

CHAPTER ONE

The Experience of Conscious Life

Introduction

In this chapter, my goal is to describe the shape of consciousness Hegel calls *Wahrnehmen*, or perception, as *inductive in-itself*. That is, I will argue that the experience of perceptual consciousness depends on its being mediated by the experience of consciousness as such, despite its being unaware of the precise nature of its dependence. Specifically, perceptual consciousness depends on the experience of having to recognize that sensible details are aspects of a manifold. I will focus primarily on the way perception responds to its experience and its implications for our understanding of what the task is with which we emerge from the experience of perceptual consciousness.

Hegel's phenomenological analysis of sensuous certainty, the shape of conscious life which inaugurates the science of the experience of consciousness, has spurred a number of critical commentaries, each of which fastens in some way on an alleged contamination of the immediacy which Hegel claims is its defining feature as a shape of consciousness.¹ While I am concerned more, as I have mentioned, with the implications of the transition into perception than with the analysis of sensuous certainty alone, I take my reading of Hegel's analysis to show why any contamination of sensuous certainty must already be its own doing and why the only legitimate attempts to defend or preserve its immediacy are made by perception.

Sensuous Certainty

Sensuous certainty, the manner of experiencing that is best characterized by the phrase “there’s nothing to it,” presents a paradoxical beginning to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. On the one hand, what we seem to learn is that it is not, and could not be, a way of experiencing at all. Of all the shapes of conscious life examined in the course of the argument, it is uniquely untenable: the very independence from mediation it proclaims precludes language, content, and meaning. Hegel’s editorial remarks at the outset of the chapter devoted to sensuous certainty slide from a description of the necessity of immediacy for the beginning of our science, through a brief portrayal of sensuous certainty, to the outright repudiation of sensuous certainty as a form of knowledge.²

On the other hand, sensuous certainty is there as the beginning, and moreover as the one form of conscious life whose place we are supposed to accept as self-evidently necessary, or rather, the form we are to accept without imposing our own standards of unity or necessity. Of its placement, Hegel responds rather weakly that “our object cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself.”³

The paradox, then, is that of a shape of consciousness explicitly denigrated while at the same time granted an immunity from the demands of conceptual thinking, of a form of conscious life that is both uniquely impracticable and uniquely necessitated.

One of the opening sections of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, entitled “With What Must the Science Begin?,”⁴ helps somewhat in clarifying the situation regarding sensuous certainty, but equally carries with it the risk of conflating the very distinct concerns for beginnings appropriate to each text.⁵ In what follows, I will attempt to bridge the remarks from Hegel’s *Science of Logic* to the issues specific to sensuous certainty, using Hegel’s scattered remarks on beginnings in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a backdrop.⁶

There are three claims made in the *Science of Logic* that have a bearing on the place of sensuous certainty: the inseparability of mediation and immediacy; the fact that immediacy is already a reflective determination, that is, mediated by its exclusion of mediation; and the argument that the immediacy of the beginning can only be comprehended in its necessity in light of the conclusion, in which mediation is revealed as the working of a self-mediating totality, hence immediate in the sense that it is unconditioned by any external forces.

The first of these claims seems to prompt the remark that the only suitable beginning is immediate knowledge. If there is no mediation without immediacy, and no immediacy without mediation, from the standpoint of the self-comprehension of experiencing immediate knowledge begs no questions, or rather begs them all, leaving the whole of the mediating that necessarily belongs to it to be exposed. The alternative, some mediated principle of cognition like the instrumental theory of knowledge described in the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, would equally show itself to require further mediation because of the immediacy with which it is taken up as the beginning, but it would leave unexamined the development leading up to such a theory. Sensuous certainty is the paradigm of undeveloped experiencing, the form of experiencing which claims that no development is necessary or possible. It thereby poses the task of the complete course of development, which is the necessary object of science.⁷

At the same time, it is inherently problematic as a “primitive” form of conscious life, precisely because it must already be mediated by the exclusion of mediation. It is a reflective claim, a kind of extremist empiricism, and in this respect it could never be what it says it is—experiencing simpliciter. It is, rather, already a (crudely, and hence the disparaging remarks of Hegel’s) philosophical reflection on experiencing.⁸ The reflective relationship shows up in sensuous certainty as a claim made prior to experiencing which demonstrates in experiencing that it could only have been made by excluding conscious life altogether. In this respect, what we see in its experience is as much the refutation of crude or naive empiricism as it is the letting-be of the form of conscious life prescribed by the opening paragraph of the phenomenological argument. That we learn that experiencing as described by sensuous certainty is impossible, then, says as much about the reflective position it has adopted as it does about how experiencing occurs.⁹

The third claim, which is in fact one of the most profound conclusions we reach at the end of the text, concerns the continuity between the position sensuous certainty holds as a beginning and the culmination of the process it initiates. It is only when immediacy is shown to be the result of self-mediation, a mediated immediacy, that the necessity that experiencing show up as immediate is comprehended.¹⁰ To be sure, the immediacy of self-mediation is a far cry from the impoverished content of sensuous certainty; but the objective, that experiencing speak for itself

and be unconditioned by extraneous terms, is consistent with the goal of science, and the end, in effect, confirms the demand of the beginning.¹¹

What makes compelling the placement of sensuous certainty at the inception of the argument is, in the end, the combination of the goal of immediacy, that what we experience is self-determining and not dependent on anything external, and the necessity that we recognize that immediacy does show itself to depend on mediation. That is, we can take nothing else as our beginning, because we cannot posit its dependence on anything but must experience its dependence as its self-mediation.

With the claim that there “is nothing” to knowing what is, the sense-certain consciousness presents us with the claim, not that the work of experiencing is already done, but that there is none to do. Sensuous certainty is the claim that experiencing simply is, or it simply happens. Putting this claim to work we learn that there is something to be done, if only to preserve the aspects of being sensuous certainty tries to claim for itself.

Sensuous certainty can claim to be immediate knowing precisely because it ostensibly recognizes nothing other than what is. It carries no expectations over and against the being of its objects and no standards other than its own openness to being, or its receptivity. Its immediacy lies in the autonomy of its objects, in their being unopposed or unrelated to any distinct cognitive elements through which they come to be. In Hegelian terms, nothing recognized by sensuous certainty is external to, and therefore mediating for, the truth of the content of its awareness. It is on the basis of this undifferentiated integrity of its experienced other that its claim to be the purest kind of knowing is supposed to be secured.

Even in its accounting for its immediacy, however, we can see that there are a number of distinctions present. As we watch it engage in being certain, these distinctions will show up as contradicting its claim of immediate knowledge. As Hegel notes, it is its own work that raises these ultimately terminal objections, and it is to its own work that we immediately turn.

Initially, like the other two forms of object-oriented conscious life that arise from its ashes, the individual who is certain of its sensory awareness takes this to be a claim about the way things are. That is, it distinguishes its certainty from its object, and introduces the dualism of what it is aware of and its own awareness. This is precisely the kind of distinction it ought not to have made, because its immediacy depends on not having to recognize (or not having to recognize already bridged) real distinctions. To

admit them is precisely to admit mediation, a crisis that sensuous certainty initially hopes to avert by assigning first its object, and then the certain knower itself, ontological primacy.¹² What it will discover is that even taken singly, the terms through which it seeks to salvage its immediacy demand mediation.

In making its initial claim about what is, sensuous certainty focuses on that of which it is receptive and singles out something from this spatio-temporal field of awareness. This object, then, is the basis or ground of my certainty. It is because it is that I am certain of it.

On closer inspection, however, that of which it is certain has to speak for itself and provide its own determinateness. But if that determinacy involves, at the very least, distinguishing its object from its (inessential) certainty, it cannot be immediate, and the question arises, of what can it be certain? Sensuous certainty seeks to avoid any determination of its object that could be introduced from outside, and so its reply can only be in terms of the objective determining of its field: it is now, or it is here.

But it is through the indeterminacy of its apparent object that sensuous certainty finds itself in its first dilemma: now and here pick out every situation, and so it must either admit external terms as affecting *this* object and excluding others, and thereby admit mediation, or it must find some other way to single out¹³ or secure the specificity of its object. In other words, either its object is truly indeterminate, and so a 'now' (or a 'here') that is *all* nows and heres (this is the initial form of universality)¹⁴ but differentiated and mediated through the act of certainty (because this now is *not-then* or *not-there*), or it can uncover another immediate term that can salvage what it means by this now or here.

It is through its being mine that I am certain of the objective field, and so the temporal and spatial order is given up and the order of conscious awareness itself adopted. It should be clear that this option simply reinscribes the problem of mediation: there are as many distinct I-situations as there are now-situations, thus either this I must be mediated by a unified or universal I, singled out from and related to a principle of subjectivity, or it must be apprehended through another immediately singular term.

But it is equally true that the attempt to assert the primacy of the I is already mediated by the failure of the object to win immediacy. The move back to the knowing or certainty itself results from sensuous certainty being repelled¹⁵ from the object. What we can see, as observers committed to pursuing the attempt to salvage immediacy in knowing, is that the

object alone cannot provide it and that it must include the being receptive of the knower; but that is, again, precisely to convict sensuous certainty of a contradiction.

In attempting to preserve its integrity in the face of an apparent dependence on otherness, and thus on mediation, sensuous certainty has traced the path whose inevitability was plain the moment it introduced distinctions between what it knew and the act of knowing. But it has been shown a subtler truth about conscious life, one which it will explore explicitly in its final attempt to defend the immediacy of its knowing: that in seeking an immediate, or undifferentiated, integrity, it really has been aiming at a kind of universality, the indifferent¹⁶ unity of every apparently distinct term. What it took to be, the immediately specific or singular object or subject of certainty, has instead shown itself not to be. In its place is the immediate simple togetherness of all terms, the only possible object of an immediate knowing. This sensuous certainty identifies as its own act the “relation that remains self-identical.”¹⁷

In asserting the primacy of its relational integrity, of the act from which it mistakenly sought to isolate objective and subjective terms, sensuous certainty has again unwittingly engaged in mediating its immediacy—it identifies as an immediate or simple unity terms which it has experienced as distinct. As we come to see, however, the unity it achieves by actively assimilating all the terms it has exposed within its experience is only to the extent it is equally actively differentiated from the unity of the activity of sensuous certainty as such.

To identify its relational whole, sensuous certainty discards the comparative object and subject terms (this, now, and I) and gives itself over to the singular experience that it is. There is now no longer the desire to distinguish one object from another, or one subject from another, but the simple devotion to the moment of certainty.

It is here that Hegel insists that we be able to point out the truth on which sensuous certainty depends, a move which, it might be maintained, contaminates sensuous certainty, contravening our impartial observation and subjecting it to an external (and hence mediating) demand. To what extent is the call for pointing a violation of the phenomenological process?

It is obvious from the preface and introduction that our observation, as the universal individual prepared to risk our natural assumptions and our self-certain grasp of the world, is an interested one. That is, we are concerned to discover the *Erkenntnis* which results in truth, and our

observation of sensuous certainty is always mediated by our interest. At the same time, our interest can only be safeguarded if we allow conscious life to make its own claims and refrain from intervening. Our interest can mediate our observation, but not sensuous certainty's work. The preliminary conception of phenomenology is just that attitude of letting-be the shapes of conscious life and the confidence that in the course of their own specific attachments either some consistent and satisfactory way of relating to otherness will emerge, or that in its place some determinate improvement to the specific commitments of an inadequate form will show itself.¹⁸

At the same time, the phenomenological approach that we bring to bear on sensuous certainty requires that we become more involved than would mere spectators. Our task is to recover the interestedness that belongs to the life of each form of consciousness, the interestedness of existence which each form has passed beyond to the extent that it has formed itself as a principle organizing its relations with others.¹⁹

Sensuous certainty is from the beginning a kind of knowing, a way of being open to the world. If its principle contradicts its actions, if sensuous certainty is in fact incapable of securing an object and of moving from potential to enacted truth, then we need to know this, and we need to know why. What the demand for pointing expresses is our concern for its realization, our concern to let it be what it claims for itself by observing it enacting the standards it sets for itself, which include knowing that something is. *It* has made the claim of certainty, and as we have already seen, it cannot successfully preserve or express its certainty with words. It is in this respect that the claim itself has been abandoned as inherently self-contradictory, but the possibility of such an experience has not yet been abandoned.²⁰ In trying to preserve or express the experience sensuous certainty claims it has, we are driven to the simplest gesture consistent with the goal of singling something out.

The call to point out the content is an attempt to try to experience what sensuous certainty experiences, that is, to have determinate content, certain and true content, immediately, without the demand for written results. We now are no longer concerned with the self-contradictory fate of those who would assert a claim that would be violated by language. We instead are acting on behalf of the experiencing individual and trying to determine whether or not, under the restricted conditions of isolating for ourselves immediate content, such content is even possible—whether there is any content, that is, to be certain of.

What happens, however, is that pointing out the content repeats the collapse we have seen in each of the two previous attempts to be sense-certain: namely, that any one act of experiencing must occur in relation to the kind of experiencing, that any act of singling out points to both the context of possible acts (in this case, space and time), implied by the very act of singling out, and to the content determined within the context.

When the now it affirms is pointed out, it is of course a later, an other, now.²¹ This second now is then not the now that was meant, but in its sameness to and difference from that first now, it again shows that it really picks out a kind of possible experiencing or a unity of possibly experienced acts, which it must have in order to specify some determinate content.²²

To secure its experience, sensuous certainty must distinguish it from the stream of awareness which it claims it truly is. Once again, it has to distinguish between this apparently determinate act and the unity of acts that give it being. The act, in other words, only has its determinacy in being both not just this act but the unity it points to and not just the unity of awareness, that is, not just sensuous certainty in principle but just this act of it.

While sensuous certainty recoils from this discovery, we can see that to affirm the experience of universality, which here means the unity of the contextual possibility of all the acts of its kind, is equally to affirm just this context of the plurality of possibly distinct acts. In our pointing, we have implicitly recognized the unity of similar acts, out of which we have determined this one. What sensuous certainty does is to resist recognizing the unity that is the *sine qua non* of generating determinate experiences.²³ Thus sensuous certainty is thrown back against the truth that Hegel announced early in his analysis: “[a]n actual sense-certainty is not merely this pure immediacy, but an *instance* of it.”²⁴ In characterizing as external the context of possible experiencing its meaning depends on, sensuous certainty is engaged in continually contradicting itself.

In the experience we have endeavoured to make our own, we have learned two things about conscious life: first, that any determinate object must be an expression of the unity of the context of possible content, the context that equally preserves its expression, or gives it permanence, its being;²⁵ second, that conscious life as a cognitive activity must in its acting recognize the mediating context of preservation and enabling, through which it will attain the mediated immediacy of its object.

But our most pressing concern in the self-determining self-comprehension of experiencing is to see how what we have discovered turns up in and for experiencing itself. I turn now to perception, to see how as ordinary consciousness perception takes up sensible aspects and so preserves what is lost to sensuous certainty.

Perception

With perceptual consciousness, we are introduced to the first form of consciousness that presents itself as the necessary result of a development in conscious life itself. To this extent, perceptual consciousness shows itself to be much more adept at managing to get from one exchange to the next than did sensuous certainty. Perception has found what appears to be a way of taking things as they are, taking them as true, while juggling the sensible details of its predecessor and the universal context on the basis of which those details mean something—the manifold unity of the thing.

Indeed, what distinguishes perception as a form of conscious life is its ability to notice things, take discreet aspects as meaningful, as indicators or signs of its proper object, some manifold unity of those aspects, or some thing. Perceptual consciousness knows that the details which are part and parcel of its awareness of its world stand for some thing, or better, that they belong to some thing. They are not just details, they are openings onto things.²⁶ At the same time, because (like most of us in our non-reflective encounters with others) perception presupposes the active process of determining the relationship of aspect to thing, thus equally presupposes the determinations ‘aspect’ and ‘thing,’ it has a precarious grasp of its situation. The unity it takes to be the truth of any aspect is the unity it makes in identifying any aspect perceptually. It is precisely because its object is in fact this process of distinguishing and then relating aspects to a whole, yet is taken to be either the perceived aspect or the intended whole, that perception runs into trouble.²⁷ Perception depends on not having to account for what is in fact a much more sophisticated set of cognitive operations than singling out might suggest. Perception works to the extent that its familiar prejudices, whose workings exceed the level of cognitive sophistication it can recognize, are not called forth and continue doing their work surreptitiously.²⁸

In this sense, what Hegel calls perception is the kind of conscious life in which we all engage in those moments of relaxed attentiveness, in the simple exchanges whose familiarity guarantees (or at least anticipates)

success. While it is easy to see how this can be spelled out in straightforward, perceptual ways—the redness tells us that this is an apple, not a pear, the blue coat picks out this person as our friend, and the sweetness tells us that this is sugar, not salt we want for our coffee—it seems clear that slightly more complex indicators are consistent with the kind of noticing that is going on here. So, perceiving consciousness is equally the sight of the basket I take to contain apples, the gait I notice as that of my friend, and the shape of the container that I take to suggest that sugar is inside it. What is common to all of these is the kind of relating-to-a-unity, which takes some perceived aspect or detail as its cue to identify some thing.²⁹

The dialectic of perception, whose stages are not my primary focus here, consists of showing that the aspects given to ordinary awareness presuppose and do not account for the determinations they are used to identify, and that from the side of ordinary awareness these determinations lead into contradiction when forced to become explicit. I will address two points: first, that perception is (in the sense I will develop here) inductive in-itself; and second, that the tacit conceptual work underwriting the relative consistency of perception, when forced into its awareness, brings about the death of its object and its way of experiencing. This crisis will lead consciousness to recognize that details alone cannot account for the unity to which they belong, and that the order of explanation must be inverted.

When we look at its conceptual commitments, we can see that perception demonstrates that it has incorporated the crisis of sensuous certainty in its attitude to the target of its awareness, which Hegel calls the property, and the more sophisticated object that target links up with, the thing. Picking up where pointing out left off, perceptual consciousness takes the sensuous aspect by means of which it singles things out to be an expression of a universal or manifold unity, or not just this. The sensuous aspect points to the unity in which it has its being, the unity which preserves it and at the same time determines it as a not just this, or negates it. In noticing this aspect, it posits³⁰ the existence of an immediate unity of aspects.

Notice that in taking up the unity of the thing as its proper object, perception is performing the first act of determinate negation, and it is the first instance of the logic upon which the development of the science of experiencing depends.³¹ The thing is identified as not just this aspect or detail, but the unity given *Copyright © M. Alan* which we have seen experi-

encing demand as a condition of its having determinate content. Sensuous certainty tried to hold fast to just this, and in recognizing the sensible detail as not just this, perception shows itself to be the result of a positive response to experiencing. This it shows to us, and not to itself; to itself, it is just noticing things. We, however, having attempted to experience the immediacy of sensible content, are in a position to recognize the most naive representation of a self-differentiating unity as what experience demands of consciousness in order to occur at all.³² What this means is that we can recognize that perception emerges inductively. Let me describe what I mean here by induction, in a preliminary way, and what I take to be its relationship to what Hegel calls determinate negation, before returning to the specifics of perception.

Many philosophers and students of philosophy are most familiar with induction in the context of the notorious “problem of induction”—the problem, that is, of making true and necessary claims about a domain defined in terms of its contingency and fragmentation. Induction is supposed to be problematic because it is generative, because it extends what we can claim to know from an instance to a kind or type, without ever really justifying, we are told, that kind of epistemic or metaphysical leap.

But as Max Black, among others, has argued, the purportedly problematic nature of induction, and this instance-type move as well, belong to a very specific philosophic project, one concerned with upholding the deductive paradigms of rationality and necessity. From the work of Descartes onward, the task of epistemology has been to isolate and investigate those aspects of a transcendental subjectivity that ensure that certain formal criteria are met in our judgments—criteria derived from a conception of reason as self-identical. The problem of induction really is as much a problem of deduction—the consequences of a dualistic conception of knowing that guarantees that what is true can only ever be derived from the nature of a self-identical subjectivity, not said of things themselves or of experience in its terms.

But induction has a richer history than is allowed by conventional epistemology. It hasn’t always signified the attempt to lend experience a pale version of the rigorous necessity governing thought itself. In Aristotle, for example, there is an account of induction that speaks more directly to the conception that I am arguing animates Hegel’s phenomenology. Let me examine Aristotle’s account briefly.³³

In *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle describes induction in the context of the problem of identifying the source or origin of the discovery of the pri-

mary premises by means of which scientific knowledge is both attained and demonstrated. There are two important issues for Aristotle in detailing the process by means of which we acquire the premises: first, that we, like animals, possess some instinctive discriminatory drive and a corresponding capacity for making sense of the world; and second, that the manner of sense-making we call science or knowledge depends on a series of prior and less accurate or less sophisticated approaches to the task of sense-making. That is, our scientific knowledge develops through an attentiveness to the world and to our success in comprehending it.

Aristotle argues that induction is the name, not for some abstractly rational process of conceptual assimilation, but for the series of unifying responses to the world that lead us to science. Though this process begins for us with sensory experience, the “power of systematizing”³⁴ sensory awareness arises first as memory, then as experience, and then as skill and science. Each is more appropriate to the subtlety of the scientifically comprehended unity of the experienced world, yet each in its own way serves to make possible a kind of coherent involvement in that world, a determinate range of experiencing made possible by a distinctive approach to the issue of systematicity in experience. Induction, for Aristotle, names the process of learning from experience how it demands of us that we unify and comprehend it.³⁵

As I have already suggested, the more traditional (empiricist) account of induction typically begs the question as to what form the unity and multiplicity have to take.³⁶ Empirical observation is said to pick out a number of similar or identical things or events, then infer from them some uniform rule governing their behaviour or identity. The rules which emerge, however, are not rules of the events or things themselves but presupposed rules of so-called rational observation—criteria establishing what counts as the uniformity and repeatability of certain phenomena.³⁷

But, as we will see,³⁸ it isn't simply the predetermined form that unity has to take that distorts inductive inference in its traditional form. Positing one form of mediating unity in experience is, as we have seen in the experience of sensuous certainty, the *sine qua non* of conscious life. The key to induction becoming for-itself as I will define it is its responsiveness to experience under any inadequate principle or rule, when that rule disintegrates in the face of what happens in conscious life. Induction in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* bears a closer resemblance to what Feyerabend might call counter-induction—the need, prompted by experience itself, to renegotiate our categories.

It is from this standpoint that the dualism posited by and implicit in the traditional form of induction becomes as problematic as its circularity. If experience is defined as comprised of intrinsically discreet units, any unity will necessarily be presupposed (and thus imposed), and from the perspective of experience itself, imposed arbitrarily. Because it is imposed without regard for the object itself, its imposition can only be immediate or unconditioned by the mediating presence of the multiplicity itself. There always will be a “remainder” (or, better, a “reminder”) left unaccounted for, because within intrinsically fragmented multiplicities, unity can only tell part of the story. The antithesis between an immediate multiplicity and a knowing unity marks this form of consciousness as inductive in-itself—that is, induction that has not yet learned the unity that reconciles it with, by accounting for, its experienced multiplicity.³⁹ This accounts for the close relationship between traditional accounts of induction and debates over probability theory, in which contingently related events are rated according to their approximation to a rule.

The conservative nature of epistemological debates on this issue (which have hardly advanced at all) is the result of this dualism, which allows proponents of traditional induction to replicate the dualism within the object, pointing to a rational core over and against a contingent and changing surface, or a regularity amidst discrepancy, and so on. The fact that the project of traditional epistemology is self-critical is diffused in the irregularities built into this unruly beast it has dubbed experience. Even the critics of traditional induction invoke just this dualism to challenge the legitimacy of administering any form of unity. Experience, they say, is made up of indeterminately discreet units, or temporally determined successive contents of consciousness, so no prior conformity between units might be discovered. Hume’s famous objections to the importing of inherently abstract conceptual unities (like causal necessity) into the inherently fragmentary world of experiencing are perhaps the clearest expression of what has plagued accounts of induction from the outset of traditional (seventeenth- and eighteenth-century) epistemology: that it has already defined the possible forms of conceptual unity and the necessarily fragmentary nature of experience as opposed.⁴⁰

To be sure, Hume gives no sign of being disturbed by the fact that he was invoking the very opposition presupposed by the abstract-rationalist conception of induction to deny the legitimacy of the practice—to ground a skeptical epistemology and philosophy of mind, in other words. Within contemporary epistemological debates, which typically deal with

Hume's objections, it is of course not the predetermined opposition but its positive reconciliation as question-begging that has come under fire. The so-called problem of induction is the problem of justifying what has to be presupposed for inductive inference to occur. If induction is said to be the gathering of a number of identical units to make some claim about a rule governing their identity, surely that identity has already been at work in making the selection of identical units possible. The move that appears to confirm both the specific induction and the method of inductive inference in general instead confirms the strength of the deductive hypothesis already in place. What appears to be induction is rather a kind of confirmation of a deductive paradigm. This is certainly the case in discussions of so-called scientific method in contemporary epistemology, where the paradigm of calculative or mathematical unities is confirmed, rather than experience observed.⁴¹

The concept of induction that I am arguing animates Hegel's account of the self-comprehension of experience emerges from two convergent themes in the text's argument: the necessity that we approach truth claims about the nature of experiencing in terms of the experiencing these claims in turn make possible, and the necessity that experiencing develop itself to scientific self-comprehension.⁴²

The emphasis on experiencing as the self-determining source of its science is most clearly evident in the introduction, especially in the description of experience as that which develops according to determinate negation. That is, experiencing poses its own demands and acts as its own "principle of verification."⁴³ Indeed, for Hegel, *this is experiencing*: positing a way of relating to otherness, and a form of otherness itself, and then trying to make sense of the world in light of these posited claims.⁴⁴ If a given reflection on experience shows itself to be incapable of organizing what happens as conscious life, that incapacity shows up not only as refuted by experience, but as my having failed to account for some specific aspect of experiencing. According to the description of determinate negation, this concrete expression of failure "is what experience has made of [the prior reflection]," a kind of counter proposal for renewing reflection that comes from experiencing itself.⁴⁵

To the extent that consciousness is prepared to pursue its attempts to know what happens in experiencing, it has been given the determinate expression of what its prior conception lacked. But within any installed principle or rule of experiencing, this expression shows up as the disparity between the object sanctioned by the prior positing of the rule and

another unsanctioned object whose appearances destroy the integrity of the rule. Induction by determinate negation means accounting for this new, unsanctioned object by unifying experience inductively, according to the rule that reconciles or accommodates the experienced difference.

The traditional problem of a unit that begs the question of inductive inference is not an issue here (at least not in the traditional way) because the unsanctioned unit and the unity in which it can be reconciled are other than the installed one. From the perspective of the scientist organizing our experience, this is viewed deductively, that is, in terms of the crisis implicit in the relationship between the scientific concept of experience and the particular rule governing the experience in question. But just as it is crucial to the scientist that the concept be the result of a self-development, so too it is crucial that the experience in question *show itself* to be the experience of the difference generated by its own rule for experiencing when it is realized as experiencing. In other words, *what the scientist calls determinate negation is achieved by experiencing consciousness as induction*. Induction is the means by which the experience of one installed rule is overcome, or better, transformed, as a response to the experience that calls for another; it is not the confirmation of what has already been established. It is precisely the failure of the principle to secure experience in its own terms that makes induction both possible and necessary.⁴⁶

Just as it does not beg the question of the units to be unified, induction in the science of experiencing does not predetermine the kind of unity it aspires to, nor is its experienced otherness posited as fragmented in some predetermined opposition to reflective unity.⁴⁷ One form of conscious life posits its ultimacy, and it is experience, as the performance of the shape of conscious life, that reveals the need for and the path to transformation. Induction names the originary role played by experiencing in all of its manifestations, its role in working out its own unifying principle and as the context in which the success of any reflection on that experiencing is to be measured.⁴⁸ Induction, and not the deduction of a given concept, is the logic that ensures that the development here is the self-mediation of experiencing consciousness.

To pursue experiencing in its truth, then, consciousness must learn to read in its experiencing the appearance of an unsanctioned difference and be prepared not only to see in this difference some further signs of progress, but also (the two are inseparable) to experience its own limits as already transgressed.⁴⁹ To actualize its progress, consciousness must trans-

form these signs (typically, the difference between what it thought it knew and what its experience has shown to be its proper object), to unify them, as a new kind of knowing. Induction by determinate negation is transformative in pursuing the fragmentation that occurs as a result of an inappropriate approach to its experience. In learning to read its own experiencing, in order to unify as a reflective principle what really happens in experiencing, consciousness must be inductive, which is to say it must let its experience direct it and be prepared to forego familiarity and those other forms of conceptual stasis and expose itself, or make itself vulnerable, to the threatening context of instability and contingency.

It is equally true, however, that the bulk of Hegel's transitions (for this is where we see the inductive moment of the logic of experiencing most clearly, in the movement toward a new reflection) occur accompanied by the reassuring presence of the scientist himself. To what extent has Hegel's argument, and thus the very claim about experiencing providing its own argument, already been compromised in its presentation as completed? Where might we find the inductive risk in the controlled (and often intrusive) tone of the scientist, which testifies however implicitly to the deductive element in what we are reminded repeatedly is already a scientific argument?

This is clearly a very serious question and one to which a number of commentators have devoted many pages of commentary. Without entering into any one of these debates specifically, let me redescribe in this context what I consider the distinctively inductive element.⁵⁰

There are two processes of development that need to be distinguished here. One is what Hegel frequently refers to as a "past" which is already completed.⁵¹ The other is the one we as readers, or better as thinkers,⁵² are undertaking, a development Hegel will call, referring in part to the Socratic account of learning by *anamnesis*, the recollection or *Erinnerung* of the first development.⁵³

There are two kinds of transitions that figure into the narrative of experiencing: the transition made by the experiencing consciousness, which at some time held one of these views as its own, and the transition we are experiencing as necessary in our recollection. About the first of these, it seems we can say very little, other than what must have happened insofar as any one form of consciousness always presupposes development. Hegel will, from time to time, describe these transitions as improbable, as he does, for example, in the case of the *Geist*'s *Wahrheit* and *Wissenschaft*.⁵⁴

In our transitions, however, we are demanding of ourselves that we let only the experienced expression of the determinate breakdown of any one shape of consciousness be our guide, and the only necessity that governs our development is the necessity of an inductive unification of that experienced breakdown. The experience of a form of conscious life is not to be taken as expressive of a given concept of experience, affirming what we have already been told, but as making possible a specific development, making that advance necessary for experiencing to show its truth completely.

In this sense, then, we are engaged in the transcendental induction of the concept of experience, where experiencing itself expresses to us the unifying principle with which it is to be comprehended. That this process has been organized scientifically in no way detracts from the originary role experiencing itself plays. To pursue the course of the argument, we need to experience each form of conscious life, to address it in terms of the experience it allows and to find in that experience alone our basis for developing further.

At the same time, as I have already remarked, this process is deductive from the standpoint of the scientist. In focusing on what I call the transcendental induction of the concept of experience, I am not claiming to exclude the role of deduction here.⁵⁵ Rather than threaten the inductive element, however, the role of deduction in Hegel's science makes clear its dependence on induction, that is, on the experience of consciousness itself as the source of its scientific concept. The scientific deduction is the demonstration of its legitimacy in claiming to comprehend the self-comprehension of experience, but its presentation as a series of inductions equally confirms the legitimacy of each of the inductive moves and the necessity of inductive inference in general.⁵⁶ Experiencing consciousness does not have the concept given to it, but must wrest it free from its own experiencing. What experiencing demands in order to be comprehended is not simply posited, but experienced. The reciprocal entailment of induction and deduction, of a concept that shows itself to have emerged as the self-development of the phenomenon of experiencing, is the distinctively dialectical element of Hegel's concept of experience.⁵⁷ It is because the concept of experience is its own self-comprehension that its inductive emergence belongs to it essentially, which is just what the phenomenological scientist has recognized in presenting its self-development inductively.

The transcendental induction in which we are engaged allows us to make some additional observations about each of the forms of conscious life that we come across in our development, precisely because we have experienced their origins, undergone what lends them the necessity they claim as their own. In different contexts, this amounts to different kinds of observations; one of the most compelling, however, and one that holds true for all but one (the ultimate one) of the forms, is the extent to which each has “forgotten” the experience on which it depends for its necessity. As each claims to be the truth of experiencing, their indebtedness to what has gone before them ought to, but doesn’t, figure in that truth. In one way or another, each posits some immediate ground for its truth, some noninductive principle. At almost every point in the argument, the difference between “we” (the reader committed to bringing each principle to life and to seeing the experience through) and “it” (the experience of each principle itself) is precisely our awareness that experience has led it to embrace the necessity of its principle, that it is the result of induction. While each form of experiencing prior to absolute knowing posits an immediate antithesis between its principle and the multiplicity it organizes, and thereby shows itself to be inductive only in-itself, we can see how its experience of a prior multiplicity mediates that immediacy. What distinguishes us, then, is our retrospective recognition of the inductive origins of each shape of conscious life.⁵⁸ My argument throughout this work will be focused on the gradual awakening of consciousness to this indebtedness to its experiencing, this history, which only phenomenology will adequately recognize.

There are two reasons for emphasizing perceptual consciousness’ indebtedness to experiencing. The first of these concerns the transcendental induction which I am arguing that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* enacts: namely, the self-mediating self-comprehension of experiencing consciousness. It is because experiencing consciousness shows itself to depend on self-mediation to occur at all that the goal of self-comprehension, or the self-unification of the terms uncovered in self-mediation, becomes a scientific objective. It is, in other words, only because experience shows itself to be more than what immediately appears that the issue of the “more” becomes both the possible and, as we shall see, the necessary object of the science of experiencing.

The second issue concerns perceiving consciousness specifically. Perception is that form of consciousness which first tacitly acknowledges the role of mediation and experiences things as unified or universal. What

we can say now is that this is a response to the experience which asserted itself in our attempt to make sensuous certainty live up to its pronounced truth. Experiencing itself has already mediated what experiencing consciousness claimed simply “is” or “happens,” thus we can see now that it only happens if its most primitive demands have already been incorporated into the organizing principle of experiencing consciousness. Perceiving consciousness is inductive to the extent that we can see in it the simplest unification (or objectification, in this case) of what we experienced as the difference between determinate content and a preserving and enabling unity of determinateness.⁵⁹

Notice I am not claiming that it knows itself to be inductive or has practiced some kind of experiment with sensuous certainty. Rather, what we saw in experiencing sensuous certainty was that in its simplest terms experiencing demanded a manifold unity of possible experiences in order to have determinate content in any act of conscious life. That demand is reflected as having been met by perception, thus in perception we find the expression of what is for us the first lesson of experiencing; we see, in other words, where the necessity of perceiving things lies.

This inductive pre-history is precisely what Hegel refers to in the introduction, as the necessity “that presents itself to consciousness without its understanding how this happens, which proceeds for us, as it were, behind the back of consciousness.”⁶⁰ “Behind its back” is just what our transcendental induction enables us to say about the necessity animating perception: it takes itself to be necessary, but we can see that in-itself, perception is necessary only for experiencing to develop itself from itself.

Indeed, the disparity between the necessity it reflects in its behavior and the necessity it attaches to things is the basis for the experienced collapse of perception. The unity it must have is posited as the immediate unity of sensible or perceptible details. But perceptible details point to any number of unities, or at least cannot be said to point to any one to the exclusion of others, making perception haphazard at best.⁶¹ Let me turn to the experience of perceiving consciousness and to its posited unity to develop the crisis in perception.

There are two consequences that follow from this positing. The first is that it must posit many other properties, each of which is like the first—mediated by the unity that preserves and makes them all accessible. This is what consciousness learned from sensuous certainty: that the unity that preserves and enables its experience is the unity of all the related experi-

ences it preserves and makes possible, thus to recognize it is to posit an indeterminate number of aspects.

Seen from the perspective of their common ground, the many properties emerge as immediately one with it. Yet they are its determinate and differentiated expressions, determined and differentiated as other than the unity in which they are preserved. The many properties are themselves locked into a kind of logical isolation, having each come forth from the simple unity as nothing more determinate than details co-positing with the manifold.

The instances are indifferent to one another because the common ground in which they are preserved and which makes them available to perception is indifferent to their determinate diversity. In this respect, perception has followed sensuous certainty, for which the now that is noon and the now that is midnight are themselves related only as nows; they carry no reference to the specificity of each other in themselves. They find their being simply in the belonging to a universal that is equally unaffected by the specifics of its moments. The moments are distinct only as constitutive of a manifold or universal togetherness. Because they are 'generic' expressions, their only determinateness lies in their pointing necessarily to a higher unity and in their being *not* each other.

At this conceptual level, we can see that the mutual indifference of the properties poses a problem for perceiving consciousness. The plurality of self-related properties must have some common element if they are to relate as properties to the one unity which preserves them — if they are, that is, to be *proper* to it and it alone. It isn't sufficient to say that there are 'these other' determinate expressions of this thing; the phrase 'these other expressions' picks out the whole field of perceptible qualities itself, or all white things, for example, as much as it picks out any one white thing.⁶²

So perception has to mean more than this; it means those other properties to be the specific determinacies *proper* to the manifold of things: shape, texture, and so on. But once again, these determinations belong to many things, while perception means this determinate thing, this white, round thing, for example, and not that one, which is round, white, and sour, for example. Things of perception are supposed to be distinguished, singled out, by their properties, which means that the thing has to be further determined as having a principle of exclusion, as being itself this one and not another.

Thus, as a second consequence of the initial positing of the object, the many determinacies ~~Copyright © Walter~~ stand against one another. To be