Beyond Argument: A Hegelian Approach to Deep Disagreements

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Abstract: Accounts of deep disagreements can generally be categorized as optimistic or pessimistic. Pessimistic interpretations insist that the depth of deep disagreements precludes the possibility of rational resolution altogether, while optimistic variations maintain the contrary. Despite both approaches' respective positions, they nevertheless often, either explicitly or implicitly, agree on the underlying assumption that argumentation offers the only possible rational resolution to deep disagreements. This paper challenges that idea by, first, diagnosing this argument-only model of arriving at rational resolutions, second, articulating a competing but undertheorized Hegelian-informed approach, and third, attending briefly to some of the challenges of such an approach.

Keywords: deep disagreement, rational resolution, argument, Hegel.

I. An Optimistic Outlook

Deep disagreements, or disagreements in which argumentation seems unable to bridge conflicting forms of reasoning, abound in religion, economics, politics, science, and of course philosophy. Despite the prevalence of easy examples, considerable contestation remains regarding what it means for a disagreement to be 'deep' and whether this sort of depth precludes the possibility of rational resolution. Accounts of deep disagreements generally fall within one of two camps: optimistic or pessimistic interpretations. On the pessimistic interpretation, deep disagreements by virtue of their depth cannot be rationally resolved (Davson-Galle 1992; Fogelin 1985 and 2007; Campolo 2005 and 2009). Optimistic variations – the focus of this paper – reject the idea of absolute depth in principle and instead maintain that deep disagreements can indeed be rationally resolved (Lugg 1986; Turner 2005; Turner and Wright 2005; Feldman 2005 and 2007; Phillips 2008; Godden and Brenner 2010; Siegel 2013; Aikin forthcoming).

The aim of this paper is twofold. The first is to diagnose and identify two subsidiary forms of optimistic accounts of deep disagreements. More specifically, I hope to offer an exploratory sketch of a competing but undertheorized alternative to what I call the *argument-only approach* to deep disagreements. I call this account the *argument-plus approach.* My second goal in this paper is to suggest a plausible way of defending the argument-plus model against the objections that derive from my Hegelian formulation of the approach – namely, its ostensibly naive valorization of second nature and habit and its paternalistic

nature. Although my defense of the argument-plus approach is largely centered on what I take to be the most crippling objections, I nevertheless offer some suggestions for potential responses to the other concerns regarding relativism and the deflation of the force of reasons for the interested argument-plus defender.

My suggestion is that optimistic portrayals of deep disagreements tend to take one of two forms: the argument-only and the argument-plus model. Proponents of both approaches, insofar as they are optimistic programs, accept the idea that deep disagreements can be rationally resolved. The central distinguishing feature of these two interpretations hinges on whether argumentation constitutes the sole method of producing rational resolutions to deep disagreements. Whereas the argument-only approach is committed to the idea that argumentation comprises the only method of arriving at rational resolutions to deep disagreements, the argument-plus model rejects the idea that argumentation constitutes the only source of such rational resolutions. Within the existing deep disagreement literature, many explicitly accept the argument-only model or do so implicitly in their failure to consider non-argumentative means of producing nevertheless rational resolutions to deep disagreements (Feldman 2005 and 2007; Phillips 2008; Godden and Brenner 2010; Siegal 2013; Aikin forthcoming).

Given the relative paucity of argument-plus defenders (Turner 2005; Turner and Wright 2005; Lugg 1986), it is no surprise that the position remains severely undertheorized. In what follows, I first offer an elaboration of the central commitments that I take to underwrite the argument-only approach and the strengths that accordingly follow. Once we have a working conception of the argument-only approach in place, we will be in a better position to recognize both the motivations for adopting an argument-plus approach and the difficulties such a position faces.

II. The Argument-Only Approach

Rather than offer a careful articulation of the diverse assortment of argument-only approaches, my intention in this paper is merely to provide us with a rough approximation of such an account. I want to suggest that there are at least five reasons to adopt the argument-only approach to deep disagreements. First, the argument-only approach rests on a Kantian conception of rationality, insofar as it takes reflection – in the form of giving, asking, and assessing reasons – to constitute the most developed manifestation of rationality. For Kant, the ideal form of deliberation for finite rational beings is critical reflection, wherein the agent abstracts from her reasons for action, explicitly evaluates her motives and reasons, and legislates moral law for herself, thereby realizing her rational nature (Walsh 2012, 286). The reason reflection holds this revered place for Kant and, as I argue, for argument-plus defenders is that rationality most fully manifests in the activity of critical reflection, which takes on its public form in

argumentation in which reasons are made explicit and correspondingly evaluated. At the core of most argument-only approaches, there seems to exist a general tendency to valorize critical reflection in this Kantian manner. This underlying commitment explains why argument-only defenders insist that argumentation constitutes the sole means of reaching rational resolutions to deep disagreements.

In holding argumentation in such high regard, the argument-only model effectively relegates other forms of persuasion, such as education, manipulation, and brainwashing, as not yet rational or patently irrational. Less controversial forms of persuasion, such as education, are not yet rational in the sense that they do not manifest into argumentative – that is, their fully realized and rational – form, though they may enable us to realize our rational potential and can consequently be characterized as implicitly or latently rational. Accordingly, for the proponent of the argument-only approach, the only possible source of a rational resolution to deep disagreements lies in argumentation. Other forms of persuasion cannot produce rational resolutions because they are fundamentally irrational or not yet rational.

The second motivation to adopt an argument-only approach derives from its firmly-rooted anti-paternalism. The approach is anti-paternalistic in that it recognizes both us and others as rational beings who are responsive to reasons. By tying rationality to argumentation, the argument-only approach effectively isolates effects in belief formation and adoption that arise from argumentation, or 'purely epistemic' grounds, from the effects that arise from non-epistemic bases, such as coercion and force. In other words, it is only because the argument-only approach is deeply committed to the idea that we are rational beings and ought to be treated as such that it finds itself drawn to a Kantian conception of rationality.

A third reason one might find the argument-only approach appealing is that it preserves the epistemic and normative force of reasons. That reasons have an intuitive epistemic and normative appeal is evident in our everyday practices.[1] Their epistemic force derives from the crucial role that reasons play in justifying knowledge claims. Insofar as reasons are what give rise to justification, they constitute a sufficient but not necessary condition for knowledge. It would go against ordinary intuition to attribute knowledge to a merely true belief because that would entail that unjustified true beliefs, such as lucky guesses, would count as instances of knowledge. In referring to the normative force of reasons, I mean to draw out the intuitive idea that there are

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[1] Although there are those who might contest this characterization of preserving the force of reasons as a desiderata of the argument-only approach, my aim here is not to adjudicate between epistemic internalists and externalists. My suspicion is that the externalist would offer an interesting approach to thinking about rational resolutions to deep disagreements, but that the internalist line of thought appears more commonly in the literature, which is why I have chosen to focus on it in this paper.

some reasons that *should* persuade us to formulate and adopt our beliefs (or act) in certain ways, even if we have other motivating or explanatory reasons for believing or behaving otherwise. In short, reasons are normative in that we *ought* to find them compelling, regardless of whether we in fact do. The idea is that the argument-only approach's commitment to our fundamental rationality also commits it to the idea that explicit reason-giving, insofar as they sit at the center of the argument-only model's conception of rationality, are epistemically and normatively important to us. Reasons have a special hold on us, a kind of epistemic and normative force.

A fourth characteristic strength of the argument-only approach is that it maintains a firm grip on objectivity because it is committed to the *translatability thesis*, while simultaneously allowing for a commitment to socially-informed understandings of knowledge. Roughly, the translatability thesis rejects the idea of the absolute incommensurability of conceptual schemes (Davidson 1973-74). Positively stated, all conceptual schemes are translatable and thereby accessible to reasoning. Insofar as no conceptual scheme can fundamentally resist translation, the propositions that make up such a scheme constitute objective reasons because they are theoretically epistemically and normatively accessible and persuasive to *all* rational beings in the same way. The advantage of such an approach is that it can both maintain objectivity and recognize the social basis of knowledge. For instance, the translatability thesis can accommodate the two theses that constitute feminist standpoint theory:

> *The Situated-Knowledge Thesis:* Social location systematically influences our identities, experiences, and epistemic capacities, thereby shaping what and how we know. (Wylie 2003, 62)

> *The Thesis of Epistemic Advantage:* Those who occupy socially marginal space may develop or amass epistemic advantages in at least some contexts. (Wylie 2003, 63; Intemann 2010, 783)

The argument-only approach would accept the idea that social locations may systematically influence our knowledge and that these locations may offer epistemic advantages to those who occupy the social margins, but it would reject the idea that such social locations offer *unique* epistemic advantages that cannot be propositionally shared with those who do not occupy those locations. In this way, the argument-only approach rejects only a strong reading of socially-informed ways of knowing, that is, the idea that some social bases offer unique access in some contexts.

The fifth reason for the argument-only approach's appeal is that it contains explanatory value. As an explanation for the depth of disagreements, the argument-only proponent can point to a failure to effectively, genuinely, and accurately share or consider evidence. In short, disagreements of depth arise from implicit or explicit failures to argue well.

III. The Argument-Plus Approach

While there are certainly good reasons to find the argument-only approach compelling, I want to draw our attention to three potential objections to understanding deep disagreements according to this model. From these objections, we will be in a position to formulate the argument-plus approach.

First, insofar as it operates along a Kantian conception of rationality, the argument-only approach is open to the Hegelian line of criticism that such a conception of rationality underestimates habit and second nature as a source of manifest rationality. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right,* Hegel offers a harsh criticism of the Kantian ideal of rationality, rejecting the idea that critical reflection constitutes the most developed manifestation of rationality. There are two main reasons why Hegel takes such a disparaging stance towards critical reflection. First, conscience – what Hegel takes to be the embodiment of critical reflection – lacks a determinate conception of the good and therefore also lacks an objective criterion for determining the good (Hegel 2016, §141, 186). Consequently, it poses the risk of becoming evil at any moment. For this reason, Hegel rejects the idea that critical reflection is unqualifiedly good (Hegel 2016, §139, 167-70). Put more directly, critical reflection alone is fundamentally limited in its capacity to determine the good. The second danger stems from the fact that the process of critical reflection necessarily involves self-alienation. Insofar as this is the case, critical reflection always poses the structural threat of throwing the subject into a "bottomless pit of self-questioning." (Honneth, 2010, 41) This is why Hegel considers the cultivation of habit in ethical life to constitute an achievement. In ethical life, not only are our reasons tied to a determinate conception of the good but we also immediately relate to those reasons insofar as we feel at home in the forms of life from which those reasons emerge. In Hegelian terms, reason is most fully realized – or actual – in ethical life and the habitual disposition we develop in such forms of life (Hegel 2016, §27, 57; §151, 195).

In contrast to the argument-only approach, the argument-plus approach takes argumentation to constitute merely one form in which our rationality manifests. Turner and Wright (2005) insightfully call our attention to practices and behaviors other than argumentation, such as learning and enculturation, that also manifest our rationality. My suggestion is that, by turning to the Hegelian notion of rationality, we can not only recognize Turner and Wright's insight, but also think more critically about the valorized status of reflection and appreciate the achievement of second nature in ethical life. In ethical life, we not only feel at home in the world but we do so in a world that is rational. Our cultural participation in ethical life, and to the extent that it manifests as habitual and therefore expresses itself as a relation of immediate self-relation, constitutes the fullest actualization of our rationality (Lumsden 2016). In short, the argument-plus approach, unlike the argument-only approach, can appreciate the cultivation of habit and second nature in ethical life not only as an achievement

but also as a realization of a higher order than critical reflection and argumentation.

Second, one might criticize the argument-only approach's commitment to the uniqueness thesis because it operates according to a misguided conception of knowledge. Arguably, this mistaken conception is one of the driving factors for the argument-only proponent's rejection of a strong interpretation of the social basis of knowledge. One might resist the idea of absolute translatability on the grounds that not all knowledge is reducible to propositional form. We might call this residual knowledge *understanding*.[2] Although I cannot hope to offer a detailed account of this notion of understanding in this paper, my suspicion is that what is leftover and untranslated when we attempt to reduce a form of life into propositional content has much to do with understanding that derives from having particular dispositions, or more specifically an emotional and cognitive orientation, that plays a crucial role in our ability to recognize, assess, and respond appropriately to salience (de Sousa 1987, 141-204; Lance and Tanesini 2004; Döring 2009). Recent developments within psychology and cognitive science bolster the idea that emotion constitutes a central component of rational thought, insofar as emotion enables us to be "interested in" or "attentive to" an object (Blanchette and Richards 2009; Koole 2009; Gyurak, Gross, and Etkin 2011). In short, emotions constitute a precondition, not a hindrance, for the collection and assessment of evidence, deliberation, and argumentation. These dispositions, which are at least in part and substantially emotional, might themselves be socially molded and are necessary for comprehension of a form of life insofar as they comprise a central component of forms of reasoning.

My contention is that, even in cases in which one accurately, genuinely, diligently, and fully transcribes a form of life into propositions and shares these propositions in deep disagreements, one loses the disposition that, at the very least, accompanies understanding in translation. Even if one could describe such a disposition, having propositional knowledge of said disposition – or the exhaustive list of experiences that gave rise to it – could not by itself produce understanding. I suspect that the reason for this is that, as a kind of disposition, understanding does not merely emerge from having access to and reflecting upon a set of a propositions. If my suspicions are right, absolute and complete translation of a form of life - including the understanding and forms of reasoning to which it gives rise - into a set of propositions lies beyond the range of possibility. And if we are willing to reject the uniqueness thesis' underlying commitment to knowledge as completely reducible to propositional knowledge and therefore absolutely translatable, a strong version of the sociality thesis begins to appear more plausible.

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[2] I am indebted to Tempest Henning for sharing her deeply insightful suspicion of contemporary epistemology's overemphasis on propositional knowledge with me, which inspired me to turn my discomfort with the argument-only approach to knowledge into a criticism of its focus on propositional knowledge.

But why think that sociality offers us unique access to knowledge or understanding? It recognizes that, at minimum, some aspects of rationality are grounded in social forms of life, a thesis that has been widely supported and recognized in varying ways and to varying degrees (Sellars 1997; Freud 1989; Merleau-Ponty 2014; Wittgenstein 1958; Marx 1978; Hegel 2016). The appeal of a strong socially-informed understanding of knowledge lies in the fact that it seems to capture why disagreements seem as deep as they do. The idea is not that there is one way to reason but that reasoning takes on a variety of forms insofar as it is indexed to particular forms of life. This is, of course, not to deny the possibility of translation but it recognizes that translation is always imperfect, insofar as it cannot make up for a lack of or develop an appropriate emotional attunement or disposition that emerges from the practices, behaviors, education, and enculturation which comprise particular forms of life. We can accordingly explain deep disagreements as those disagreements that arise when two forms of life – and their respective orientations to the world – conflict. What is rationally salient in one form of life may simply be rationally unpersuasive in another.

The third concern regarding the argument-only approach is that it unsatisfactorily dissolves the very phenomena of deep disagreements. Part of what is compelling about the idea of deep disagreements is that people find them genuinely 'deep,' even if not absolutely so. The argument-only approach can only explain the difficulty of rationally resolving deep disagreements by pointing to explanations that indicate we are either hindered by irrational motives or have simply not genuinely engaged in argumentation. But neither explanation seems to capture the phenomena of deep disagreements in which we surely are not 'blinded by our emotions' and have also tried to sincerely reason and argue with one's interlocutor. I want to suggest that the argument-plus approach offers a more satisfying way of thinking about the kinds of deep disagreements that persist despite continued, genuine, and well-argued disagreements. The acceptance of a strong view of sociality, in a sense, makes deep disagreements deeper because there are now two chasms to cross: one of argumentation and one of a socially-grounded form of reasoning. And while this might appear alarming to optimists, I want to suggest that this approach more accurately captures the phenomenon of deep disagreements.

IV. Hegel on Deep Disagreements

As I have formulated it, the argument-plus approach offers three distinct advantages against its counterpart. It recognizes habit and second nature in ethical life as achievements of manifest rationality, diagnoses the uniqueness thesis as reductive thereby making space for stronger interpretations of socially-informed ways of reasoning, and offers a more satisfying explanation of the depth of deep disagreements. In light of its strengths, we can also identify its corresponding weaknesses. In this section, I explore four challenges to my

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Hegelian-inspired formulation of the argument-plus approach, but focus on what I take to be its most damaging criticism – that it is paternalistic. Although I do not offer a full defense of the argument-plus approach in this paper, my aim is to show that by drawing on a particular conception of human nature we can resist some of the objections that are generated by a Hegelian argument-plus model.

There are two interrelated objections that emerge from the Hegelian arc that I have attributed to the argument-plus approach. The first objection is that it offers an uncritical valorization of habit. If rationality most fully realizes itself in second nature in ethical life, the very possibility of social critique and critical consciousness seems to, at least on first glance, have no place in ethical life. In short, Hegel's understanding of second nature in ethical life offers what appears to be a deeply conservative portrayal of rationality that is antithetical to the critical reflection that often constitutes social critique. While this paper is not the place to defend my reading of Hegel, I want only to point out that Hegel himself acknowledges that habit, like critical reflection, is not unqualifiedly good.[3] That is, critical reflection also constitutes an essential component of ethical life. My contention is that their difference lies in the fact that, for Hegel, being at home in the world in ethical life constitutes the highest – or most actualized – form of rationality, whereas Kant precariously, if not naively, treats critical reflection and argumentation as the culmination of rationality. Put in relation to social and political concerns, while it might be true that being an 'insider-outsider' with a critical consciousness might give one better epistemic access to knowledge and understanding, the kind of marginalization that produces a social position characterized by, in Hegelian terms, the systemic inability to be at home in a dominant or oppressive form of life for certain people often comes at a great material and psychological cost. Unlike Kant's conception of rationality, Hegel rejects this naive valorization of critical reflection because it overlooks the importance of being at home in the world.

The second objection is that, in adopting a Hegelian approach to deep disagreements, the argument-plus model appears to endorse paternalism, insofar as it defends other non-argumentative practices as capable of producing rational resolutions to deep disagreements. What makes the charge of paternalism so fatal for a model for understanding deep disagreement is that it makes the site of any deep disagreement an appropriate site for the use of alternative means of persuasion, including potentially coercion and force. The problem is that it seems to endorse the imposition of an external system of reasoning and set of reasons onto a subject who could and would not endorse those reasons as her own. In this paper, I entertain four varieties of the charge of paternalism.

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[3] Others offer excellent defenses of Hegel against this charge. See Robert M. Wallace's (2001) "Hegel on 'Ethical Life' and Social Criticism," Simon Lumsden's (2012) "Habit, Sittlichkeit and Second Nature," Andreja Novakovic's (2017) *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life,* and Walsh's (2012) "Distance and Engagement: Hegel's Account of Critical Reflection."

The first formulation of the paternalism charge can be stated in the following way: the argument-plus approach accepts not yet rational or irrational means of persuasion as processes that can produce rational resolutions to deep disagreements. This objection proceeds on the basis of a Kantian conception of rationality whereby critical reflection – and its public form, argumentation – is held as the apotheosis of our rationality as finite rational beings. The consequence is that non-argumentative practices, such as education and enculturation, constitute latently rational means of persuasion, practices that enable us to realize our rational behavior but are not themselves manifestly rational in the same way argumentation is. My suggestion is that, by turning to Hegel's recognition of the achievement of second nature in ethical life, we can develop a greater appreciation for the ways in which rationality manifests in habit.

A second way of articulating the charge of paternalism is that, even if we grant the argument-plus proponent and confer the status of 'manifestly rational' onto education and enculturation, we lack a criterion and therefore a principled means of distinguishing between rational (in this broader Hegelian characterization) and irrational means of persuasion, such that the two become indistinguishable. The desirability of such a criterion should be apparent by now. Without it, it becomes unclear when education becomes a form of glorified brainwashing, or 're-education.' Even so, this paper is not the place to attempt to identify criteria for distinguishing between rational and irrational means of persuasion. Nevertheless, we can retain the conceptual possibility that such a criterion or set of criteria can be articulated by pointing to a site of agreement among both argument-plus and argument-only supporters. Both would presumably accept the idea that not all varieties of education and enculturation are forms of 're-education.' Insofar as this is the case, we can salvage the conceptual possibility that there is indeed a way of distinguishing between rational and irrational means of persuasion, even if that process or set of criteria cannot be articulated here.

A third version of the paternalism charge might take on the following form: even if the education approach is a rational method of producing rational resolutions to deep disagreements, it is nevertheless a paternalistic program when we impose it upon individuals who already know how to argue. That is, it is not merely the content of the education program that determines whether it is paternalistic; it is also a matter of the circumstances in which that education is imposed. The idea is that there is a substantial difference between educating a child, so that she may realize her rational capacities as a knower by developing the skill of argumentation and educating someone who already knows how to argue. In the former case, one is teaching another how to reason. In the latter, one is 'teaching' someone to recognize someone else's reasons and that precariously borders on paternalism.

An argument-plus defender may respond in one of two ways. First, 're'-education might be appropriate in those instances in which someone has failed to develop reasoning skills that constitute a necessary but not sufficient condition of being enculturated. One such skill might be the capacity for self-correction. We might even go so far as to say that without such a skill one has not become a proper member of any epistemic community. But, of course, such a standard of being a proper member of an epistemic community is easily satisfied, insofar as the capacity for self-correction is merely a formal procedure and contains no given content.

To respond to the more substantial paternalism charge about re-education, I suggest that we turn to the Hegelian tradition of immanent critique. As Rahel Jaeggi (2009) argues, immanent critique offers a more promising method of adjudicating amongst conflicting forms of life than other forms of social critique because it avoids the shortcomings associated with both internal and external critique. Internal critique remains entirely dependent on the resources within a given lifeform, which precludes forms of more radical social critique – namely, ones that might put into question the very standards internal to a given form of life. External critique paternalistically imposes external standards and reasons that the object of its critique would not accept as reasons for action. In contrast to both internal and external critique, immanent critique offers a promising third alternative. Immanent critique relies on the process of determinate negation, or the transformation of the old into what is both new and grounded in the old through the processes of negation, preservation, and unification. This kind of social critique is 'immanent' in the sense that it generates new ideals through the overcoming of the practical contradictions engendered by the original norms in question. In this way, one can understand Hegelian immanent critique as a kind of anti-paternalistic problem-solving or learning process.

One can formulate the paternalism charge in a fourth way: while immanent critique seems to offer a non-paternalistic version of producing rational resolutions to deep disagreements, it nevertheless requires more than a merely formal criterion for identifying practical contradictions or problems. Certainly, at an absolute minimum, a formal criterion for recognizing practical contradictions, such as a consistency requirement, is embedded within the process of immanent critique. But I want to suggest that if we are genuinely committed to the sociality thesis, then we are also committed to a thicker content-laden criterion for recognizing practical contradictions as such. The thought behind this should appeal to both proponents of the argument-only and argument-plus approach. If reasoning is indeed, at least in part, necessarily indexed to particular forms of life such that forms of knowing are socially situated, then recognizing problems is not merely a matter of deconstructing old ways of reasoning but also necessarily involves positively constructing new ways of reasoning and understanding the world. That is, there is no view from nowhere from which we can identify practical contradictions qua practical

contradictions. And, if this is the case, the new ideals generated through immanent critique are not generated through some empty formal problem-solving process. One requires a standard against which all forms of life can be measured. And so, we have returned to an external standard and the risk of paternalism reappears.

The response to this fourth variation of the paternalism objection, I contend, hinges on adopting a minimal but nevertheless substantial *anthropological thesis* about human nature – that is, we are embodied, socially constituted and dependent, and necessarily productive creatures who take our own lives as the objects of our creative expression. Insofar as we are the types of human beings that we are, there are certain ways in which all forms of life are continuous or can be measured against the same standard. I do not wish to spell out the contents of this anthropological thesis here, but my conjecture is that a non-reductive naturalistic approach of this sort offers us a potential way of defending the argument-plus approach from the charge of paternalism.

In turning to immanent critique as a potential source of resolving deep disagreements, however, we have ostensibly unwittingly produced a defense of the argument-only approach insofar as immanent critique constitutes a form or component of argumentation. The basis for this objection rests in thinking about immanent critique according to what James Gordon Finlayson (2014, 1153) describes as its "slender, commonplace" version or, as I want to classify it, as a purely argumentative exercise. My conjecture is that the Hegelian tradition of immanent critique cannot be reduced to a purely pragmatic problem-solving process, as a practice that merely concerns the articulation of background premises and presuppositions and the deduction of valid inferences. This commonplace understanding of immanent critique draws on a similarly thin conception of critique grounded in a notion of knowledge as reducible to propositions. In contrast, the Hegelian tradition of immanent critique draws on a thicker notion of critique, one that is grounded in forms of reasoning and ways of understanding that arise from forms of life. According to this line of thought, immanent critique involves more than mere argumentation but also the active, constructive, and transformational practice of "forging links," whereby we develop new ways of being in the world (Jaeggi 2009, 79). Critique, in this Hegelian sense, requires more than just the articulation of well-founded criticisms and statements; it also encapsulates the practice of coming to develop the forms of life and the forms of reasoning to which they give rise that one needs to see objects of critique as such. Thus, the invocation of a Hegelian understanding of critique, like that of rationality, speaks to more than those activities often associated with argumentation. In short, if we adopt a Hegelian approach to immanent critique, we can reject the idea that discussion of immanent critique converts the argument-plus approach into an argument-only approach.

Despite the defense of the argument-plus approach I have attempted to offer here, it is not lost on me that more needs to be said. Substantial criticisms of the argument-plus approach remain. However, my suspicion is that adopting such an anthropological thesis might also pave a path for the interested argument-plus defender to respond to additional criticisms, particularly those related to relativism and the deflation of the force of reasons. Regarding the charge of relativism, a critic of the argument-plus approach might argue that, if we accept the sociality thesis, it looks like we have conceded that there is no objective truth. Truth is now indexed to particular forms of life and this appears to foreclose the possibility of non-coercively resolving deep disagreements. However, the anthropological thesis wards off the possibility of relativism, insofar as it maintains that there is indeed a universal standard to which forms of life and the systems of reasoning to which they give rise must ultimately answer.

A second challenge to the argument-plus approach is that it looks like it offers a deflationary account of reasons. It seems to me that the anthropological thesis allows a defender of the argument-plus approach to successfully avert the charge that she has deflated the normative force of reasons, but it is less clear how one might avoid the charge that one has deflated the epistemic force of reasons. Insofar as reasons are indexed to particular forms of life, their epistemic force – that is, their capacity to give rise to justification – is significantly weaker. The question then is: how should we understand the practice of asking and giving reasons, if not as a primarily justificatory practice? Following the work of Herbert Fingarette (2000), I suggest that we should expand our understanding of the very practice of reasoning. It is not just that it enables justification. It is also central to the acquired skill of 'spelling things out.' Part of why we reason is to make sense of our world as *our own*. In spelling out our world and making the implicit explicit, we also see ourselves as endorsing our form of life. Of course, in doing so, we also hold our forms of life up to our forms of reasoning and, when our forms of life fail to live up to this standard, they risk producing a sense of alienation. In short, forms of life are also answerable to our practices of reasoning. We might say the epistemic force of reasoning practices is, in some sense, expanded upon in this account. Reasoning enables us not only to *justify* knowledge, but also to endorse knowledge as *our own.*

V. Conclusion

Why adopt an argument-plus approach to deep disagreements? At first glance, the motivation for such an enterprise seems to be severely outweighed by the significant costs of trying to reconsider rationality in a Hegelian light. Indeed, I offer only a partial sketch of an argument-plus model of deep disagreements precisely because it does not eschew the difficult questions of how to hold onto both argumentation and second nature as manifest expressions of rationality, a strong interpretation of sociality and objectivity as compatible, and

propositional knowledge and knowledge which exceeds propositional reduction. Nevertheless, I contend that grappling with these questions in regards to deep disagreements is not only timely but also necessary. Questions about the nature of deep disagreements sit at the heart of the contemporary political landscape. Deep disagreements and the ways we will confront them, in many ways, are what will characterize this historical period. Turning the conversation away from argumentation, I want to suggest, is one way to begin to broaden the conversation about how to think about rationally resolving the kinds of entrenched and pervasive deep disagreements that characterize much of our political engagement today.

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