

Mark Meaney's Capital as Organic Unity: The role of Hegel's "Science of Logic" in Marx's "Grundrisse"

In his PhD thesis published in 1991, Mark Meaney claimed that the Introduction to the *Grundrisse* is a critique of Hegel, but the rest of the *Grundrisse* closely follows the logic and text of the *Science of Logic*. After a brief consideration of the Introduction, he matches one-to-one the entire text of the *Grundrisse* to corresponding passages in the *Science of Logic*, paragraph by paragraph, in the same order in which they appear in the *Logic*. We know that Marx was reading the *Science of Logic* at the time and his matching with the *Grundrisse* is more extensive than that identified by Uchida's book, published in 1988, in which Uchida used the *Shorter Logic*. The two writers also disagree somewhat on the way the correspondence plays out.

The *Logic* has three books: the Doctrine of Being (the Immediate), the Doctrine of Essence (the Becoming of the Concept), and the Doctrine of the Concept. Because of the antique connotations of the word "Doctrine," these are nowadays often referred to as the Being Logic, the Essence Logic and the Concept Logic. The Concept Logic has three parts, the Subjective Concept with its three "moments," Universal, Particular and Individual, the Object, and the unity of subject and object in The Idea, followed by an exposition of Cognition and a summary entitled The Absolute Idea.

The *Grundrisse* has an Introduction, a Chapter on Money and a Chapter on Capital, which is divided into three sections (The production of Capital, the Circulation of Capital, and the transformation of Surplus Value into Profit), followed by Miscellany and a note on Value.

Meaney's begins by linking the passage on the One (early on in the Doctrine of Being, following the analysis of Pure Being) to a point early on in the Chapter on Money and continues to map the Chapter on Money to the Doctrine of Being, through to the Measureless, and the "Becoming of Essence" at the end of the Doctrine of Being.

For Meaney, the Chapter on Capital, begins with the "Becoming of Essence", actually the last category of the Doctrine of Being and continues through Reflection, Appearance and Actuality (the three divisions of the Doctrine of Essence).

The section which is entitled "The accumulation of capital," p. 459ff, in the Nicolaus translation of the *Grundrisse* corresponds to the beginning of the Doctrine of the Concept, according to Meaney, and he traces the linkage through the three moments of the Subject and the moments of the Object Mechanism, Chemism and Organism, continuing this latter category to the first section of the Idea – the Living Individual, Life Process, etc. And there ends the exposition. Thus Meaney maps the entire development of the *Logic* from its beginning in Pure Being up to its conclusion in the Life Process.

The final two chapters of the *Science of Logic*, the Idea of Cognition and the Absolute Idea are not connected to the *Grundrisse* by Meaney.

I do not intend to discuss Meaney’s reasoning for how this correspondence between Hegel’s *Logic* and mid-19th century political economy comes about. I will just note a couple of points about the linkages he found.

In my view, beginning from the passage on the One in the *Science of Logic* is significant, and this starting point is preserved in the final draft of *Capital* itself. And there is sense also in finishing with the first division of the Idea, because the final two sections are not part of the immanent critique by means of which Hegel elaborated the preceding passages of the *Science of Logic*. If Marx stopped there, that would make sense because the proper place to respond to these sections would be in the Introduction to the *Grundrisse*, as indicated by Uchida. Marx placed his reflection on method at the beginning, not the end. Meaney does not make any such connection however.

It is interesting to compare Meaney’s mapping of the *Grundrisse* on to the *Science of Logic* with Uchida’s.

I will use a table to illustrate the two similar but different patterns of linkage.

Hegel’s <i>Logic</i>	<i>Grundrisse</i> acc. Meaney	<i>Grundrisse</i> acc. Uchida
Being: from the One to the Measureless	The Chapter on Money	The Chapter on Money
Being: The Becoming of Essence	The Chapter on Capital, I	
Essence: the Moments of Reflection		
Essence: The Doctrine of Essence		
Essence: Actuality		
The Concept: as far as §1 of the Idea.	II. The Circulation of Capital	—
The Concept: §2 of The Idea	—	Introduction

I have no concern with whose mapping is correct. They may both be correct. After all, they are not all that wide apart. But the thing is: both writers claim that Marx was self-consciously “mirroring” the *Logic*, so surely they should be identical?

The point is that the *Logic* is a *logic of enquiry* and there is considerable leeway by which concepts can be useful in one or another domain of human practice. Marx may well have been engaging in some exercise of this kind in 1857, but both writers are deluding themselves if they find any more significance in these correspondences than evidence that Marx engaged in this *exercise*. I think it is wrong to see it as a “first draft” of *Capital*. More likely it was a preparatory exercise.

Please refer to my paper “Reading Hegel’s *Logic*” for an explanation of how Hegel’s *Logic* relates to this and any other domain of human practice.