



# The Logic of Desire: An Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

*Peter Kalkavage*

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Peter Kalkavage's *The Logic of Desire* guides the reader through Hegel's great work. Given the book's legendary difficulty, one may well ask, "Why even try to read the *Phenomenology*?" In his preface, Kalkavage explains why he thinks a reader should try:

*There is much to commend the study of Hegel: his attentiveness to the deepest, most fundamental questions of philosophy, his uncompromising pursuit of truth, his amazing gift for characterization and critique, his appreciation for the grand sweep of things and the large view, his profound admiration for all that is heroic, especially for the ancient Greeks, those heroes of thought in whom the philosophic spirit first dawned, his penetrating gaze into modernity in all its forms, his enormous breadth of interests, and his audacious claim to have captured absolute knowing in a thoroughly rational account.*

According to Kalkavage, the *Phenomenology* belongs to a quartet of the greatest works on education. The other three members of the quartet are Plato's *Republic*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Rousseau's *Emile*. No genuine philosophic education can omit a serious encounter with this giant of the modern age, the giant who absorbed all the worlds of spiritual vitality that came before him and tried to organize them into a coherent whole.

"This book comes as close as I have seen to a guide to Hegel for the 'courageous non-specialist,' to employ Mr. Kalkavage's expression. He writes from what is obviously a lengthy and deep study of Hegel and of the *Phenomenology* in particular. There is no patronising of Hegel's complex teaching. The technical terminology is not avoided or concealed by the jovial jargon of a study manual. Kalkavage has mastered the art of presenting topics of great difficulty in a way that will instruct specialists as well as non-specialists. I found especially illuminating his portrait of determinate negation and the difference between consciousness and the phenomenological observer. This book should be in every college and university library."—Stanley Rosen

"Having taught philosophy to undergraduates for the past thirty-nine years, I can especially appreciate the value of Peter Kalkavage's book, *The Logic of Desire*. This work will truly benefit anyone who wishes to learn what Hegel himself is teaching in his first major volume. It provides remarkable insights on Hegel's complex work as a whole as well as serving as a sure guide for every chapter and for virtually every paragraph. Even the many endnotes are very valuable. It should be made readily available to every undergraduate who has to read any part of the *Phenomenology*."—Dr. Donald C. Lindenmuth, Pennsylvania State University

**Peter Kalkavage** is a member of the senior faculty at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, where he has taught for thirty years. He is the author of numerous articles on philosophy. He translated Plato's *Timaeus* and co-translated Plato's *Phaedo* and *Sophist*.

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