VI. THE OPENING ARGUMENTS OF THE *PHENOMENOLOGY*

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IN THIS PAPER I'd like to look at the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—the section on "Consciousness"—as an essay in transcendental argument. By "transcendental arguments" I mean arguments that start from some putatively undeniable facet of our experience in order to conclude that this experience must have certain features or be of a certain type, for otherwise this undeniable facet could not be. Obviously, the best-known examples are to be found in Kant, and it is because of this pre-eminence that the "transcendental" is appropriate.

Thus the transcendental deduction in its different versions can be thought to appeal as bedrock to two basic facets of experience; its unity (reflected in the fact that the "I think" must be able to accompany all my representations) and its polarization between subject and object (which requires some form of objectivity, that is, a distinction between the way things are and the way they seem). From these facets, which seem hard to gainsay, Kant builds the proof of the necessary application of the categories by attempting to show that without their application these two undeniable characteristics could not hold of experience.

But this type of argument is not confined to Kant. It is very much part of contemporary philosophical debate. Two examples may illustrate this: Strawson, in *Individuals*, argues that the concept of a person as a being to which "*both* predicates ascribing states

This paper was written especially for this volume.

of consciousness *and* predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, etc. are equally applicable . . ." (p. 104, italics in original) not only must be applicable, but must be "primitive," that is, not analyzable as a "secondary kind of entity in relation to two primary kinds, viz. a particular consciousness and a particular human body" (105). The argument for this, as for the ancillary thesis that P-predicates must "have both first- and third-person ascriptive uses" where neither is primary (108), is founded on two related facets of experience: "Why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all?" and "Why are they ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation, etc.?" (90) That we make such ascriptions of states of consciousness, and that we make them along with ascriptions of bodily characteristics, is fairly taken for undeniable. The argument then consists in showing that this kind of ascription could not be, unless the concept of a person were primitive. We thus have a transcendental argument. Of course, in keeping with the "linguistic turn" of contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy, the undeniable starting point has to do with the use of language, here the *ascription* of certain states, but the family relation to Kant's work is clear nonetheless.

Of course, it is hardly surprising that we find in Strawson's work an affinity with Kant. But this is not to say that such an affinity must be present for a philosopher to have recourse to transcendental argument. Much of Wittgenstein's argument in the *Investigations* can, I believe, be understood in the same light; except that it is clearer what Wittgenstein is arguing against than what he is arguing for. Let us take the arguments against private ostensive definition, which turn on the impossibility of a private language. In *Philosophical Investigations,* I, paras. 258 ff., Wittgenstein attempts to show that we could not succeed in

operating with a truly private sign "E" for a certain sensation. His argument turns on showing that we could have no "criterion of correctness" for the use of such a sign.

The rock-bottom starting point of Wittgenstein's argument can be understood as this: that our concepts, being general, are used to reidentify fresh examples of the sort of thing that falls under them, that a distinction must thus be possible between correct and incorrect reidentification and hence right and wrong use of the term. This in turn founds the necessity of criteria, and it is the supposed incapacity of private ostensive definition to provide criteria that justifies its being swept aside as a picture of experience and its relation to language.

This argument has some interest for us because it has a degree of affinity to one of Hegel's arguments which we will examine. The plausibility of the view of experience Wittgenstein is attacking here, that it is a private realm of knowledge to which the subject has privileged access, rests on one's ignoring language in a certain sense. We focus on the preverbal experience in our imagination, and hence what we imagine to be the preverbal experience: here we are contemplating a certain "sensation" of red, or a certain inner feeling of unease or depression. Surely we have at this stage already gained some knowledge, however exiguous, viz. that this sensation or feeling is experienced. On the strength of this, we can then go on to *name* it, hence introducing language.

Put this way, the story is quite plausible. But can language thus be held at arm's length? What is involved in our claim to "know" as we confront the pure, as yet unnamed, experience? We are certainly not talking about a genuine pre- or non-verbal consciousness of things, such, for instance, as that of an infant or an animal; for these can't be said to know in any

human sense. For us, knowing is inseparably bound up with being able to say, even if we can only say rather badly and inadequately, and even if we may have in desperation to have recourse to such words as "ineffable." An experience about which nothing at all could be said, not even that it was very difficult if not impossible to describe, would be below the threshold of the level of awareness which we consider essential for knowledge (in the sense relevant here, i.e. knowledge of the currently experienced). It would have been either lived unconsciously, or else have been so peripheral that we had or could recover no hold on it.

This relation of knowledge to what we can say is recognized by the theorists of experience as private knowledge, for they present a picture of the subject as being in a position to *name* the object of the experience, and hence in a position to say, even if possibly in a private language, what he had experienced. But of course to be in a position to name an object is already to have a linguistic consciousness of one's experience. Naming an object presupposes being ready to apply to it other terms which will situate this name in our discourse and identify what it names. Naming cannot take place in isolation outside of a context of linguistic capacity. We have to know what we're naming, and this means that we have to be able to say, however inadequately, what we're naming.

Thus the situation evoked above, in which we're in a position to name our experience, cannot really be preverbal. Typically, we would be able to say something like this: "There's that damn sensation again, I better find a name for it, let's say 'E' "; or "Hello, this is a new sensation, let me call it 'E.' " Naming can take place here, because we have delineated what we name by "sensation," and in each case we could probably add some other descriptive terms as well

(e.g., "intermittent, throbbing, mildly painful sensation in the left shoulder").[1]

Thus we could look at a goodly part of Wittgenstein's argument in the *Investigations* as a transcendental one with the following starting point: to know, we must be able to say (in the sense in which admitting indescribability is also a form of "saying"). This gives the wherewithal to destroy the picture of preverbal consciousness which lends the notion of experience as private knowledge its plausibility. But more, by exploring the nature of language and showing that it cannot be constituted by the introduction of names independently of each other, but rather that each term has meaning only through a skein of relations to others, Wittgenstein hopes to put paid to the idea that we can have a private language (that is, descriptive terms that wouldn't derive their meaning from their relations to the words of our common language) and hence an experience-world of private knowledge. He tries to show, in other words, that a putative descriptive term of a private language, unless situated through the words of the common language, is nothing more than an "inarticulate sound" (op. cit., I, para. 261), that emitting it doesn't amount to saying anything, so that if this is all that can be "said" about an experience, it can hardly be considered an object of knowledge. So that irreducibly private experience (experience not shaped through common language) could only be if it were not the case that to know is to be able to say; or in other words, a necessary condition of this seemingly undeniable facet of our conscious experience, that we be capable of speaking about it, is that there be no irreducibly private experience.

[1] Cf. Wittgenstein, op. cit., I, para. 261: "What reason have we for calling 'E' the sign for a *sensation*? For 'sensation' is a word of our common language, not of one intelligible to me alone" (italics in original).

This argument, as I mentioned above, is of special interest to the purpose at hand because it parallels Hegel's opening argument in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology,* which also turns on the basic starting point that to know is to be able to say. But before getting on to this, perhaps a word should be said about the principle of reading these passages of Hegel as transcendental arguments.

A first point of rapprochement springs to mind immediately. The examples we have been looking at of transcendental argument have a certain bent in common; they are all directed against one or other aspect of the dualist picture of experience developed and handed down to us by Cartesianism and empiricism. This impression of common bent would be strengthened if we cited other prominent cases of transcendental argument in our day, those of philosophers of the phenomenological school. For indeed, one of the uses of phenomenological "description" with a writer such as Merleau-Ponty is to provide such starting points of transcendental argument whose conclusions were meant to be a refutation of empiricist and "intellectualist" notions of experience.

We may perhaps understand the background to this correlation in the following way: both Cartesianism and empiricism present us with a picture of experience that is derived mainly from a certain notion of the human epistemological predicament. Those who opposed them, either because they had a different notion of epistemology or because they disliked the picture of human nature that resulted, have thus been tempted to attack, at the weakest spot, the very schematic and implausible notion of experience. And this terrain lends itself to transcendental arguments, since it is at least tempting to believe that we can delineate facets of experience that are basic and pervasive enough to be undeniable, and these can be the starting points for our arguments. Kant's first *Critique*

thus opened a two-century-long hunting season on empiricism, in the course of which a great many philosophers have joined in.

In terms of bent, Hegel is undoubtedly of that company, not only in general, but in particular in the passages we propose to examine here; for Hegel starts off in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology* examining "sensible certainty," a notion of experience as simply receptive (*aufnehmend*) and as preconceptual. But this affinity of bent is hardly enough to justify our classing Hegel's arguments together with the others as transcendental, the more so in that Hegel's ultimate goal, to show that "consciousness" (consciousness of an object) is ultimately one with "self-consciousness," is an ambition shared by none of the other philosophers mentioned. Of course, the fact that the ultimate goal is different doesn't in any way rule out the possibility of substantial similarity in argument on the way there; and as we shall see later, much of what Hegel attempts to prove as steps toward his ultimate goal resembles the conclusions of contemporary philosophers. But transcendental arguments are not identified by their bent but by their structure as argument, and this is the parallel we have to show to Hegel's work.

This will come out in one way as we look at the argument itself. But this is not really enough, since Hegel purports to be very clear and explicit about his own way of proceeding, and it is this notion of the dialectic that we must confront as well with the structure of a transcendental argument.

Hegel's aim in the *Phenomenology* is to move from the "natural," i.e. commonsense, view of consciousness to his own. He makes clear in the Introduction that he intends to take nothing for granted, that he does not intend to present his way of thinking over against that of "natural consciousness" and let his case rest on assurances that it is better founded. His

method will be to start with ordinary, "natural" consciousness and show that on examination it transforms itself into another "figure" (*Gestaltung*). But how transform itself? Because, says Hegel, "natural consciousness," or the ordinary commonsense notion of consciousness, comes to see its own untruth or inadequacy.

But how can natural consciousness come to see its own inadequacy? Our ordinary notion of experience is that of a knowing subject who has a certain vision of things; the notion of experience is characterized by the notion we have of what is experienced, sense-data (sensible qualities), particulate data (fields), and so on. Now, it is no use going outside this notion of experience and judging it by what we know (or think we know) to be effectively there in the world. For this would be introducing a "yardstick" (*Maszstab*) from outside this notion of experience; and moreover, it would be irrelevant, since experience is not just a function of what is there in the world to be experienced.

But how, then, can a false notion of experience be shown to be wrong from the inside? It can, Hegel claims, because a notion of experience contains its own "yardstick"; it contains, that is, an idea of what it is to know an object. Now, with this we can compare experience as it effectively is, and see if they agree; if effective experience fits the model projected for it.[2]

In other words, natural consciousness can be transformed from within, because it is not just a given effective experience but an effective experience shaped by a certain *idea* of what experience is. Consciousness is not just any object, it is an object that lives in relation to a model of itself: "das Bewusstsein . . . ist für sich selbst sein *Begriff*, dadurch unmittelbar das Hinausgehen über das Beschränkte und, da ihm dies Beschränkte angehört, über sich selbst" (p. 69). Hence it has the kind of duality that can enable it to be in contradiction with itself, where what it is effectively when it attempts to realize a given model violates that model.

The change that results from this kind of contradiction Hegel calls dialectical movement. And of course it is a real change and not simply a disappearance of a model thus smitten with contradiction; for the contradiction between model and reality is a determinate (*bestimmt*) one; as such, it calls for a particular transformation to overcome it; and of course, the transformation must be in the model or yardstick, for it is this which is at the root of the contradiction, that in trying to realize it, effective experience violates it.[3]

Hence, any inadequate notion of consciousness will transform itself from within in the following way: as a notion of consciousness, it must contain an idea of experience, of what it is to know an object. Let us try to experience in this way, to have this kind of knowledge. If it turns out that effective experience guided by this model contradicts it, that we cannot attain knowledge along this path without violating the model in some way, then it will be shown to be impossible and will have to be changed. We will make the changes that the contradiction revealed by this particular experience has shown to be necessary, and this will yield us another notion of consciousness with which to start another test.

But this procedure presupposes that we can characterize effective experience in terms independent of

[2] "An dem also was das Bewusstsein innerhalb seiner für das *Ansich* oder das *Wahre* erklärt, haben wir den Maszstab, den es selbst aufstellt, sein Wissen daran zu messen" (71, italics in original).

[3] "Die Prüfung ist nicht nur eine Prüfung des Wissens, sondern auch ihres Maszstabes" (73).

the model of experience we are working with. Moreover, if we are to show that the model is not just unrealized in a given case, but cannot be realized, we have to be able to identify some basic and pervasive facets of experience independently of our model (they must be independent, i.e. not derivable from the model itself, if they are to contradict it and show it to be impossible). Hence the method that Hegel outlines in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* can only be applied if such basic facets can be picked out, and his arguments will stand only to the extent that they can be shown as beyond question.

Hegel's argument will thus have to start from undeniable characteristics of experience; and since it will go on from there to show that the various inadequate models of consciousness are incompatible with these characteristics, which on the contrary require other conceptions if they are to hold, his argument, to the extent that it follows the plan of the Introduction, has many affinities to transcendental arguments. Now, this claim could not be made for the whole book, but the argument of the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* does conform to the method laid out in the Introduction, and hence, as we shall see, Hegel's arguments can easily and convincingly be presented in transcendental form, and this section of his work can be mined as the source of interesting transcendental arguments.[4]

The arguments here, of course, are closely related to others in the rest of his work, notably the *Logic*.

[4] Reciprocally, we could construe Wittgenstein's argument mentioned above along the lines of Hegel's dialectic. In order to show the impossibility of the kind of experience that could be the basis of a private language, we attempt to realize this model in imagination with our sensation "E." The conditions of successfully identifying "E" violate the terms of the model, for they require that we link "E" up with the public language. The model is shown in Hegel's sense to be contradictory.

But since the *Phenomenology* is designedly a dialectic of forms of consciousness (however much or little later parts of the work conform to this description), it is obviously here that one finds the arguments that are closest to recognizable transcendental form. In fact, however, many arguments in the *Logic* are also of the transcendental type, but it would take us too far afield to explore this at the moment.

II

The notion of consciousness with which Hegel starts his dialectical critique is one he calls "sensible certainty." This is a view of our awareness of the world according to which it is at its fullest and richest when we simply open our senses, as it were, to the world and receive whatever impressions come our way, prior to any activity of the mind, in particular conceptual activity. "Wir haben uns ebenso *unmittelbar* oder *aufnehmend* zu verhalten, also nichts an ihm (sc. dem Seienden), wie es sich darbietet, zu verändern und von dem Auffassen das Begreifen abzuhalten" (79). Now, according to the view called sensible certainty, this pure receptivity is supposed to give us the richest knowledge, as well as the truest, and both these for the same reason, viz. that "sie hat von dem Gegenstande noch nichts weggelassen, sondern ihn in seiner ganzen Vollständigkeit vor sich" (loc. cit.).

This view has evidently a certain resemblance to empiricism. It is not identical with empiricism, since it is not by any means as fully specified: it lacks, for instance, the definition of what is received in terms of "sense data" (or "ideas," "impressions," as they were variously called in the classical version). But the idea of consciousness as primordially receptivity, prior to any intellectual (i.e. conceptual) activity, and the view that a greater degree of certainty attaches to the deliverances of this receptivity than to any judgments

we might make on the basis of it, these are recognizably empiricist themes.

Now Hegel's *démarche* in face of this conception is very similar to Wittgenstein's: he challenges sensible certainty to *say* what it experiences. The underlying principle is the same, viz. that if this is really knowledge, then one must be able to say what it is,[5] and this is (here as with Wittgenstein) the starting point of what we called above a transcendental argument. But in Hegel's presentation, it is seen primarily as the application of his method. Sensible certainty claims knowledge by pure receptivity; very well, let us try to see what knowledge can be effectively attained in this way, or what is the same thing, let us try to say what we know in this way. As we shall see, the attempt to say will contradict the basic requirements of sensible certainty, will take us beyond its defining limits, and hence it will stand self-refuted in the way outlined by the dialectical method of the Introduction.

There are two main ways in which the attempt to say takes us beyond the limits of sensible certainty. The first is a minor theme in this first chapter, although it is the major one in the opening passages of the *Logic:* the great richness of this form of consciousness is purely apparent; as we "take in" the scene before us, we might mistakenly believe that we are taking in an inexhaustible richness of detail, because in fact an inexhaustible number of detailed things could be said about this scene. But the requirement that we say what we know shows that what we are really aware of is a selection from this inexhaustible fund, for in grasping things under some descriptions, we exclude (for the present) being aware of them under others. Looking at the objects in my study under their ordinary descriptions as use objects (type-

[5] "Die Sprache . . . ist . . . das Wahrhaftere" (82).

writer, desk, chairs, etc.), I cannot see them as pure shapes; or looking at them as pure shapes, I cannot see them as the juxtaposition of different materials, and so on.

Thus, says Hegel, this form of consciousness, far from being the richest, would in fact be the poorest, for its very lack of selectivity condemns it to emptiness. To go beyond selection in the attempt to "take in everything" can only be to fall over into unconsciousness, a trancelike stare. The references to "pure Being" (80) evoke parallel arguments of the *Logic.*

But the main theme of this first chapter is a refutation of the claim of sensible certainty to be in immediate contact with sensible particulars, without the mediation of general terms, which not only introduce selectivity, as we have just seen, but involve grasping the objects before us through aspects that they have in common or could have in common with other things, rather than in their own particularity. Sensible certainty is rich and true because it is (supposedly) in touch with the particular thing itself, and not simply with it in so far as it is an instance of a given class.

The thrust of Hegel's argument is therefore quite close to that of Wittgenstein mentioned above: they both focus on the inescapable role of the concept or descriptive expression; only while Wittgenstein's main interest is to go on to show how the concept only has meaning within a skein of relations to others, and hence to the common language and ultimately life-forms, Hegel's principal point here is the impossibility of bare knowledge of the particular.

Hegel's argument for the necessary mediation of knowledge through a concept or universal has basically two stages: In the first, he imagines the protagonist of sensible certainty answering the request to say by pure demonstratives ("this" or "here" or "now"). Hegel could argue at this point that these must be inadequate expressions of what I am aware

of, that the object must be more determinate than this if I am to be said to be aware at all. But instead he takes another tack, that of claiming that a term such as "this" or "now," applying as it can indifferently to many different contents, itself functions as a universal, and hence shows that there can be no immediate knowledge of the particular—knowledge, that is, unmediated by general terms. As a matter of fact, in Hegel's particular usage of the term, this likeness of function is enough to class these demonstratives as universals (as he will also class the "I"). "Ein solches Einfaches, das durch Negation ist, weder Dieses noch Jenes, ein *Nichtdieses,* und ebenso gleichgültig, auch Dieses wie Jenes zu sein, nennen wir ein *Allgemeines* (82, italics in original).

This stage continues with a consideration of the possible riposte on behalf of sensible certainty: that we can identify the particular time and place meant by "here" and "now" by adding that they are the here and now that *I* am contemplating. But "I" in this context, as Hegel points out, is as much a "universal" as "this." I *mean,* of course, one particular person, but I succeed as little in saying which particular person in saying "I," as I do in saying what particular thing in saying "this."

But of course this will not satisfy the protagonist of sensible certainty. And Hegel's assimilation of "I" to the demonstrative terms discussed earlier just brings the malaise to a head. I cannot say who is meant by "I" or "this" or "now" in a way that will be available to anyone regardless of context; and, for the same reason, sentences containing such words cannot be just transplanted from their context and retain the same truth value. But when I say "I" or "this," *I* know what I mean, and I can *show* you, if you will just place yourself in the same context.

Here we come to the real idea underlying the notion of sensible certainty. As a pure contact with the

particular, it is of course only available in context, and as a knowledge unmediated by concepts, it can of course only be shown. In this second stage of his argument, Hegel is getting down to the real issue:

> *Zeigen* müssen wir es uns lassen; denn die Wahrheit dieser unmittelbaren Beziehung ist die Wahrheit *dieses* Ich, der sich auf ein Jetzt oder ein *Hier* einschränkt. Würden wir *nachher* diese Wahrheit vornehmen oder *entfernt* davon stehen, so hätte sie gar keine Bedeutung; denn wir höben die Unmittelbarkeit auf, die ihr wesentlich ist (85, italics in original).

We come across here, in another form, the familiar theme of ostensive definition. This is the nub of the argument.

Hegel's answer is similar to Wittgenstein's, as we have seen. *I* cannot know even what I mean in this context if all I can say is "this" or "here." For what do these terms embrace? Take "now": does it mean this punctual instant, this hour, this day, this decade, this epoch? It can mean all of these, and others in different contexts. But, for it to mean something for me, and not just be an empty word, there must be something else I could say to give a shape, a scope, to this "now"; let it be a term for a time period, such as "day" or "hour," or some description of the event or process or action that is holding my attention and hence defining the dimensions of my present.

And so, Hegel concludes, there is no unmediated knowledge of the particular. Sensible certainty ends up saying the opposite of what it means (88), and this is the proof of its contradictory nature. Any attempt at effective awareness of the particular can only succeed by making use of descriptive, i.e. general, terms. The purely particular is "unreachable." What remains beyond description as the "unexpress-

ible . . . is nothing other than the untrue, irrational, simply pointed to" (das Unwahre, Unvernünftige, bloss Gemeinte, 88). And by the same token, the particular is the subject of potentially endless description; for at any point, descriptions in general terms will not have captured its particularity, and yet there is nothing further to be done in order to express this particularity other than mere description in general terms.

The thesis as here presented will not seem strange, or even wrong, to many contemporary philosophers. But the argument and its conclusion are presented by Hegel in a way that reflects certain major themes particular to his philosophy. Thus the unavailability of the bare particular is not just an epistemological truth; it reflects the ontological one that the particular is doomed by its very nature to disappear, that it is in principle mortal. What is permanent is the concept. So the unsayability of the particular is simply the expression of its ontological status, as that which cannot remain, that which must pass. And reciprocally, external particular existence is impermanent because it cannot be expressed in concepts.

That is why it is astounding, says Hegel, how some philosophers can continue to hold to the sensible reality of the particular as the final ground of knowledge. Even the beasts are wiser than this:

> . . . denn sie bleiben nicht vor den sinnlichen Dingen als an sich seienden stehen, sondern, versweifelnd an dieser Realität und in der völligen Gewissheit ihrer Nichtigkeit langen sie ohne weiteres zu und zehren sie auf (87).

But, in Hegel's ontology, if it is true that the particular is mortal, it is also true that it exists of necessity, that the concept, the Idea cannot be outside of its embodiment in (a series of) particulars. The concept reveals itself in the procession of particulars, their coming to be and passing away. The particular can only be understood as a passing vehicle for the concept.

This background of theory makes Hegel present the argument for the unsayability of the particular in a fashion peculiar to himself. The argument reflects not just the impossibility of bare unmediated knowledge of the particular, but also the movement underlying experience itself. As particular sensuous beings, we encounter particular things, we come across them, as it were, with our senses. But as soon as we try to grasp them, they disappear, so to speak; we can hold onto them only by subsuming them under a concept. In Hegelian language, our attempt to grasp things in knowledge first negates them as particulars; then, negating this negation, we recover them by grasping them through mediated conceptual consciousness. The immediate is negated, but it is retained in mediated form.

The term in connection with which Hegel presents this argument is "now"; and although there are some respects in which this particular example is unrepresentative, the point is plainly meant to be general. The "now" of sensible certainty could be understood in its most immediate sense as designating the punctual present. But this is no sooner designated than it is past, hence gone, "negated"; but when we fall back on a description that gives the scope of our present, say "today" or "this hour," the immediately fleeting present is recuperated and reintegrated into this larger "now"; the first negation is negated.

This example is less illuminating than it might be, because the particular fleetingness of time, whose punctual instants vanish in becoming past, cannot be matched easily in the discussion of "here" or "this." But the general point seems to be this: in experience we meet particulars; we can grasp these particular

things only by in some sense "pointing," either literally or by focusing on a thing in a way we could only convey through the use of some demonstrative or related word. But the experience itself of pointing (*Aufzeigen*) is that, in trying to grasp the thing, we show the fleeting, unseizable nature of the particular, and we can recover it and hold it before our gaze, as it were, only by subsuming it under a universal.

In other words, "das Aufzeigen ist das Erfahren, dass Jetzt *Allgemeines* ist" (86, italics in original). And by that terminal "ist" Hegel means to convey the point that this experience brings us to the ontological truth of the matter, that the particular only is, as a vehicle for the concept. But what is germane from our point of view here is that Hegel has not just argued to the impossibility of unmediated knowledge of particulars and the necessary role of concepts, but wants to present the idea that the argument, as the depiction of an attempt to grasp the particular that fails, reflects our experience itself, as we encounter and reach out for particulars and discover that we can only really hold them through the mediating instruments of universal concepts.

III

This notion—that the argument reflects the movement of experience itself—sets the stage for another pair of transcendental arguments, which occupy the second chapter and the transition to the third.

The movement of experience is the attempt to grasp a particular that issues in an awareness of the object as falling under certain descriptions. The particular can never itself be grasped in language; an attempt to do so can issue only in a potentially endless list of descriptive terms being applied to it. But just because it is potentially endless, no list of properties can ever exhaust the thing and hence overcome

the duality between the particular thing and the descriptions found true of it.

These latter are what we call "properties," and hence the new notion of the object of experience that emerges out of the dialectic of the first chapter is that of a thing with properties (*das Ding und seine Eigenschaften*). The notion of experience as consisting in knowledge of this object, Hegel calls "perception" (*Wahrnehmung*).

This is the starting point for a new dialectic in which Hegel tries to show that experience defined in terms of this object reveals itself once more as contradictory, for the object itself suffers an inner contradiction. Common sense will try to avoid this conclusion by attributing the inconsistencies to the process of perception itself. But, Hegel argues, all these attempts to save the thing are doomed to failure. We will have to conclude at the end of the chapter that the conflict and movement that we attribute to perception are in the thing itself.

But how can we say that the thing is contradictory? Hegel's argument attempts to establish this by showing that there is a conflict between the two dimensions of the thing—as particular, and as ensemble of properties; and yet that each is necessarily linked with the other. These two theses are the conclusions respectively of the two interesting transcendental arguments mentioned above. Let us take the latter first.

The idea is that there is a kind of mutual dependency here, that we couldn't logically have our property concepts if we didn't operate with particulars, and reciprocally that we couldn't identify particulars without property concepts.

If we thought of properties as just "matters" (Hegel takes up here a concept connected with one of the false starts of physics of the late-eighteenth century, e.g. in the attempt to account for heat by "calorific matter") existing alongside each other in the universe