanism. Mechanism applies only to the activities and powers of nonliving, non thinking beings, whereas causality, as a transcendental rule, applies to all appearances, without distinctions⁴. (2) The difference between causality and purposiveness does not lie in the mechanical conditions to which the former could be applied, but, more properly, in the ontological model underlying them. Whereas causality entails the asymmetrical succession between the principle of change and the effect, purposiveness points out the symmetrical inter-dependence of every part from the whole. More importantly, causality entails a substance that cannot act upon itself, whereas purposiveness points out organisms' self-activity.

§ 2. Contrary to Kant, Hegel establishes a dialectical connection between mechanism and causality in the *Science of Logic* (hereafter: SL). He does not conceive mechanism and teleology as two separate uses of understanding, but as different spheres of objectivity that are closely related. I will argue that Hegel's strategy is that of unifying causality, mechanism and teleology insofar as they underly a unitary theoretical structure. Hegel's claim contrasts Kant's theory because (1) Hegel provides causal activity with substance's self-determination; (2) he maintains that mechanism belongs to the structure of thinking's existence. I will proceed by clarifying the role of causality in first part of the SL, then I will point out Hegel's use of mechanism in the second part of the SL.

Within the "Doctrine of Essence" causality identifies the activity of substance over against its accidents. Substantiality is the most encompassing ontological category and causality is the way substance distinguishes itself from its accidents. From the very beginning of this section Hegel stresses that «substance as power determines itself» (SL: 558). Hence, substance is capable of change, contrary to Kant's view, and the causal activity of substance is the way substance explicates itself through the effect. Here it is worth to notice that Hegel's notion of substance shares some similarities with Fichte's explanation of the transcendental Ego in the *Doctrine of Knowledge* (first edition), since both intend substance as an activity of the form. However, there is an important difference between Hegel and Fichte. According to Fichte the concept of causality is not grounded on substantiality, otherwise there would be a substrate in relation to which the incoming change would be posited in time⁵. Hence, Fichte conceives substance as the totality of all possible activities posited by the Self.

On the contrary, the Hegelian logical determination is not a synthesis provided by the Self. Each category is deduced from an abstract and inde-

4. See also NUZZO (2005: 343-345)

5. FICHTE (1982: 165)

terminate totality, which is gradually distinguished from its indeterminacy up to the Concept. In such a context the concept of the Self should be deduced instead of being presupposed from the very beginning. Therefore, Hegel conceives the transition from substance to subjectivity a fundamental passage mediated by causality. In this way the ontological substrate provided by substance is grounded and replaced by the absolute activity of the concept. The Concept is deduced as the grounding principle of the entire objective logic, which latter represents the objectivity of understanding.

This is an important remark, which is not so much elicited in the SL as in the *Encyclopaedia*. In §113 of the last edition of *Encyclopaedia*⁶ Hegel added that understanding replaces sensibility within essence, hence admitting that the transition from being to essence is the same as the progress from thought's dispersion to analytical understanding. Hegel aims is to deduce the pure use of understanding by explicating within essence its logical categories. In the modern tradition causality is a finite relation referring to the alterations of substance as well as to the interaction between substances. Hegel argues that this meaning of causality as external relation is the objectivity of finite understanding, which is not able to ground itself, since it is exclusively ruled by the law of non-contradiction. As a consequence, essential categories are deduced from their reciprocal opposition, but they cannot establish any principle of determination within themselves. The same difficulty surrounds the notion of causality, which is the most encompassing category deduced within the Objective Logic. Then, how can understanding be replaced by the Concept?

Hegel's issue is to deduce causality as substance's activity upon itself and not simply as a posited relation between substances or within substance and its accidents. The former implies a continuous and pure self-activity, whereas the latter entails a discrete change or external relation. The transition from external relation to substance's activity is the same as reason and it is fundamentally based on causality. This entails that (1) causality does not belong to an ontology of objects independent from the transcendental ratio that justifies it. On the contrary the objectivity of causality is absolutely grounded on the pure subjectivity of reason. Thereby Hegel's issue is to (2) reveal the inability of understanding to give causality its absolute foundation. More specifically, the Hegelian strategy reveals the limits of causality by demonstrating mechanism as its necessary consequence. This is the reason why Hegel investigates the meaning of causality through its different logical determinations, such as formal causality, determinate causality, conditioned causality and reciprocity. The inconsistencies deriving from an intellectual treatment of causality lead to a different order of explanation.

It is important to highlight that Hegel does not deal with the different

6. HEGEL (2010b : 176)

uses of causality (practical or physical), but rather with the meaning of causality as such. The question he asks is: what does it mean, for a cause, to exercise a causal activity? From this point of view it does not matter whether causality is applied to moral or physical field, but whether the structure of causality can be absolutely identified in itself.

Hegel proceeds by proving the inconsistency of formal causality. Formal causality a tautology⁷, because cause and effect are only distinct from a particular point of view. A cause only becomes a cause when it has an effect, hence the two apparently opposing terms reverse their roles. The effect is the cause of the cause, and the cause is the effect of its own effect. By formal causality one understands that something derives as an effect from something else, which must be the cause, but this does not explain what is the causal activity in itself. As a result, formal causality is replaced by determinate causality, which points out the meaning of causal action as change.

Determinate causality focuses on the transition from cause to effect as a becoming-other of the cause. At the same time, causality is the subsistence of the relation between passive and active substances. Thereby, causality turns into action-reaction relation that corresponds to the structure of mechanism⁸. The point is that causality is no longer a determination of substance, but rather causality and substance are equally originaive, for causality identifies a power to act upon its other and not the formal relation between two objects, one of them follows the other. In Hegel's view, causality becomes conditioned once it generates an asymmetry between active and passive side within substance, and this is exactly action-reaction relation.

Mechanical interaction provides substance with the necessary unity between active and passive substance, because here passive and active are reciprocally conditioned. Therefore, the action is bent round and becomes an action that returns into itself, an infinite reciprocal action. It is not substance that acts over against its other, but rather it is substance that becomes cause as a reaction to its being posited as an effect. The point here is that causality is no longer a presupposition, but rather the actualization of substance.

Notice the shift of the argument: we started by considering causality as a formal succession relation between substances and then as power to act. Now the deduction of causality reveals that its is fundamentally substance's actuality. This entails that the meaning of causality does not rely on the distinction between law and rule, but rather in the activity of substance as

7. SL: 561.

8. SL: 569: «*Mechanism* consists in this *externality* of causality, where the *reflection* of the cause *into itself* in its effect is at the same time a repelling *being*, or where, in the *self-identity* which the causal substance has in its effect, the cause equally remains something immediately *external* to it, and the effect has *passed over* into *another substance*».

self-conditioning power. Reciprocity is the key-structure leading to such upshot. Here again the reader gets reminded of the Third Proposition of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*, wherein the notion of reciprocity is closely related to the development of theoretic reason. The third proposition of the *Science of Knowledge* states the determination of the Self through the Not-Self, in such a way that the ego limits the non-ego. Fichte adopts reciprocity to explain the synthetic unity by which both ego and not-ego acquire reality. Hegel himself states in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* that Fichte's treatment of objective categories is the first rational attempt that has ever been made to deduce categories⁹. However, Hegel's treatment of reciprocity differs notably from Fichte's theory insofar as Hegel is not committed to the idea of synthesis. Contrary to Fichte, Hegel does not adopt the point of view of the Self in order to deduce categories, therefore reciprocity does not display any interaction between the ego and the not-ego. In Hegel's view, reciprocity is substance's reflection within itself, so that substance displays the structure of the subject by being the cause of itself.

Reciprocity removes mechanism precisely because the posited effect does not pass over into another substance, but it is reflected within the same substance. Hence, the meaning of causal activity is the self-relation of substance: «the mutual opacity of the substances standing in the causal relationship has vanished and become a self-transparent clarity (...); the original substance is original in that it is only the cause of itself, and this is substance raised to the freedom of the Notion»¹⁰. This means that substance liberates itself, because, insofar it is self-conditioning, its process becomes independent even from a posited cause. Substance reproduces itself spontaneously, turning difference into free actuality in such a manner that it reaches its own "originativeness"¹¹. Essential causality is now explicated as an appearance, because it displays only external relations, which presuppose a substance lying before them as substrate. The limit of understanding is precisely that of reducing reality into a series of external relations, such as matter and form, whole and parts, cause and effect without pointing out that these categories are thought's determinations. Therefore, causality as such, considered in its isolation from concept's self-activity, cannot be absolutely distinguished from mechanism. Hegel's issue is that understanding is able to justify only the appearance of objectivity, but it cannot ground its own activity, because understanding does not recognize its own entanglement in reality. Once causality is deduced as the capacity of substance to be the cause of itself, understanding is replaced by the Concept. The difference between external causality and the Concept

9. HEGEL (1990: 234)

10. SL: 582

11. On the meaning of *originativeness* as final causality with relation to the aristotelian notion of *aitia*, see FERRARIN (2001: 209-220).

lies in the unity provided by the Concept. This latter is the measure of reality precisely because it is the principle of determination of the totality to which categories belong. Therefore, categories are no longer external to each other, but reciprocally related and mechanism is not absolutely actual, because the Concept is the measure of its truth.

This is the reason why the deduction of the Concept in the SL explicitly mirrors the pure I-think of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Hegel himself states that the Concept is the structure of the pure unity of self-consciousness. Therefore, causality is nothing but understanding's self-consciousness. It means that understanding has to condition itself in order to recognize its own entanglement in categories. According to this point of view, all previous ontological determinations are finally ordered in relation to the self-activity of the Concept.

More specifically, by the Concept Hegel intends the retrospective structure that, on the one hand, unifies the entire ontological process from being to substance and, on the other hand, maintains itself as persistent ground of the universal process developed into the Subjective Logic. Hence, the difference between understanding and reason lies in the fact that only reason unifies ontological categories in a single totality, the Concept. However, the Concept is the totality that contains the principle of determinations of objectivity, that is, it provides finite being with its ultimate justification, but it is not committed to the structure of an organism. The latter is the structure of life deduced in the Logic of the Concept or Subjective Logic. Like Kant, Hegel does not relate causality to the idea of a self-organizing whole. But, contrary to Kant, the Hegelian issue is that causality cannot be intended a transcendental rule of temporal succession. By causality thinking recognizes its own entanglement in reality, without producing it. If the Concept had been understood from its very beginning as a self-organizing whole, then there would have been no difference between the pure Concept and an absolute conscience, which latter leads directly to subjective monism. On the contrary Hegel's deduction of the Concept mirrors the Kantian I-think insofar as it is the principle that causally reveals itself to itself. At stake is the recognition of thinking's universality and not thinking's self-generation. Certainly, this point of view entails a radical shift of explanation of Kantian I-think, upon which I cannot here expand. However, it is remarkable how Hegel connects the law of causality to pure consciousness by passing through mechanism.

So far I have tried to outline Hegel's concept of causality within the Objective Logic, but this is not the end of the story. The Subjective Logic displays causality and mechanism as well, therefore, in order to further inquiry Hegelian strategy, one must still consider the use of mechanism in the Subjective Logic.

§ 3. The movement of the Logic of the Concept is radically different from the Objective Logic, because the first part of the SL aims to make the structure of the Concept explicit, whereas the second part lies in the process of unfolding (*Entwicklung*) the Concept as universality. At a first sight it seems that causality does not play any role within the Subjective Logic. However, causality is not absolutely removed, for it appears again into reason's explication as mechanism, as Hegel himself claims¹². Action-reaction and mechanism differ by degree and not by form. Whereas action-reaction is a reflective relation, mechanism entails the absence of communication between objects and law. Both rely on the absence of communication, as they are devoid of any conscious activity.

It seems that for Hegel causality is twofolds: on one hand, it displays thinking's alienation into objectivity, thereby leading to mechanism; on the other hand, it belongs to the structure of reason as such, therefore it cannot be absolutely sublated. As causality belongs to the structure of Concept's self-relation, the duality between thinking and its otherness is reproduced into objectivity as dichotomy between reason and objects. This also means that mechanism, both as causality and objective existence, is closely related to thinking's logical manifestation. It does not simply represent necessity over against freedom, but it is a sort of inner constraint belonging to the structure of thinking. On the one hand, mechanism seems to crystallize categories into passive and active substances and concept's universality into a plurality of objects, on the other hand, mechanism reactivates thought. But what kind of crystallization is mechanism?

I would say that mechanism is the structure of thinking's pure existence, which latter qualifies the coming-to-be of thought in opposition to sheer immediacy. Existence implies the relation to otherness as condition of determination, therefore, it is closely related to the idea of actuality. Logical thinking has to demonstrate its reality by confronting with its absolute being-other-from-itself and mechanism is precisely the structure that maintains thinking in this duality.

More specifically, mechanical objects are supposed to be determined by the law, so they have to satisfy law's conditions and they strive towards it. However, the law has already played a crucial role in constituting anything determined as objective. Therefore, the original striving of the self-subsistent object is replaced by the mutual opposition between law and object. Hegel's intent is to stress that there can be no purely given "objectivity" and that one must inquire the mutual interaction between law and object in order to justify mechanism. The liberation from mechanical necessity consists in revealing the interconnection between law and object as conceptual determination, so that they are no longer external and opposite, but reciprocally related.

12. (SL: 715)

Here, one can notice that reciprocity is the key structure to escape, once again, from mechanical polarization. The lack of self-subsistence of the object «is in this way no longer merely a striving towards the centre (...); on the contrary, it is a striving towards the object specifically opposed to it. (...) Centrality is, therefore, now a relation of these reciprocally negative objectivities in a state of mutual tension»¹³. The transition from mechanism to chemism can be explained as a change of direction of the logical movement. First, there is the striving towards the centre, which means that objects, as self-subsistent entities, are posited in relation to the law. Then, the striving reaches neutrality through chemism, wherein objects are posited in mutual interaction. The distinctive self-subsistence of objectivity is restored as unity through teleology. Although Hegel contrasts teleology and causality, it is worth to notice that they are not really opposite:

In every transition the Concept maintains itself; for example, when cause becomes effect it is only the cause meeting with itself in the effect; but in the teleological transition it is the Notion that as such already has a concrete existence as cause, as the absolute concrete unity that is free in the face of objectivity and its external determinability.

Whereas causality mediates the arise of the Concept, teleology is the Concept as concrete causality, which explicates itself or that externalizes itself¹⁴. This same externalization includes mechanism as one of the moments belonging to conceptual objectivity. Therefore, teleology is not completely other from causality. On the contrary, Hegel explicitly defines teleology as concrete causality, because it is the totality of objectivity, which has an immanent principle of determination. Teleology replaces causality because it identifies the structure by means of which reason is conscious of itself in its other.

Therefore, causality and teleology do not belong to different uses of understanding, as they point out, once again, the theoretical transition from reason's self-alienation to reason's self-recognition. Hegel cannot admit any gap between causality and teleology because they underlie the process of thinking's existence. The self-relation achieved by thought through mechanism reveals the existence of pure thought, which is not conditioned by any externality, as it is the unity of itself and its other. Hence, mechanism is never left behind and it is constantly involved in logic as the emerging and self-revealing structure of thinking's self-relation. Consequently, Hegel's strategy lies not so much in claiming the ontological commitment of Kantian teleology, but rather in giving pure thought its own self-consciousness.

13. SL: 726.

14. See also DAHLSTROM (2008).

§ 4. As a conclusion, I wish to remark further why a mechanical feature always lies at the core of conceptual activity. Hegel himself introduces mechanism in the Subjective Logic as a general character:

This is what constitutes the character of mechanism, namely, that whatever relation obtains between the things combined, this relation is one extraneous to them that does not concern their nature at all, and even if it is accompanied by a semblance of unity it remains nothing more than composition, mixture, aggregation and the like. Spiritual mechanism also, like material, consists in this, that the things related in the spirit remain external to one another and to spirit itself. A mechanical style of thinking [*Vorstellungsweise*], a mechanical memory, habit, a mechanical way of acting [*Handlungsweise*], signify that the peculiar pervasion and presence of spirit is lacking in what spirit apprehends or does. Although its theoretical or practical mechanism cannot take place without its self-activity [*Selbsttätigkeit*], without an impulse and consciousness, yet there is lacking in it the freedom of individuality, and because this freedom is not manifest in it such action appears as a merely external one¹⁵.

Mechanism means the lack of essential connection both in theoretical and ontological field. As the relation between objects is a mere aggregation, when it is devoid of a principle of constitution, in the same way a mechanical *Vorstellungsweise* needs self-consciousness in order to transform habit into a complete and free self-activity. But «the presence of spirit» usually lacking in mechanism is not achieved by introducing a conscious agent, but rather by extending to the greatest extent thinking's natural passivity. However, the truth does not consist in asserting the limit of mechanism and leaving it behind, because the activity of reason lies precisely in the constant process of actualizing itself through understanding and objectivity. Mechanism does not provide any complete or satisfactory account of reality, anyway it is only by means of it that thought is able to manifest itself as the same as being.

One can notice that the deduction of the Concept in the SL shares a similarity with the arise of thinking in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. Within Psychology mechanical memory plays a crucial role in determining intelligence's development from imagination and representations up to thinking and logic. More specifically, intelligence must undergo its own self-alienation through language and memory before explicating itself as thinking. Remarkable is the fact that the psychological path leading to thinking and logic is described as a teleological process¹⁶, as if intelligence

15. SL: 711.

16. See also INWOOD (2010: 460).

strived in order to achieve the purest knowledge of itself as concept.

For the sake of brevity, I will focus on the highest moment achieved by intelligence through memory. It is when intelligence, by filling itself with the word, «receives into itself the nature of the thing. (...) Intelligence thereby makes itself into something thingly, in such a way that subjectivity, in its distinction from the thing, becomes quite empty, a mindless container of words, it becomes mechanical memory»¹⁷. Hegel adds that «in this way the excess of recollection of the word veers round, so to speak, into extreme alienation of the intelligence». The last passage of the quote is particularly interesting, because it allows to think of an excess of recollection. What does it mean an «excess of recollection»? The filling of intelligence with the name and the way intelligence makes itself thingly is an excess of recollection, because there is no more duality between meaning and language. As a consequence, intelligence does not reflect upon the signs and the determinacy of being outside is the same as the inward determinacy of meaning. This is the reason why mechanical memory represents an empty subjectivity and a petrified objectivity. Mechanism lies precisely in a mindless state, in the absence of consciousness, so that words are spoken and meanings conveyed by simply recollecting them.

It is remarkable that Hegel intends mechanical memory as an empty connection between subjectivity and objectivity. More specifically, subjectivity is defined as «the empty bond which establishes within itself series of them [of the names] and keeps them in a stable order». In all the three editions of *Encyclopedia* Hegel defines the connection between intelligence and language a succession of names (series), although he never commits himself to the treatment of syntax, which latter might provide the series with a proper meaning. Indeed, it is only in virtue of a syntactical order that language can be meaningfully ordered. But Hegel also seems to argue that a meaningful order can be established by the causal self-determination of intelligence through memory. As successive order is the distinctive character of causal action, mechanical memory is the power (*Macht*) to condition intelligence and to make it objective through linguistic signs. We memorise series of words, whose sequence involves no intelligible principle, and then we are able speak/think/write by using the same principles to convey different meanings. The issue is not so much that syntax is necessary for meaning, as that not-sensible principles comes into existence in virtue of mnemonic causality. In other words, Hegel aims to point out the structure of thought by means of which we are able to convey meaning. This structure is strongly related to the actualization of a not-reflective and internalized mechanism. The causal action exercised by intelligence upon itself is the way intelligence actualizes itself «in its right mind (*bei sich selbst zu sein*)». At the same time, by the very act of causally determining itself, in-

17. HEGEL (2010: 200).

telligence externalizes itself, thereby providing the transition to thinking.

From this point of view, both logic and psychology share mechanism as a fundamental structure mediating the development of thinking. It is then tempting to conceive causality and mechanism as transversal concepts, like crossing-concept – models that underlie thinking's alienation in each and every manifestation of thought. The structure of causality entails both thinking's alienation – mechanism – and thinking's self-recognition. On the one hand, this model is intended to contrast Kant's theory of causality with the metaphysical notion of causality as *causa sui*. On the other hand, Hegelian model entails passivity and absence of thought as necessary moment of thought's activity.

Mechanical causality is then necessary to awake- so to say- thought from its natural passivity. One might ask if every mechanism leads to thinking and conscious activity. It is not that every kind of mechanism leads to thinking, but that every mechanism entails the absence of conscious reason. As a result, thought is never immediately given and requires a specific pattern of retrospective recognition. The structure of this recognition is the restoration of causality as self-activity, but there is no necessity leading to such an acknowledgement. Although the Logic displays the clarity of pure thought, this is not a rule for subjective thinking. This is the reason why, within psychology, conscious thinking and logic are not immediately given, but require a further effort by intelligence.

In other words, Hegel's philosophy compels us to investigate the structure of thought through its different manifestations, without assuming ontology or psychology as given paradigms. On the contrary, it is possible to inquire the structure of thought within the Hegelian system from different points of view, without assuming neither logic nor psychology as absolutely prior. This is the reason why the Hegelian philosophy could provide many suggestions to a research focused on an ecological model of mind. According to Hegel concept is defined not just in terms of exemplary states and their features or properties, but also by the relational structures of these properties, and their capacity to change under different contexts. This might open up new investigations I cannot certainly here expose, but only suggest as a conclusion.

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