

I

Why the *Phenomenology of Spirit*?1. The problem of the *Phenomenology*

The 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* is one of Hegel's most read, best known and least understood works. It has an air of mystery about it: at once profound yet obscure, detailed, important but only available to the initiated. It is written in an unmistakable style that identifies it as "Hegelian" both to its admirers and detractors. Even the tales of its creation have a bit of romance to them, with one story having Hegel supposedly writing the final parts on the night that the city in which he is living, Jena, is being shelled by Napoleon's troops in one of the climactic battles of the old regime in Europe. In one of the most celebrated interpretations of the *Phenomenology*, the Russian emigre to France, Alexandre Kojève, interpreted the book as giving philosophical voice to the "end of history" that was being given political voice by Napoleon's soldiers. Hegel himself was in dire straits at the time, having only recently entered academic life and having a job that seemed to be without a future. Had Hegel been hit by the proverbial horse cart at this point in his life, he would have been remembered (if at all) as one of the very minor figures in German idealism, a commentator on Schelling and Fichte. The book was written hurriedly by a fellow who could have easily been taken to be going nowhere in his life. Nonetheless, Hegel turned out a work more or less finished in its first draft that had no predecessors in its genre and (so some would say) also no successors, supposedly (as yet another story has it) fleeing with some of the pages in his pocket as Napoleon's troops entered the city.

There is even a dispute among Hegel's readers as to where the *Phenomenology* is supposed to fit within the overall architecture of Hegel's own thought. Hegel did not even originally give the book the title by which it has become famous. Its original title was the *Science of the Experience of Consciousness*, but Hegel changed his mind and renamed it the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was to be the "First Part of a System of Science." (Apparently he changed his mind during the negotiations with the printer, who, confused by the whole mess, printed both the old and the new titles on the cover pages of the first printing, so that some copies of the first edition were called the *System of Science. Part One: Phenomenology of Spirit*.) Moreover, Hegel did not leave us any completely clear indications about what role he thought the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was supposed to play in his later system. It is evident that he did not completely abandon the work; he continued, for example, to give friends copies of the book, and he continued to refer to it in his lectures

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and in his published work. Yet he did not offer lectures on it, and on a first glance at the structure of his overall later "system," it is hard for the Hegelian student to find a clear place in the "system" where it *could* fit. He did rework the themes of the opening sections of the Jena *Phenomenology of Spirit* ("Consciousness" and "Self-Consciousness") into a section of the later "Philosophy of Spirit" as a part of the *Encyclopedia* under the title "Phenomenology of Spirit," but the rest of the *Phenomenology* was omitted from that work, and, moreover, the "Phenomenology of Spirit" in the *Encyclopedia* version is only a short preliminary to his overall "Psychology." However, to complicate matters, Hegel was beginning to rework the longer Jena *Phenomenology of Spirit* shortly before his death, presumably for a new edition. What changes he might have made we do not know, although it seems as if he intended to republish it fairly well unchanged.

The *Phenomenology's* obscure style is notorious. One of the first books ever to be written in English on Hegel was James Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel*.¹ A reviewer commented that Stirling had succeeded in keeping the secret, and, for many contemporary readers, the feeling has been that the secret is still intact. It is still difficult to pick up the *Phenomenology* and simply begin reading it, even for a trained academic philosopher who has become thoroughly habituated to the kind of linguistic usage that characterizes much Western philosophy and that non-philosophers often find so puzzling. This initial obscurity of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has invited upon itself various incompatible readings. Go to a university library and check out several works on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; you will find that almost all of them say that the book is about different things. There are myriad readings of the *Phenomenology*, ranging from seeing it as a work of orthodox Christianity to seeing it as a full-scale attack on Christianity. To some, the *Phenomenology* has been taken to be something like a philosophical roller coaster that in certain passages suddenly roars down its tracks at high speed after having slowly rumbled up to certain heights, with no more rhyme or reason for any particular transition than that it struck Hegel that such a transition might be fun or illuminating. Others have seen it as a kind of philosophical *Bildungsroman*, in which the protagonist is something large and metaphysical called *Geist*, or "Spirit." Others have seen it as the work of a youthful revolutionary who gradually and unfortunately changed into a stodgy, officious professor in Berlin extolling the virtues of the Prussian state. Hegel's thought has been praised and blamed for the development of existentialism, communism, fascism, death of God theology, and historicist nihilism. Hegel has also been called the Aristotle of the modern world and the Aquinas of Protestantism. Indeed, given the differing reactions to Hegel, it would be an interesting piece of intellectual history to trace out all the various interpretations of this work (and of Hegel himself) that have surfaced in the world since its publication. It would be a history ranging from idolatry (Hegel as the man who had all the answers) to puzzlement to bewilderment to disgust to outright rejection as a charlatan (typical of the twentieth-century Anglo-American reaction to Hegel).

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In this light, it might seem imprudent to be offering yet another interpretation of this book. (I have been tempted more than once to call this *Yet Another Book on Hegel's Phenomenology*.) Nonetheless, a good case can be made that we are finally in a position to begin assimilating what Hegel has to say to us. In the period after the Second World War, a set of German commentators began crafting an original, precise, and insightful interpretation of the Hegelian texts that can be fairly said to have demolished (one hopes forever) most of the old myths about Hegel. In the period from, roughly 1979 to the present, the seeds of that German debate have begun to flower in the Anglo-American world as a whole host of new interpretations of Hegel have been emerging that have taken that German scholarship (and the intervening French scholarship) in new directions. Moreover, the current situation in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, with the kinds of problems that have come to the fore in analytic philosophy, has perhaps prepared a philosophical audience that is less likely to dismiss Hegel out of hand as antiquated humbug and more likely to look at him with fresh eyes. Even so, there is still widespread doubt that Hegel, at least in his full-blown form and not in some watered-down version, is too much tied in with the antiquated questions of the early nineteenth century to be of more than passing interest to us. The question is: Has Hegel really come back on to the intellectual agenda of contemporary thought? Or is his thought, however original and profound it might be, something that we study not for its insights but only to gain a kind of historical knowledge about how we came to have the problems that we do?²

My objective here is not to offer a commentary or a paraphrase of the book; there are already enough of those. Instead, I offer a reconstruction of Hegel's central theses and the central lines of thought in the *Phenomenology*. Instead of a commentary, I offer a kind of Hegelian analysis of Hegel's text itself. My idea is to pursue Hegel's arguments and to reconstruct them in a way that is both faithful to the text and that brings out what is at stake in Hegel's project and in the particular points he makes. Although my main hope is that this assessment can stand as a self-sufficient exposition on its own and be of independent philosophical value, I hope that this can nonetheless be of use for those who wish to read the *Phenomenology* or do a close study of it (even without being able to consult the German text). After having gone through the *Phenomenology*, I then conclude by relating it to Hegel's mature system, and show how certain developments in the mature system complete the project of the *Phenomenology*.

2. Hegelian preliminaries

What, then, is the *Phenomenology of Spirit* about? Hegel says quite clearly in his "Introduction" to the *Phenomenology* that the work is concerned with the theory of knowledge. In particular, he says that it is concerned with how the kinds of knowledge-claims that we make can be said to match up with the objects that they purport to be about. Thus, one might expect such a work to

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be concerned with problems of the evidence of the senses, induction, whether the justifying evidence for epistemic claims is “internal” or “external” to consciousness, and similar issues. However, the topics covered in the *Phenomenology* instead seem to range over items as varied as issues concerning the formation of character in early modern Europe, Kantian ethics, and the history and philosophy of religion, with there being only a short introductory chapter on what might at least look like epistemology to a modern philosophical reader. Understanding the general goal of the *Phenomenology* therefore requires us to see how Hegel takes the theory of knowledge to be connected with all these other issues.

The task of the theory of knowledge seems to be to offer an account that explains how our knowledge-claims (our ideas, our propositions, our sentences, whatever) could possibly match up with their purported objects. Hegel notes that putting the issue in this way seems to place the problem of skepticism at center stage in two ways. First, the basic issue of such a theory of knowledge would be with whether our knowledge-claims *do* or *can* match up with real things, in which case generalized skepticism – the doubt that our claims might *in general* fail to match up to “real” objects – becomes the main concern of such a theory of knowledge. Answering that kind of skeptic comes to be *the* problem of the theory of knowledge. Second, generalized skepticism is also the *result* of adopting such a view, in that once one understands the problem of knowledge to be that of matching up some “idea” with objects, these “ideas” become the intermediaries between the thinking subject and the world, and the problem thereby naturally arises as to how we could know that the intermediary is not giving us an illusory representation of its object.³ Stated in those terms, it might seem impossible to answer the skeptic unless one therefore finds some kind of self-certifying idea (an idea that carries its own justification on its face, such as the property of being “certain” or being “infallibly known” or being “necessary”) and a self-certifying procedure to move from that self-certifying idea to other non-self-certifying ideas.

Now, there are many candidates for what would count as self-certification (certainty, infallibility, indefeasibility, and so on), and the issue therefore seems to come down to which of these really would be the self-certifying “ground” of all other knowledge. The theory of such a “ground” would be a “science” in the German sense of *Wissenschaft* – that is, a kind of structured theoretical knowledge of some circumscribed domain. Is such a “science” possible? It seems not, for whatever shape this “science” may take, it is but itself only one more claim to knowledge, and it must therefore “ground” itself. There are, moreover, very conflicting claims to knowledge among different types of communities. Some religious types claim to know God with certainty and infallibility in their hearts; other more secular types claim to know the individual items of sense-experience with certainty or infallibility. The latter may claim to reject the former because they do not fit their canons of “scientific procedure” or the “commonly accepted standards” of rationality. The former may reject the latter because they substitute procedures of scientific rationality in places where only the “heart” can rule. Neither side, so it

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seems, produces any real argument to convince the other, since both stances amount to simply taking certain standards or certain projects to be self-evident while rejecting the other side's claims simply because they fail to live up to the standards of their own point of view. Indeed, what each side takes as self-certifying is dependent, so it seems, on other assumptions that are certainly not so self-evident (such as issues concerning secular accounts versus religious accounts). At least from the standpoint of a theory of knowledge that would be a genuine *Wissenschaft*, we need more than the vague assurance that "our side" has really got it right simply because the "other side" has failed to live up to our standards. The other side is, after all, capable of making the same claims.⁴

Since each side in these disputes already makes a variety of assumptions in forming its accounts of knowledge-claims, each of these kinds of theories is, as Hegel puts it, itself only an *appearance* (*Erscheinung*), a historical phenomenon, alongside other claims to knowledge, and, as an "appearance," it can make no intrinsic claim to being true or even better than the others.⁵ Indeed, if we are to take the problem of skepticism seriously, we must see all accounts, including the account we are giving of the other accounts, as "appearances," as merely one more set of claims as to what is real and true that stands alongside a host of other competing claims. An authentic skepticism must therefore be skeptical about itself; it must also take skepticism itself as only an "appearance."

But such a type of skepticism will, of course, seem corrosive, since it appears to offer no way to resolve such issues. How could, for example, the secularist come up with an account that is justifiable to the religious in terms that the religious can accept on their own terms or that give them reasons to change what they count as the "grounds" of belief? Yet, if Hegel is right, only a theory that does exactly that could claim to be an authentic *Wissenschaft*, a well-grounded, structured theoretical account of knowledge and not just a restatement or a refinement of principles that a given community (modern, ancient, religious, secular, whatever) already takes for granted. The task of a theory of knowledge must be to produce some way of evaluating what kinds of reasons for belief (or for action) can count as *authoritative* reasons, and it must be able to show that the reasons it gives for counting those reasons as authoritative reasons are *themselves* authoritative reasons, and it must do this while at the same time regarding all claims, including the ones it itself makes, as being only "appearances."⁶ The theory of knowledge can therefore only adequately define its task if it is able to effectively delineate what it means to take everything as an "appearance" and to understand what it means to be genuinely skeptical.

To look at all such accounts as appearances, Hegel argues, is to look at them (in his words) as "formations (*Gestaltungen*) of consciousness," as forms of life that have come to take certain types of reasons as authoritative for themselves. Reasons appear as authoritative when they appear as mandatory, that is, as *necessary* for the agents for whom they are authoritative. In this way, Hegel continues the Kantian shift away from Cartesian issues about

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certainty (from the kind of hold that *we* have on certain norms) to necessity (the hold that certain norms have *on us*). A "formation of consciousness" in Hegel's sense is composed both of the ways in which a form of life takes certain types of reasons (or, to put it more generally, norms) as authoritative for itself and the ways in which it articulates to itself why it is legitimate for those reasons to count for it as authoritative, non-optional reasons. (A terminological point: In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel quite consistently refers to that set of "grounds" that people take as authoritative as the "essence," or the "absolute essence" of a formation of consciousness; he says of these "essences" that they are the "objects" of a consciousness that assumes that such and such is authoritative for it.) The *Phenomenology*, by and large, examines various "formations of consciousness" in terms of how they take these authoritative standards more or less as "given," as "objects" of consciousness that the participants in that form of life simply "find" in their social worlds ready at hand for them. To look at accounts *as appearances* is therefore to take them at their own word, to see how in their terms they take certain kinds of reasons to be authoritative, and how they attempt to legitimate that authoritativeness for themselves; it is not to *presuppose* that any one account or "appearance" is superior to another.

Since there can be a variety of different "formations of consciousness," it might seem that in taking each one as an appearance, the theory of knowledge is thereby destined from the outset to result in a kind of self-undermining relativism or some kind of pointless self-contradictory avowal that no statement of knowledge can be taken to be true. Taken this way, the attempt to produce an adequate theory of knowledge can, as Hegel puts it, only be seen "as the path of doubt, or, more authentically, as the path of despair."⁷ If an adequate theory of knowledge must also therefore give a non-question-begging account of why it takes *its* own reasons to be *the* authoritative reasons for accepting the account of knowledge that it gives, then it seems not merely to have complicated its task but perhaps to have made it impossible. Those reasons themselves, so it would seem, would also have to be underwritten by other reasons, *ad infinitum*. Moreover, in order even to start, the theory of knowledge surely has to presuppose some kind of standard for counting some kinds of things as evidence, but this kind of methodological restriction seems to say that it can presuppose no such standard at all.⁸ Thus, it seems that such strictures make it impossible to produce any kind of legitimate "science" – *Wissenschaft* – of knowledge at all.

Since we must start somewhere, it seems that we must simply take whatever standards of evaluation we happen to have and subject them to some kind of internal test. Indeed, Hegel recommends this solution as appropriate, given the general question with which modern considerations of the theory of knowledge already begin. That issue has to do with how we match up our "ideas" with the way things are "in themselves." Now it is trivially clear that whenever we attempt to go about doing this, we are always using some standard or another in terms of which we judge that something counts as the way in which things "really are" as opposed to the way they only seem to be.

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Those standards, as Hegel says, are internal to consciousness in the sense that we are always taking things to be such and such in terms of the kinds of reasons that we have come to take as authoritative for ourselves. The major issue for the theory of knowledge must be to examine whether those reasons (or, more neutrally put, those “grounds”) that we *take* as authoritative *really are* authoritative. It must show that what underwrites the “ground-rules” of our reason-giving activities is genuine and legitimate. If nothing else, we can look to see whether these authoritative reasons themselves are *within their own terms* satisfactory, not whether, for example, we find them satisfactory by the standards of another set of terms.⁹ That is, we can examine the reasons that we or anyone else has come to take as authoritative, and we can reflect on whether those reasons can be shown to be adequate at least in terms of the goals that they set for themselves. In this way, perhaps, this kind of corrosive skepticism can become a “self-consummating skepticism.”¹⁰

There are at least two types of doubts we may have about such reasons. We may have doubts about whether those reasons that we *take* as authoritative *really are* authoritative reasons and we may have doubts about whether the *account* that we have given of why they should (or should not) count as authoritative reasons is itself in order. Skepticism arises when either of these kinds of doubts occur; it arises, as Hegel likes to put it, out of the *negativity* of self-consciousness. The “negativity” of an account is its capacity to generate a self-undermining skepticism about itself when it is reflected upon within the terms that it sets for itself. The *negation* of an account, in Hegel’s language, is always that set of self-undermining considerations that arise from within an account’s own terms, and, for that reason, negation is always *determinate* negation, the *specific* set of self-undermining objections that come out of such accounts.¹¹ This kind of “negativity” – the capacity to generate a kind of skepticism about itself from its own terms – is a characteristic of those accounts that are the object of reflection, or, as Hegel puts it, of *self-consciousness*. The “science” (*Wissenschaft*) of knowledge must therefore also develop within itself some conception of the relation between authoritative reasons and self-conscious reflection.

Self-consciousness on the Hegelian model is not the awareness of a set of internal objects (sensations, mental occurrences, representations, whatever). To use a metaphor, self-consciousness is at least minimally the assumption of a position in “social space.”¹² We locate ourselves in “social space” when, for example, we reason in various ways; or when we assume various roles; or when we demand a certain type of treatment because of who we think we are; or when we see some forms of behavior as appropriate to the type of person we think ourselves to be; or when we recognize others as having the right to make certain kinds of moves within their speech-community; or when we give a reason to another person to explain or to justify what we are doing; or when we give an account of what we are doing to others that we think affirms what we take to be a good reason for doing what we are doing. Within a “social space” individuals assert various things to each other and give what they take to be reasons for these assertions, and people impute certain reasons

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to them on the basis of the shared social norms that structure their "social space" – that is, on the basis of what they take the person to be committed to in light of what he does and their shared norms. All the various activities of reason-giving – for example, of telling someone why you take some belief to be justified, of giving a good reason to yourself for going ahead and doing something, or of narrating some story about yourself that you take to explain and justify the way you lead your life – are themselves forms of social practice in which we in turn mutually evaluate each other's actions, in which we each assume certain types of epistemic and ethical responsibilities, and in which we impute certain moral and epistemic responsibilities to others in light of their behavior. In the various social practices involving reason-giving, we also have principles of *criticism* for evaluating the reasons we give. Reason-giving, that is, is itself a social practice that goes on within a determinate form of "social space" that "licenses" some kinds of inferences and fails to "license" others.

A distinguishing feature of a particular "social space" is the set of what counts within that "social space" as the basic "ground-rules" for agents to justify their beliefs and to guide their actions. The structure of authoritative reasons within each "social space" thereby naturally appears to each agent to constitute not just the way that he and others contingently *happen* to reason but the way in which people in general *should* reason. That is, those sets of authoritative reasons appear as both certain and as structuring what is to count as truth, and as necessary, as something that is not optional for the kinds of agents they are. When a set of such reasons and the accounts given of them undermine themselves, they of course lose that appearance of necessity and they lose their link to truth for those agents. Part of the theory of knowledge, therefore, must be to see if there are any set of authoritative reasons that can generate their own necessity in a way that does not undermine itself.

This requires the construction of a self-conscious reflective account of those authoritative standards and norms themselves that can affirm for us which of them are genuine and legitimate. Any form of life will have certain reasons that it takes as authoritative; to the extent that it becomes *self-conscious* about these standards and norms, it will develop accounts of why what it *takes* as authoritative for itself *really is* authoritative. Becoming self-conscious about such norms is to become aware of the apparent paradoxes, incoherences, and conflicts within them.

All these forms of self-consciousness have a mediated (that is, inferential) structure.¹³ Whenever there is mutual recognition among self-conscious subjects that is mediated by such a shared self-conscious understanding of what for them counts in general as an authoritative reason for belief and action – that is, mediated by *whom* they take themselves to be in light of what they count as being generally authoritative for themselves and why they take themselves to count those things as authoritative – we have a relation of what Hegel calls *spirit*. Spirit – *Geist* – is a *self-conscious* form of life – that is, it is a form of life that has developed various social practices for reflecting on what

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it takes to be authoritative for itself in terms of whether these practices live up to their own claims and achieve the aims that they set for themselves. Put more metaphorically, spirit is a form of “social space” reflecting on itself as to whether it is satisfactory within its own terms (with what it takes to be the “essence” of things, in Hegel’s terms). “Spirit” therefore denotes for Hegel not a metaphysical entity but a fundamental *relation* among persons that mediates their *self-consciousness*, a way in which people reflect on what they have come to take as authoritative for themselves.¹⁴

Dilemmas arise within a given form of spirit when there are internal problems within that “social space” such that some of these taken-for-granted reasons seem to clash with each other, or when some ways of reasoning within that “social space” quite unexpectedly lead to skepticism about the whole system of reasons itself or about significant parts of it (for example, when a form of life sets certain basic aims for itself that it necessarily fails to satisfy, that is, when that form of life is unsuccessful in its own terms). In these cases, in order to stabilize their sense of who they are, agents seek to affirm for themselves that what they have come to *take* as authoritative reasons *really are* authoritative reasons. Moreover, this activity of affirming that things are in order and that our reason-giving practices are not flawed is aimed at satisfying the desire to affirm for ourselves that we are who we think we are, or that our self-identity is not terribly flawed and irrational, and that the world is therefore fundamentally as we take it to be. These social practices of affirmation and reassurance can take many different shapes – tragic drama, religious practice, philosophical reflection, acting within certain social roles – but they all function as practices through which individuals and communities reflect on their self-generated skeptical reproaches on their form of life and try to reassure themselves that their practices are in order (or with some revision can be put back in order) and that their “social space” is therefore internally lucid.¹⁵

Since we cannot assume that any one of these “forms of spirit” is correct – we must treat them all as “appearances” – and we cannot assume that we can take a vantage point *outside* any of these “social spaces,” we must conduct the theory of knowledge “inside” each of these “formations of consciousness,” which of course are also “formations of spirit.” Since any putative theory of these reasons (any putative *Wissenschaft*) must itself be treated as *only* an “appearance,” it must be treated as a historical phenomenon alongside other historical phenomena. Moreover, no such purely historical phenomenon can claim to be the correct theory (or to be the true *Wissenschaft*) simply by stating that it “works” within its own terms or “fits” better the contemporary scene or matches up to its participants’ “intuitions,” for that scene and those intuitions are themselves only “appearances” and are the result of many contingent factors.

But even this way of putting matters is itself not sufficiently skeptical, since it begs the question as to why it is *required* that philosophy should be such a *Wissenschaft* at all. (In effect, it makes being a *Wissenschaft* into a hypothetical rather than a categorical imperative.) The usual claims about philosophy’s

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need to “ground” things cannot be satisfactory, nor can it be enough to simply *want* philosophy to be a *Wissenschaft* – to have a taste for large, architectural edifices rather than, say, desert landscapes. After all, why is it mandatory for there to be a “grounding” of thought and action at all? And why *that* type of grounding? Why should we not settle for something else, perhaps a kind of humanistic reflection in an essay oriented form, such as Montaigne offered? Or just aphoristic reflections, such as Pascal practiced? On Hegel's terms, to be genuinely skeptical, we should demand of philosophy that it give a non-question-begging account of why it must be a *Wissenschaft* at all, and in general how it can claim whatever authority it claims for itself.

Thus, in the terms that Hegel sets for his thought, he must be able to show why the kind of project that he is attempting – a theory of knowledge that treats everything, including itself, as an “appearance,” a “formation of consciousness” – is itself a necessary project, something that “we” (the modern community, his readers) supposedly *require* because of some feature of ourselves. Moreover, not only must “we” be said to require it, this requirement itself must be intelligible to “us” as being more than something “we” just contingently happen to want or desire at this point in our history. Even if we do happen to want it or need it, that wanting and needing must be due to features of ourselves that are not optional for us.

It is therefore important for Hegel to show that alternative accounts of what is to count for us as authoritative are not merely deficient in respect of some particular aim or another; their deficiencies must somehow themselves *lead to* the kind of account that he thinks is the proper one.¹⁶ That is, it would not be enough to gather up alternative explanations of what is to count as authoritative reasons for belief or action and then compare them on some scale of how well they all managed to satisfy some presupposed fundamental aim (for example, matching up with our intuitions in reflective equilibrium, or showing the rationality of science to be continuous with common-sense rationality). If nothing else, that would always leave it open as to the status of the presupposed aim itself, and whether that aim was optional for us. Instead, the other accounts must be shown to be *self-undermining* in such a way that they themselves require the Hegelian account to make sense of themselves. This may mean showing that there is indeed some *aim* that is operative in the practices of those alternative accounts that the Hegelian theory itself better fulfills. But that aim must be shown to *emerge* as a requirement itself, as something that those accounts themselves generate out of their own failures to make good on the terms that they have set for themselves.

Hegel's term for this way of looking at reason-giving activities is *dialectic*. Dialectic looks at *accounts* that forms of life give of what they take to be authoritative for themselves, and how those accounts are transformed in terms of considerations internal to the accounts themselves.¹⁷ Forms of life as “spirit” are constituted by the kinds of self-conscious reflections on what is necessary in that form of life to explain and justify what for that form of life counts as an authoritative reason for belief and action. There is obviously much more in a form of life that does not fall under the category of reason-giving or justifica-