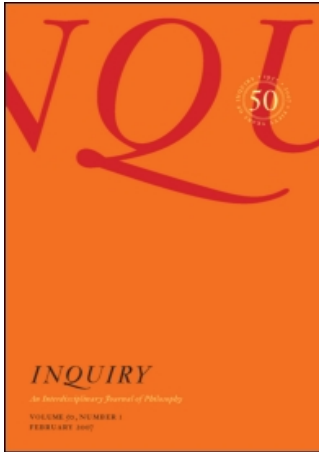


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# Hegel's Account of Rule-Following<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** *I here discuss Hegel's rule-following considerations as they are found in the first four chapters of his Phenomenology of Spirit. I begin by outlining a number of key premises in Hegel's argument that he adopts fairly straightforwardly from Kant's Transcendental Deduction. The most important of these is that the correctness or incorrectness of one's application of a rule must be recognizable as such to the rule-follower. Supplementing Hegel's text as needed, I then argue that it is possible for an experiencing subject to follow a rule only where there is a community of individuals whose agreement can provide a standard for the correctness and incorrectness of his use. I further argue that a community must consist of members that are compresent, and thus that a collection of time-slices of an individual will not serve this purpose. I conclude by raising a potential problem for Hegel's account of rule-following concerning the correctness and incorrectness of the judgments of a community, and pointing to a possible line of response to this problem.*

At the centre of Kant's semantic theory are the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. At the core of these is Kant's claim that a concept is something that serves as a *rule* for uniting manifolds of intuitions. Perhaps surprisingly, Kant says little if anything about the nature of rules and rule-following. This is a lack that Hegel perceives and undertakes to fill in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. His line of argumentation begins with the Kantian premise that, because following a rule is something that we must be able to form the intention to do, following a rule must be recognizable as such to the concept-employing subject. He then proceeds to argue that, given this constraint, an individual cannot follow a rule in isolation. Rather, he argues, rule-following is an

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essentially social affair. If Hegel is right, he ought to be read as contributing an essential missing piece to Kantian semantic theory.<sup>2</sup> This paper delineates and defends Hegel's arguments for the sociality of rule-following.

## I.

At the core of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is the Transcendental Deduction, the argument in which Kant attempts to justify the use of pure *a priori* concepts of the understanding, or Categories. This argument is a practical one.<sup>3</sup> It begins with what Kant takes to be a necessary goal of every creature like ourselves: to conceive of oneself as a single, unified subject of experience persisting through time.<sup>4</sup> Kant argues that the only means to achieving this goal is to unite the manifold of intuitions in a single cognition, that is, to have a single thought the content of which speaks not just to how the manifold is at the time of the thought, but also how it must be at other times, in other locations, and in certain other counterfactual situations. This, in turn, he argues, is only possible via the employment of the Categories in correct object-concept employing judgments. Thus Kant's argument goes from the need to conceive of ourselves as single, unified subjects of experience to the justification of the use of the Categories.

Of course, along the way, Kant takes on board a good deal besides these two features of experience. Most significantly, for reasons concerning the role of judgment in uniting the manifold of intuitions, and with the unity of judgment itself, Kant becomes an inferentialist about conceptual content.<sup>5</sup> One central purpose of this paper is to explore the consequences of Kant's claim that these issues require us to be inferentialists, and to conceive of concepts as *rules* for uniting the manifold of intuitions. First, however, it will be worth our while to take note of another thesis advanced by Kant in the course of this argument, namely, that the experiencing subject must be able to undertake the making of correct object-concept employing judgments as a means to an end.

It is significant that this thesis concerns ends that the experiencing subject has and means that he takes to satisfy them. This is particularly important because for a piece of practical reasoning to function as such, the end and means that it describes must themselves be such that the subject of the argument can *correctly represent to himself* what it would be to have such goals and take such ends. A goal is only someone's goal if that person can know in what it would consist to meet that goal. A means is only someone's means if that person can know in what it would consist to take those means. The purpose of practical reasoning is to structure the goal-oriented behavior of the one who engages in it. When one is the subject of a piece of practical reasoning – insofar as one is rational, and the reasoning is sound – one *has* the goal and *adopts* the means prescribed by that argument. I.e., the result of a piece of practical reasoning is the forming of an *intention*. One can only

form an intention, however, if one can *understand* the goals and means that are to be the object of that intention.

The significance of this for the current investigation is that whatever it is to correctly employ object-concepts in judgments – that is, on Kant’s view, whatever it is to follow a rule – must be the sort of thing one can form the intention to do. It follows from this that following a rule must be something *recognizable as such* to someone who is doing so.<sup>6</sup> We can call this the Internalist Premise. As we are about to see, this is a crucial background assumption in Hegel’s arguments concerning rule-following.<sup>7</sup>

## II.

The first three chapters of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* – gathered under the heading “Consciousness” – are concerned with non-inferentialist theories of representation, and their frequent ally, correspondence theories of truth. Hegel’s procedure in these chapters is to demonstrate of each theory he considers that it is what Kant would call transcendent. That is, he demonstrates that each theory violates a more general version of the Internalist Premise by accounting for correct representation (and knowledge, truth, etc.) in ways that make it in principle unrecognizable as such to the representing subject.<sup>8</sup> Since we are beginning with Kant and *inferentialist* theories of conceptual representation, we do not have to delve into these sections of the *Phenomenology* in any detail. We can instead pick up Hegel’s dialectic at the point that he himself takes the Kantian turn – an approach to the *Phenomenology* that Hegel himself would find quite appropriate.

Hegel begins his investigation into rule-following with what *seems* like a declaration, not of inferentialism, but of *idealism*:

In the previous modes of certainty what is true for consciousness is something other than itself. But the Notion of this truth vanishes in the experience of it. What the object immediately was *in itself* [...] proves to be in truth, not this at all; instead, this *in-itself* turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for another. (PS §166)<sup>9</sup>

As self-consciousness, it is movement; but since what it distinguishes from itself is *only itself as itself*, the difference, as an otherness, is *immediately superseded* for it; the difference *is not*, and *it* is only the motionless tautology of: ‘I am I’; but since for it the difference does not have the form of *being*, it is *not* self-consciousness. (PS §167)

One *might* here take Hegel to be asserting a kind of idealism. He *seems* to be saying, especially in the second passage, that self-consciousness is aware not of anything outside of itself, such as an external world, but only of itself and its own activities – “what it distinguishes from itself is only itself as itself”. Furthermore, on this reading, what self-consciousness takes to be outside of

itself, the external world, “is immediately superseded for it,” and the difference between the two “is not”. Returning to the first passage, this reading would have it that there is no way that the external world is apart from our conceiving it; “this in-itself turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for another”. This all certainly *sounds* like idealism.

In fact, however, what Hegel is here noticing is not (yet) idealism, but rather only a somewhat more mundane fact about the inferentialist's take on meaning: that when we specify the meaning of a given term, we do not do so by pointing to some worldly object for which that term stands, but rather we assign that term a place in *our* language. This claim was perhaps made most clearly and explicitly by Sellars via his account of the meaning rubric and his accompanying theory of meaning.<sup>10</sup> Consider the claim that,

(1) ‘dog’ refers to dogs

On a certain kind of referential account of meaning, this sentence concerns the relation of tokens of certain linguistic items, DOGS, to certain objects in the world, dogs. It concerns a word-world relation. For the inferentialist, this will not be so. Because the inferentialist accounts for the content of conceptual representations in terms of the *inferences* in which a term figures, this content will consist, instead, of various word-word relations.<sup>11</sup> So, using the Sellarsian analysis of the meaning rubric, the inferentialist will construe (1) as

(2) \*dog\*s are ·dog·s.

Here \*dog\* picks out the concept  $\gg\text{dog}\ll$  in some target language (here English), and says of it that its inferential role is the same as that of the  $\gg\text{dog}\ll$  *in the language used by the person making this statement* (again, English).<sup>12</sup> The inferentialist claims that statements about the meaning of a concept are always given in terms that relate the inferential role of that concept to the inferential role of a concept in actual use by the speaker. This is because, since meaning is *not* understood by the inferentialist as a word-world relation, there is nothing *outside* of word-word relations – properly understood – that *can* be an articulation of the meaning of a concept. On an inferentialist account, that is, meaning cannot be reduced to reference (as reference is understood by, for instance, a meaning *externalist*).

Perhaps surprisingly, *this* is Hegel's point in the above quotations. In the previous “modes of consciousness” that Hegel has considered – accounts of conceptual representation that construed representation as consisting in a word-world relation – “what is true for consciousness is something other than itself”. On such accounts, representations have the content that they do because they bear a certain relation to something *in the world*, and thus to something distinct from the one making such a judgment. The *truth* of a judgment made by employing such representations thus depends on the

*judgment's* standing in a certain relation to the world. What the inferentialist claims, on the other hand, and what Hegel takes himself to have shown, is that “this *in-itself* turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for another.” Hegel’s contention is that the content of a conceptual representation consists in its relation to other concepts that the one using the concept could himself also employ. The *content* of a conceptual representation is not a thing in the world that bears a relation to the tokens of that representation, but rather is the inferential role that that concept plays in the language of the one who uses it.

Hegel’s next move, then, is to explore the nature of this language-user. If all reference is *intra-linguistic* – in the sense that it is not a word-world, but word-word relation – what needs investigating is the nature of such intra-linguistic relations. Recognizing, with Kant, that the conceptual rules that govern such relations are underdetermined by sensory inputs, Hegel, like Kant, concludes that conceptual rules are crucially tied to the spontaneous understanding of the experiencing subject. That is, because sensory inputs underdetermine the conceptual rules that one follows in organizing one’s experience, one is, at least in this sense, free to use whatever concepts one wishes – so long as they accord with the Categories. Hegel’s first supposition – which he later rejects – is that this is *all* that there is to such rules: i.e., that the experiencing subject is completely unhindered in what rules he chooses to follow and in what the content of these rules consists.

Hegel calls this conception of the rule-following subject Desire and its object Life. We can, for present purposes, set aside the question of why he chooses just these terms.<sup>13</sup> What is more important is understanding Hegel’s picture of the interaction between Desire and Life. Of Life, he writes:

Thus the simple substance of Life is the splitting-up of itself into shapes and at the same time the dissolution of these existent differences; and the dissolution of the splitting-up is just as much a splitting-up and a forming of members. (PS § 171)

The idea here is that according to this conception of rule-following, the nature of the objects that one represents using conceptual rules depends, in some sense, on the conceptual rules one uses to represent them. Again, there is supposed to be, on this account, nothing more to the fact that *x* is *F* than that an experiencing subject takes *x* to be *F*. This is because the meaning of ‘*F*’ will always be whatever the experiencing subject determines it to be. So, if that subject judges that *x* is *F*, then it follows that *x* is *F*. This is not because the experiencing subject changes the world so as to make *x* *F*, but rather because he is free to change the meaning of the term ‘*F*’ so as to include *x* in its extension. In the above quotation, Hegel supposes that the experiencing subject is aware of this, and so vacillates between judging *x* to be *F*, and realizing that since it is only because of his own whim that *x* is *F*, judging that

it could just as easily be that  $x$  is not  $F$ . Thus, the shape that the subject splits-up the world into is the shape that the world has, and as the subject sees this he dissolves this shape, only to form another, which is then dissolved in turn.

Now *this* sounds very much like idealism, but we must be careful to see just what kind of idealism it is, and to understand that it is *not* a position that Hegel endorses. Hegel is not here presenting an idealist à la *Berkeley* (before God's mind enters the picture, that is).<sup>14</sup> It is not the case that for Desire, Life consists in its sense-impressions or that in changing from  $F$  to not- $F$  anything about the object itself changes. The world *exists* independently of how Desire conceives it.<sup>15</sup> This much, Hegel takes to already have been established by Kant in the first *Critique*. What are determined by Desire are just the content of the conceptual rules under which this existence is subsumed. The object, in a sense, stays as it is, untouched. What changes is the meaning of the term “ $F$ ”, and so the object's *status* as an  $F$ . Consider a game of soccer. What happens on the field – who kicks the ball, where the ball goes, whether someone touches it with his hands, etc. – is determined by the world. Whether such activities and events count as violations of the rules of soccer, on this picture, is determined by what those rules are. Since it is Desire that determines what the *conceptual* rules are under which its object is subsumed, it is Desire that determines what counts as  $F$ . Hegel's idealism here is an idealism about what it is *to follow a rule*. The account under consideration is that following a rule consists in nothing more than certain of the activities of the spontaneous understanding. I.e., we make rules for ourselves and determine, by ourselves, what counts as following them.

There at least two problems with this picture. The first can be brought out by considering the following scenario. I go about my house touching various pieces of furniture and saying aloud each time “glorp”. Suppose this were a rule-governed process of *predicating* “glorp” of some of the pieces of furniture in my house. Suppose further that rule-following is as the account that we are considering conceives it, so that I cannot go wrong in my judgments of the glorpness of things. Consider the following situation. I have gone all through my house (ostensibly) judging of certain things that they are glorp, and of certain others that they are not glorp. At some point, I judge of my couch that it is glorp. Later, I judge of it that it is not, and never has been, and *further*, that when I earlier judged that it was glorp, I was mistaken. We seem to run into the following problem:

- (1) The couch is glorp iff I judge that the couch is glorp.
- (2) I judge at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp.
- (3) The couch is glorp.
- (4) I judge at  $t_2$  that the couch is not glorp.
- (5) The couch is not glorp.
- (6) The couch is both glorp and not glorp.<sup>16</sup>

As if this were not troubling enough, my *recognition* at  $t_2$  that at  $t_1$  I judged that the couch is glorp provides the material for the following, similar argument:

- (7) I judge at  $t_2$  that at  $t_1$  I judged the couch to be glorp, and I judge, at  $t_2$ , that I was, at  $t_1$ , wrong to do so.
- (8) My judgment at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp is incorrect iff I judge at any time that it is incorrect.
- (9) My judgment at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp is incorrect.
- (10) I judge at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp, and I am incorrect to do so.

As (6) is a contradiction, and (10) is *ex hypothesi* impossible, something has certainly gone wrong here. This argument proceeds, however, only from the assumptions that the account under consideration is correct and that we sometimes judge differently at different times or judge ourselves to have made mistakes. Since the latter two premises are clearly true, the view under consideration – that conceptual rules are applied correctly or incorrectly solely in virtue of the judging activity of the experiencing subject – is clearly untenable. Notice that there is no room here for a move that would modify the claim to apply only to *justified*, *correct*, etc. judging. Any such move would simply import a locus of correctness other than the experiencing subject, and in doing so would undermine the account in question.

This worry, while serious and important, is not Hegel's. Hegel's worry about this picture of rule-following stems directly from the constraint that we have already seen the Transcendental Deduction impose on any acceptable account of rule-following: that it must make following a rule recognizable as such to the one who follows (or attempts to follow) it. Hegel's worry is that this condition is not met by the present account because, according to it, there is no distinction to be made between *seeming* to follow a rule, and *actually* following one. Hegel puts this point in terms of the *objectivity* of rule-following, i.e., in terms of the accordance of the object with the rule that is applied to it:

On account of the independence of the object, therefore, it [Desire] can achieve satisfaction only when the object itself effects the negation within itself; and it must carry out this negation of itself in itself, for it is *in itself* the negative, and must be *for* the other what it *is*. (PS §175)

What the experiencing subject needs is a standard for the correctness and incorrectness of his judgments that is *independent* of it, that is *not* it. It is not sufficient that Desire predicate arbitrary concepts of its object. It must be the case that this object, in some sense, is *genuinely* subsumable under these concepts. The object must *be* for the subject what it *is*. Thus, Hegel is here pointing out that, as long as Desire is the only available standard for what counts as the correct application of a conceptual rule, *for Desire*, there *is* no



such standard. That is, as long as whatever Desire does is correct, there can be, for Desire, no distinction between correct and incorrect at all, no *getting it right*.<sup>17</sup> Desire, thus, cannot recognize following a rule as such because to it everything *seems* to count as following a rule, and there is no basis *other than* this seeming for it to judge.

What Desire requires is that there be a standard for when it correctly follows a rule that is available to it as such. What Hegel suggests is that so long as it is Desire that we are considering – so long as the experiencing subject is the only standard under consideration – Desire can never achieve this end. Consider again the case in which I go all through my house ostensibly predicating “glorp” of certain pieces of furniture, and “not-glorp” of others. There is nothing about the *objects* of my predications that speaks to whether these predications are correct or incorrect. Of course, there *would be* something about the object that would make these predications of ‘glorp’ correct or incorrect *if the content of that concept were fixed* – namely, that they are or are not glorp – but the issue at hand is how such content fixing is possible. Furthermore, there is nothing about my *past* uses of “glorp” to help here either. It might be thought, that is, that my past uses of “glorp” would form some sort of pattern in accordance with which I could project future correct and incorrect uses of “glorp”. The problem, of course, is that there must also be some standard of correctness for what can be extrapolated from this pattern, and here again I am left with only my own judgment about how it *seems* to me. Thus, on the Desire model, the experiencing subject looks not to the object to determine whether he has used ‘glorp’ correctly, but only to his own judgment on the matter:

[S]elf-consciousness is thus certain of itself only by superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life; self-consciousness is Desire. Certain of the nothingness of this other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is *for it* the truth of the other; it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a *true* certainty, a certainty which has become explicit for self-consciousness itself *in an objective manner*. (PS §174)

This is how Hegel describes the first phase of this process, whereby the experiencing subject turns away from objects as the standard for correctness, and towards himself. We have already seen how he describes the second phase, in which this subject sees that, as long as all he has to base his decision on is how things appear to him, there can be no possible distinction for him between correct and incorrect uses.

What the experiencing subject needs, then, is a kind of resistant force, something that is able to act as a standard for correct and incorrect uses of a concept that is *independent* of his own judgments of correctness and incorrectness. As Hegel puts it:

Consciousness has for its object one which, of its own self, posits its otherness or difference as a nothingness, and in so doing is independent. (PS §176)

The idea here is that, if the experiencing subject is to judge correctly, there must be a standard for correct judgment with which he can agree but which at the same time is independent of his own judgment. The natural first place to look for such a standard was the world, but we have seen that *for the experiencing subject* this will not do. The world is the *object* of his judgment, but is not a standard that he can use to determine the correctness or incorrectness of his judgment about it. This is because, until the content of his concept is fixed, nothing in the world can make a judgment about that content correct or incorrect.

### III.

A helpful context in which to think about this problem is that in which it comes to the attention of an experiencing subject that he has *misused* a concept. Hegel's point is that such a mistake can only *come to his attention* – as opposed to his unilaterally *deciding* that he has made a mistake – if there is some matter of fact about what counts as a mistake that is independent of his own judgments. I.e., the experiencing subject must be *corrected* by something or someone. What Hegel sees is that for the Kantian constraint on rule-following to be met, whatever does this correcting of the experiencing subject must be recognizable to him as having the *authority* to do so. The world does not have the power to correct the subject, and so the issue of authority does not so much as arise regarding its role in this story. As we have seen, the experiencing subject himself *would* have this authority, but can never be in a position to correct himself. (For reasons that we saw earlier, he always either agrees with himself or runs into contradiction.) What Hegel then confronts is the question of what *could* have this authority. His answer is that:

Self consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness. (PS §175)

Later he adds that,

Self-consciousness exists *for a self-consciousness*. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it. (PS §177)

Only by standing in some relation to another experiencing subject – which Hegel here calls “achieving satisfaction in” and “existing for”, about which

we will have more to say in a moment – does the experiencing subject have available to him a standard for correctness and incorrectness. Two questions immediately arise: First, how is Hegel's answer supposed to work; and, second, is it successful?

How is it that an experiencing subject can come to recognize anything other than himself as having the authority to determine what is correct and incorrect vis-à-vis his conceptual (rule-governed) judgments? The proposal we are considering is that this is possible only if this other thing is another experiencing subject. This proposal has two parts, which it will be important for us to keep distinct. First, there is the claim that another experiencing subject *can* provide a standard for the correctness and incorrectness of the conceptual judgments of an experiencing subject. Second, there is the claim that *only* another experiencing subject can do this.

To see the appeal of this position, let us consider again the failures of the world and the experiencing subject to provide a standard. Consider the situation that we proposed earlier had to be possible if the experiencing subject is to act according to a rule and recognize his doing so as such: the situation in which he is *corrected*. We saw that the world could not correct the experiencing subject because the experiencing subject is never in a position to recognize the “corrections” of the world as such. Since he is making judgments *about* the world, he must always base these judgments on how the world *appears to him*. Thus, the experiencing subject in this case really uses only himself as his standard. He may *take* himself to recognize the world as authoritative, but for him to do so is a meaningless gesture. It is really only his whims that govern his behavior. (Of course, his whims are *causally* affected by the world, and while such causal relations will have *some* place in the justificatory story that will eventually have to be told here, it is not at the level of being corrected and recognizing this as such.) Further, the experiencing subject cannot be his own standard because, as we have seen, this simply means that whatever he takes to be correct will be correct, and this is just to say that he has no standard for correctness at all.

How, then, is another able to correct the experiencing subject in such a way that the latter can recognize this correction as such? We will begin with a broad-strokes picture of how Hegel thinks this works, and then focus on particular details as the need arises. Suppose, then, for the moment that the experiencing subject can recognize another experiencing subject as such.<sup>18</sup> Suppose further that the experiencing subject can recognize that another experiencing subject makes certain judgments.<sup>19</sup> The experiencing subject, then, is confronted with the following situation. He encounters a being that he takes to be like himself (another experiencing subject) and who makes judgments about the world as he does. As Hegel puts it:

Thus the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does

itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. (PS §183)

Suppose further that there will be times at which the experiencing subject agrees with the other in the judgments that he is willing to make, and there will be other times in which he finds himself disagreeing with the other. Hegel's idea is that since the experiencing subject recognizes the other as the same sort of thing as himself, he must take the other's judgments as authoritative just as he does his own. To borrow once again from Kant, part of what is involved in the use of an object-concept is the endorsement of certain counterfactual conditionals about what manifold of intuitions an experiencing subject would have if he were, say, situated elsewhere in space, or if background conditions were different etc. In a sense, when one experiencing subject encounters another (and recognizes him as such), he takes that other as a version of himself elsewhere, and by doing so he is, by the very fact of *his* judging a certain way, committed to that other's making certain corresponding judgments. If this is the case, however, then when the two disagree, something has obviously gone wrong; a contradiction of sorts arises. *This*, Hegel thinks, is exactly the situation for which we have been searching. Confronted with a contradiction, the experiencing subject and the other must work out who, if either, is right and who is wrong. In doing so, the *community* that is thereby formed provides a *standard* for correct and incorrect uses of the concept in question.<sup>20</sup>

One concern that immediately arises from considering this picture is that it bears a striking superficial resemblance to the picture we rejected earlier of the individual setting his own standard for correctness and incorrectness.<sup>21</sup> On that picture, instead of having two experiencing subjects that contradict each other, we had one experiencing subject whose judgments at different times were contradictory. There we rejected that picture because of this contradiction. Here we have just said that the contradiction between two experiencing subjects provides the key to solving our present difficulties. If this is really to be a solution, ours or Hegel's, there must be some disanalogy between the two cases. It must be that, despite appearances, the *way* that diachronic time-slices of a person interact with one another *vis-à-vis* rule-following is different from the way that different experiencing subjects do so synchronically. In what does this difference consist?

The first thing to notice in considering these two cases is that *what* is taken as the standard for correctness and incorrectness in the two cases is not analogous. In the case we considered earlier, correctness was determined by whatever the one experiencing subject considered correct at any given time. This, we saw, generated contradiction, and failed to provide any standard to the experiencing subject. The analogy in the current case would be if the standard of correctness was determined by whatever either experiencing subject considered correct at any given time. Clearly, this would generate a

contradiction (between disagreeing experiencing subjects) and would give neither subject any further standard to which to appeal. This, however, is *not* the standard in this case, and seeing what is will bring us to a further, more important asymmetry.

In the case under consideration it is not the judgment of any particular experiencing subject that acts as a standard for correctness and incorrectness of a judgment. Rather it is the agreement of the *community* of experiencing subjects that does so.<sup>22</sup> Of course, one might now wonder whether a similar move can be made for the individual considered as a community of time-slices. Why can't it be that if the individual agrees with himself over time, or comes to do so, that this agreement can act as a standard for each of his individual time-slices?

The answer to this question is to be found in the nature of the agreement so reached. As we noted earlier, while it may be the *agreement* of the community that provides a standard for correctness and incorrectness, this is only a possible standard because it provides for the possibility of *disagreement* of particular members of the community that is *recognizable as such* to those members. It allows for a member to acknowledge that he has been *corrected*. Consider the senses we might try to give of the time-slices of an individual correcting one another. On the one hand, it might be that a current time-slice corrects a past time-slice. This might be what happens in our previous example when I pronounce that my couch is not, and never has been glorp. The trouble here is that the past time-slice is not corrected in a way that is recognizable as such to him for the simple reason that he *exists only in the past!* No correction can ever reach him, so it cannot be he that is corrected by the present time-slice.<sup>23</sup>

So consider instead whether it might be the case that a past time-slice corrects a present one.<sup>24</sup> In order to make this scenario different from the one in which whatever appears to the present time-slice to be correct is correct, we must have this present time-slice in some sense recognize the authority of the past time-slice vis-à-vis the correctness and incorrectness of his judgments. I.e., just as one individual recognizes the authority of his fellow community members over himself, so the present time-slice will analogously have to recognize the authority of his past (and future) selves over his present one. Remember that one problem we encountered with the individual experiencing subject was that even if he had a pattern of past behavior before him when determining what to do next, there was no standard available to him for determining how this pattern is to be *continued*. That is, for this solution to work it must be the case that the present time-slice corrects his current use of a concept to bring it into conformity with his past use(s). The problem is in determining in what such a rectification would consist. It seems that here we run into the same problem anew: that whatever will seem to him to be rectification will be rectification. This is not, of course, because his memory of what has

happened in the past is in any way deficient, but rather because nothing about what has happened in the past determines what *ought* to happen in the present and future. That is, if it appears to the present time-slice because of his *recognition of his past patterns of behavior* that he has gone wrong, there seems to be no additional fact of the matter to his having gone wrong. Because he must interpret this pattern of behavior in one way or another, as determining that such-and-such rather than such-and-such is the correct way to proceed, it is still *his whim* (regarding what fits with his pattern of past use) that is determining what is correct and incorrect for him. Instead of attempting to use the passive world as a standard, he now attempts to use his passive past selves as one. Both run aground on the same difficulty.

Our task now, then, is to show how the community solution escapes this fate, how it is possible for something other than the experiencing subject's own whim to act as a standard for him for what counts as correct and incorrect. Here is the proposal. An individual experiencing subject judges that  $Fx$ . The community corrects him; they assert that  $\sim Fx$ . The experiencing subject can then either change his judgment to  $\sim Fx$ , or not. In the case in which he changes, it seems as if we have succeeded. The community has been able to act as a standard for his use of "F" and "x". What about the case in which he does not change? If such a case is possible, does it not follow that the success of the first case was a mere illusion? Is it not the case that his accepting the community as his standard for correctness and incorrectness, like his using his past selves as such a standard, is subject to his whim?

The answer here is that it is not. For consider what it is for the experiencing subject to *recognize the community as the standard for correctness and incorrectness as such*. Surely this must consist in, at least for the most part, *accepting* the judgments that the community accepts, and rejecting those that it rejects. Of course, we tried to grant this much to the time-slice individual as well, and there the problem was that what counted as acceptance was determined by the individual's whim. Here, however, that is not the case. What counts as acceptance is what the *community* accepts as counting as acceptance. To stipulate that the experiencing subject recognizes the community as the standard for correctness and incorrectness is already to concede that he will do whatever the *community* determines will count as recognizing the community as the standard for correctness and incorrectness. His whim no longer comes into the picture at all. Such an experiencing subject has already *ceded the authority* to the community to determine what counts as correct and incorrect behavior and *what counts as taking the community as a standard*.<sup>25</sup> (This is what Hegel means when he writes about "the positing of the will as the will of an 'other', and specifically of will, not as a particular, but as a universal will"(PS §230).)<sup>26</sup>

An individual time-slice has no recourse to such a move, for the problem iterates there as it cannot here. His community of earlier time-slices can have

nothing to say on the matter of what will count as following their pattern that he cannot override. He can always construe his actions as following the pattern that he has set himself. The genuine community, however, is in a position to ensure that this is not the case. They are there (or more importantly *then*) to correct him in his construal of their corrections. The members of the genuine community *act along with* the experiencing subject in a way that his past and future time slices do not. They are present to monitor, and (if necessary) change, his behavior according to what they construe as the correct pattern. *This* is the crucial difference between the time-slice community and the genuine one. The rule-governed member of the genuine community is genuinely correctable (or uncorrectable, but even then still wrong).

The main point here is that granting authority to a community consists in taking that community's agreed-upon judgments as one's standard for what is correct and incorrect, and doing this in such a way that it genuinely affects one's own patterns of behavior (in accordance with the standard for such change established by the community's agreed-upon judgment). The time slices of an individual are not in a position to produce an agreed-upon judgment of any sort, and are not in a position to rule further on what counts as conformity. One can try to take one's past use as a standard, but without further supplementation, nothing counts as succeeding or failing to do so. Taking the agreement of a compresent community as a standard, on the other hand, allows for the agreement of the community *about what counts as agreement* to do so. A community is always *present* to hand down further verdicts. Past time slices judge as they judge and do nothing else. So, a compresent community is in a position to act as a standard for correctness and incorrectness, while time slices are not.

#### IV.

At this point, I would like to depart more significantly than I already have from specifically Hegelian concerns in order to address a particular objection that might arise to the proposal at hand: that the agreement of a community can act as a standard of correctness and incorrectness for an individual concept-user. Just as we were able earlier to construct arguments showing the incoherence of the individual experiencing subject taking his own judgments as the standard of what is correct and incorrect, so we seem able now to construct an analogous argument about the judging activity of the community. Remember that there our example was of the experiencing subject going around his house judging of his various pieces of furniture that they were either glorp or not glorp. Since his own judging activity was being taken as the standard, whatever he called *glorp* was glorp, and whatever he called *not glorp* was not glorp. Here, since we are taking it that the standard

for correctness and incorrectness is the community's agreed-upon judgments, we can construct the following argument:

- (1) The couch is glorp iff the community agrees that the couch is glorp.
- (2) The community agrees at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp.
- (3) The couch is glorp.
- (4) The community agrees at  $t_2$  that the couch is not (and never was) glorp.
- (5) The couch is not glorp.
- (6) The couch is both glorp and not glorp.<sup>27</sup>

This seems to show that the community's being the standard of correctness and incorrectness coupled with the fact that the community at different times agrees to contradictory claims shows that using the community as such a standard is incoherent. Again, the following argument has an even more disturbing conclusion:

- (7) The community agrees at  $t_2$  that at  $t_1$  the community agreed that the couch is glorp, and the community agrees at  $t_2$  that it was, at  $t_1$ , wrong to do so.
- (8) The community's agreement at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp is incorrect iff the community agrees at any time that it is incorrect.
- (9) The community's agreement at  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp is incorrect.
- (10) The community agrees  $t_1$  that the couch is glorp, and is incorrect to do so.

This, of course shows, using nothing but what the community has itself agreed, that either the community can go wrong, which is ruled out *ex hypothesi*, or that an individual's using the community as a standard of correctness and incorrectness is as incoherent as using himself would be. If it is true that the only way to provide an individual experiencing subject with a standard for correctness and incorrectness is via the community, and that doing this is a necessary goal of any experiencing subject, then there must be some response available to these two arguments. Furthermore, as we took the analogues of these two arguments to be reasons for rejecting the individual's potential to act as his own standard of correctness and incorrectness, to continue to do so requires that the response we give to these arguments be one that is not available for transposition back to that case.

Before we delve into the solution to these difficulties it will be worth noting that while the above argument is a rudimentary example of intra-communal contradiction, there is a more interesting kind of contradiction closely related to it. This is the case in which the community licenses some material inference about the manifold of intuitions that is proven fallacious, i.e., when the community makes a *prediction* that is *disappointed*. Notice that, using only the resources thus far provided, we are forced to count this



as a kind of intra-communal contradiction. The community agrees to both the judgment that  $p$  (at the time at which the prediction is made), and the judgment that  $\sim p$  (at the time at which the community judges that the prediction has failed). We should like to say that the community is in the position of both *having endorsed* a prediction and *now accepting* its falsification, but that it is never in the position of explicitly endorsing *both*. As the matter currently stands, however, we do not have available to us a way of accounting for such a *change*. What we thus have is a single community whose two (temporal) parts each endorse a different judgment. Without a way to further individuate communities, such a situation must count as a community's endorsing a contradiction. Of course, it is the goal of what follows to remedy this situation.

In considering this pair of arguments, and the more sophisticated relative of them discussed just above, we must be very careful in what *kind* of conclusion that we draw from them. In particular, there is reason to think that the conclusions we have drawn above, as presented, are too strong. What we have in each of these arguments are cases in which the community has run into self-contradiction. It agrees both to one judgment and to its negation. The conclusion we drew above was that the community was not an adequate standard for the correctness and incorrectness of judgments. What is certainly right to conclude here is that any community *that runs into this kind of difficulty* is inadequate to that task. We assumed above that it is simply a *fact* that communities do so, and so it is simply a fact that communities are inadequate to providing a standard for correctness and incorrectness to the individual. We must now investigate this purported fact more closely.

Suppose for a moment that *some* community ran into a contradiction of the sort depicted in the above two arguments. Suppose further that another community did not. The proper conclusion would seem to be that the former would be inadequate to the task of acting as a standard for correctness and incorrectness, but the latter would do just fine vis-à-vis these arguments. Now, such a situation is possible only if it is possible for there to *be* two communities. For instance, if by "community" we just mean all of the experiencing subjects in the world, then clearly there cannot be *two* such communities, and any contradiction found in this community's judgments infects the entire idea of using the community as a standard. The situation described here, however, of *two* communities, one of which runs into such a contradiction and one of which does not, seems entirely possible. The question, then, is whether there is any compelling reason to think that there can be only a single community of this sort, or whether there is a more fine-grained distinction that can be made here.<sup>28</sup>

To answer this question, consider for a moment the specific role that we have been assigning to the community. What we needed was a standard for the correctness and incorrectness of the application of conceptual rules to

manifolds of intuitions. One plausible way of thinking of a community, then, is just as that which has the function of providing such a standard (via the agreement of compresent independent experiencing subjects). Things with functions, however, can succeed or fail in performing their functions, and as we have now seen, the community is no exception. A community can fail to provide a coherent conceptual scheme to its members whenever it runs into contradiction. As it is the *goal* of the members of the community, however, to *have* a coherent conceptual scheme, such successes and failures of the community must be recognizable to its members. As we have emphasized throughout, goal-directedness requires that the ends that one pursues and the means that one takes be recognizable as such. This, in turn, requires that the goal-directed agents be able to make a distinction between merely seeming to recognize a goal or means as such, and actually doing so. This further requires the ability to be *corrected*. What all of this suggests is that there must be some way for the members of a community that fails to fulfill its function, to be corrected. What is puzzling here, though, is that if the community agrees to a contradiction, and the standard of correctness and incorrectness of the judgments of the members of that community is provided by the agreement of the community, then it would seem that the members of the community cannot, in fact, be corrected. This is because the standard of correctness *is the very thing about which they would need to be corrected*. So either the task we have outlined is impossible, or there must be some *further* standard of correctness and incorrectness that comes into play in cases of intra-communal contradiction.

We now have *two* distinct puzzles to consider. The first is how we individuate communities in a non-arbitrary way more fine-grained than merely the collection of all experiencing subjects. The second, which has just emerged in the course of our argument, is how it is possible for the members of a community to be corrected *by something other than the community*, and to recognize this correction as such. We can say a bit about both puzzles here, although the latter is a substantial issue in need of its own, independent study.

First, then, we will address the topic of how to individuate communities. Once again, it is worth our while to look to Hegel's *Phenomenology* for assistance. In particular, in the closing sections of his chapter, "Spirit", Hegel considers a situation in which two communities (Spirits) confront each other, each maintaining a consistent set of standards of correctness and incorrectness (Notions) for their members. While this particular situation does not concern us here, how Hegel individuates these communities does. He writes:

Each of these two self-certain Spirits has no other purpose than its own pure self, and no other reality and existence than just this pure self. But yet they are different; and the difference is absolute because it is set in this element of the pure Notion. (PS §671)

The two communities (Spirits) differ just insofar as their conceptual schemes (Notions) differ. That is, these communities are distinct insofar as their *rules of inference* differ. The suggestion we can then garner from Hegel is that we should individuate communities by *conceptual scheme*.

Of course, if we take this suggestion, we run the risk of eliminating all too easily the contradictions that we have been considering. That is, one might worry that, if we individuate conceptual schemes with too fine a grain, then those who agree to  $p$  will constitute one conceptual scheme, those who accept  $\sim p$  will constitute another, and contradiction will be conceptually impossible. This is a real worry that, especially when combined with issues surrounding incommensurability, must be addressed. It is not, however, directly relevant to the current discussion. Remember that the community we are considering is one that *itself endorses both* of two contradictory propositions. The entire community agrees, we can suppose, that both  $p$  and  $\sim p$ , and so cannot be fractioned off into those that agree that  $p$  and those that agree that  $\sim p$ . As to why any such community would knowingly do such a thing, we have already seen the answer. This is roughly the situation in which a community finds itself when it endorses a material inference – an inference about the way the manifold of intuitions ought to be – that is later shown to be fallacious. I.e., it is the position a community is in when it makes a prediction that fails. It is in the position of both endorsing the prediction and its falsification.

Describing this process as one in which a community fails to fulfill its function, leads us to the second of our puzzles: how it is possible for the members of the community to be corrected by something other than the community, and to recognize this correction as such, for we have been arguing that for a person or group of people to have a goal they must be able to represent the conditions of attaining or failing to attain that goal, and that doing this requires that they be subject to correction that they can recognize as such. Up to this point we have been working through the suggestion that it is consonance of communal judgments that provides a standard of conceptual correctness and incorrectness for the individual experiencing subject. The suggestion on the table now is that the community too must be held to some standard, not for correct and incorrect applications of concepts – we have already conceded that, in this respect, whatever the community says, goes – but rather for its success in providing such a standard to the individual. The puzzling part of all of this is that it would seem that our arguments regarding what the individual might use as a standard seem to lead to the following conclusion: nothing but agreement with a community can act as a standard. This would seem to show that the members of the community cannot appeal to *anything* for their standard for the success of the community itself. The question, then, is how it is so much as possible to regard a community as correct or incorrect in its endorsement of a particular purported conceptual scheme.<sup>29</sup>

Given our answer to our first question, however, about individuating communities, a solution to this puzzle seems well at hand. Suppose that we can individuate communities by conceptual scheme. Then just as a community acts as the standard of correctness and incorrectness of the judgments of its members, it certainly seems possible that a community of communities<sup>30</sup> can act as the standard of correctness and incorrectness of the judgments of the members of a community vis-à-vis their success and failure in providing themselves with a conceptual scheme. That is, the solution to our previous problem of what can provide a standard of correctness and incorrectness for an individual will have an analogue one level higher. The agreement of a community of communities about whether a particular community has succeeded or failed in its goal of providing a conceptual scheme for its members can act as a standard of success or failure for an individual community.

It is important to notice the differences between this suggestion and the suggestion we explored earlier regarding an individual as a collection of time-slices. Both were a way to avoid the difficulties presented by de facto contradictions – the former for the community, the latter for the individual. We have argued that the proposal in the case of the individual does not work, and it is a point in favor of the current proposal that it is not subject to the same objections that led us to that conclusion. The trouble with using the agreement of time-slices of individuals as the standard for correctness and incorrectness is that because each time slice necessarily exists at a time when no others do, it is difficult to see how any correction of one time-slice by another could possibly be made. An individual is always free in the present to take his past time-slices' behavior as consistent with his current behavior or not as he sees fit, and is equally uncorrectable by those time-slices of himself that have not yet come into existence. Such difficulties are a direct byproduct of the proposal that an individual be divided by across *time*. The current proposal, however, faces no such restriction. Individuating communities by conceptual scheme leaves open the possibility of two such communities existing concurrently, and so being in the position to correct one another.

Of course, we do not have the time to delve into the details of this suggestion here. What we do have time for is to outline a response to a fairly straightforward objection to it which will hopefully offer some insight into how a further articulation of the suggestion might go. The objection is simply this. Just as we took contradictions at the levels of the individual and the agreement of a community as reason to abandon employing these as standards of correctness and incorrectness, we can also imagine that a contradiction could arise at the level of the community of communities. By parity of reasoning this would seem to preclude using the agreement of such a community as a standard.

The beginning of an answer to this object can be found by noticing that both Kant and Hegel argue that one always needs to employ *some*

conceptual scheme. Thus, in cases in which a particular conceptual scheme *fails*, the solution can never be to simply abandon that scheme, but must always also involve *replacing* it with some other one. Thus, the agreement of a community of communities is not only about the failure of certain conceptual schemes, but also about the suitability of adopting certain successor schemes. This brings us to the thorny issue of the *progress* of science. What we need, then, to respond to this objection is an account of such progress that provides a standard for rational theory change that a community in the grips of such a change can recognize as such.

One suggestion that seems amenable here is that there might be some single criterion for when one conceptual scheme is suited to replace another (such as Sellars' suggestion that the successor theory be able to explain both the successes and the failures of the predecessor scheme).<sup>31</sup> The agreement of a community of communities that then acts as a standard for particular communities is the agreement reached at the hypothetical end of a process of successively replacing one conceptual scheme by another until an adequate one is found. As Hegel puts it in a slightly different context:

The realm of Spirits which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in Time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its predecessor. (PS §808)

Of course, since this agreement is hypothetical, and if real, in the far distant future, it cannot act as a standard in the same *way* that a community acts as a standard to an individual. This final community of communities is not present to correct today's communities. Rather, achieving such an agreement must act as a *regulative ideal* of such communities, pursued *by* employing the single criterion for theory change. If there were such a criterion, one which could produce univocal verdicts about when it is appropriate to replace one conceptual scheme with another, the employment of such a criterion would allow communities of communities to work towards the common goal of reaching eventual agreement with one another about a single conceptual scheme adequate for representing the world. The successor community, by providing a conceptual scheme that meets the appropriate criteria would act as an immediate check on the predecessor community, and would do so in the service of using the hypothetical end-community as a more mediate check.

The picture we would have if such a line is tenable would be as follows. The standard for the correctness and incorrectness of the judgments of a conceptual agent is the agreement of the community of which he is a part. Communities are individuated by their conceptual schemes – by the rules of inference they license, prohibit, require, etc. Such conceptual schemes, in part because they are attempts to represent *the world*, can run into

contradictions. When this happens, and when there is a conceptual scheme available that meets a certain criterion of adequacy, a new community is formed that employs this successor scheme. Communities engage in and continue this process in the hopes of reconciling their own conceptual scheme with that of a hypothetical community whose scheme is ultimately adequate (runs into no contradictions). This story is, I hope, at least faintly recognizable as resembling the Hegelian notion of the necessary historical development of the absolute, and is, I think, not as implausible as that notion has been taken to be.

## Notes

1. I would like to thank Drew Johnson, Marc Lange, Alan Nelson, Ram Neta, Jesse Prinz and Jay Rosenberg for commenting on earlier versions of this paper.
2. Thus, while my reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology* is close to, and indebted to, Pippin (1989) and Pinkard (1996), it also places emphasis on the *semantic* project in which Hegel engages rather than the epistemological one (although, of course, the two are intimately connected). My view is closest to that developed in chapter four of Forster (1998), although cf. fn. 8.
3. In casting the Transcendental Deduction as a piece of practical reasoning I am following Sellars (1964) and Rosenberg (2005).
4. According to Kant, *we* are the types of creatures that passively receive sensory manifolds over time, use concepts to unite these manifolds, and can apperceive our doing so. Thus the goal listed is a *constitutive* goal; it is one that we must all meet in order to *be* the kinds of creatures we are.
5. Kant is an inferentialist of a very particular type. He is crucially different from, say, Brandom insofar as he makes it a necessary condition on something's being a concept that it bear inferential relations not only to other concepts, but also crucially to *intuitions*. I.e., he places language-*entry* moves at the fore.
6. It must be recognizable as such that one is following *some rule or other*, that this rule is one governing the employment of an *object*-concept, and that one is following it correctly. It may still be unavailable to one just which *particular* rule one is following in doing these, which particular object-concept one is employing.
7. It is worth noting that this premise is one which, although it is fairly clearly at work in many of the contemporary discussions of rule-following, is rarely given a defense. This is true despite the fact that it is perhaps the very premise at the heart of the disagreement between social-inferentialists (e.g., Brandom) and so-called Meaning Externalists (e.g., Dretske, Fodor, Millikan). Of course, the current defense in terms of practical reasoning may be as controversial as the Internalist Premise itself – a meaning externalist might very well want to be an externalist about ends and means as well – but it at least attempts to shed some light on *reasons* one might have for holding the Internalist Premise. Gareth Evans is another philosopher in the business of giving such reasons. Cf. Evans (1982).
8. Forster (1998) argues that the opening chapters of the phenomenology (along with certain chapters in the section on Reason) do work towards *two* important Hegelian theses: that conceptual understanding is necessarily linguistic, and that language is necessarily communal. On the present reading, it is only the former thesis that is engaged in the sections on Consciousness, despite the fact that, once the latter thesis has also been adopted, Hegel can further say of Consciousness that it fails for neglecting *it* as well. We are about to see how Hegel's argument that language, and

- therefore conceptual understanding, develop in the course of his treatment of Self-Consciousness.
9. All citations from the *Phenomenology* are taken from Hegel, [1807]. I will continue to abbreviate this PS, followed by section number.
  10. Cf. Sellars (1962).
  11. In fact, for Kant it will consist in certain language-*entry* as well as language-language moves. It is a short step to adding language-*exit* moves to this list. Cf. Sellars (1954). As language-*entry* and language-*exit* moves are both, *in some sense*, word-world relations, one must be very careful here about oversimplifying the inferentialist's position. Thus, the step from inferentialism to idealism is not as straightforward as it might at first seem.
  12. I am here using Continental quotation marks, '>' '<', to name inferentially articulated concepts.
  13. Pippin (1989) suggests rightly, I think, that Hegel's choice of "Desire" signals both the pragmatist/internalist strain that Hegel initiates in this section of the *Phenomenology*, according to which what counts as correct and incorrect for a subject will be a matter of what his *interests* are in the subject matter, and that since the subject conceives of the external world as something *to be known*, it is conceived by him essentially as a *lack*. "Life", on the other hand, according to Pippin, signals the self-determining (or self-moving) aspect of the experiencing subject's experience of the world here.
  14. Berkeley, [1713].
  15. "It is this very flux, as self-identical independence which is itself an *enduring existence*, in which, therefore, they [the differences on which Desire bases its sorting practices] are present as distinct members and parts existing on their own account"(PS §169).
  16. We can stipulate that in asserting that the couch is both glorp and not glorp, 'glorp' is used univocally, to say of the couch that it is both glorp and not glorp at the same time, with the same part of itself, in relation to the same thing, etc.
  17. "One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'"(Wittgenstein, 1953: §258).
  18. The conditions under which this is possible is a subject that is taken up by Hegel briefly in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the section about the Life and Death Struggle, and then given a fuller treatment in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Hegel's thought in the former seems to be that while animals are such that they can have desires and act to preserve their own lives, humans – qua self-conscious conceptual agents – can, in addition to this, reflect on those desires and decide to give up their lives. Thus, the thought seems to run, one sign that something is a self-conscious conceptual agent is that it is capable of engaging in a life-and-death struggle. Of course, animals can *risk* their lives, and so it is unclear what distinguishes *this* from engaging in a life-and-death struggle.
  19. We can suppose that he does so in a way along the lines explicated by Sellars' account of the meaning rubric. I.e., he classifies the other's utterances as more or less functionally analogous to his own.
  20. Hegel's first attempt at understanding how this process works itself out – in an early version of the *Phenomenology* published in English as *Hegel and the Human Spirit* – focuses on the need for the parties to agree, and is modelled on a loving marriage that produces a baby. In the *Phenomenology* he focuses instead on the essential role that possible *disagreement* plays, and so begins instead on the relation between Master and Slave. (Each party takes up the cause of his own judgment and tries to *master* or *enslave* the other. They each see that the other can provide a standard for them, and since each wants to be *correct*, tries to force the other into agreement. Of course, Hegel sees that *this* kind of agreement actually does neither any good, and the remainder of the *Phenomenology* is devoted to ascertaining what kind of agreement will actually work.)
  21. This similarity is explored at length in Blackburn, (1984).

22. Such agreement, it should be noted, is – if communal agreement is to serve the role that it is prescribed by the Transcendental Deduction – a *regulative ideal* of all experiencing subjects. I.e., we are stipulating all experiencing subjects necessarily have the goal of conceiving of themselves as single, unified subjects persisting through time. The means to this goal essentially involves having a standard of correctness and incorrectness for object-concept-employing judgments. *If* the only way to have such a standard is to have community agreement, then all experiencing subjects must take the reaching of such agreement as a further intermediary goal, i.e., as a regulative ideal.
23. Of course, there is a sense in which a person in the past can be corrected by a person in the present. We take ourselves to have corrected Ptolemy. As we will see farther on, though, making sense of the possibility of such a correction requires a fairly sophisticated story.
24. Such is the practice that Robert Brandom takes entire communities to engage in Brandom, (1999). The problem for Brandom then is two-fold. First he has to show that such a solution avoids the difficulties to follow. Second he must show, since he is a *social-inferentialist*, why Blackburn's picture of the individual engaging in such a practice is essentially disanalogous to the community's doing so.
25. Of course, communities can go wrong, and it is possible for an individual to refuse to accept the community's agreement on some particular matter of fact as authoritative. What is essential in such cases is that the individual refuses to accept *this particular* community's agreement as authoritative, but not the judgment of some better situated community. Just how a community can go wrong, and in what better-situatedness consists are issues that we will touch on at the close of the current discussion, but which warrant a paper all to themselves.
26. We have now described, at least in outline, in what recognition of the community's authority over the correctness and incorrectness of the individual experiencing subject's judgments consists. It is important to note that this is distinct from the issue of *why* such a subject could, would, or must arrive at such recognition. The answer to this question is that the experiencing subject must have *some* standard of correctness and incorrectness for his judgments, and *he himself* will not do, etc. So the question, for instance, of whether the individual's acceptance of the community as his standard will depend on his whims is answerable firmly as "No". Given the necessity of the success of the Transcendental Deduction, if the arguments above are sound, he has *no choice but* to accept communal agreement as his standard of correctness and incorrectness.
27. Again stipulating that the community agrees that the couch is both glorp and not glorp at the same time, with the same part of itself, in relation to the same thing, etc.
28. The motivation for this move is exactly parallel to that for the position we discussed earlier that attempted to remedy the difficulties for the *individual* by dividing him into time-slices. Thus it will be essential to keep track of the *differences* between the strategies employed here to make "community" more fine-grained, and those employed there to make "individual" so.
29. Wright (1981) argues that nothing can act as such a standard. Brandom (1999) argues that communities can use other communities as standards in the way that common-law judges use others common-law judges as standards. Rosenberg (1980) argues that communities can use other communities as standards by employing a Sellarsian criterion for justified theory change.
30. Perhaps the most relevant example of such a community of communities is what we call the *scientific* community. The proponents of competing theories share a conceptual scheme, and the purpose of the scientific community is to adjudicate among them. This is certainly a model that would be congenial to Kant and Hegel.
31. Pace Kuhn (1977), Sellars (1961). Rosenberg (1980) argues that this criterion can be grounded in a Kantian account of theoretical *objects*.



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