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This paper will begin by briefly describing the context in which passage 100 occurs, followed by a short commentary on the passage. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, ‘sensuous-certainty’ is introduced as a model of consciousness that attempts to explain, without presuppositions, what knowledge is and consists of – and how this is known to its cognition. In effect, sensuous-certainty compares its conception of the object of knowledge to its conception of knowledge itself in hopes that they can be consistently thought together. Within sensuous-certainty, we (the subjects) are only passively aware of the ‘immediate’ sensible intuition that there are external beings that exist in space and time. This intuition is immediate because its knowledge is acquired without the intervention of internal logical capacities (such as concepts or inference rules) about the objects or beings in space and time. Therefore, the object of sensuous-certainty’s consciousness is just ‘pure’ being itself (i.e., the knowing that there is an immediate external being – something known as a ‘this’).

However, an issue surfaces in trying to think of ‘being’ as immediate and external. The start of passage 100 points out the consequence of thinking of our cognition as playing the passive or ‘unessential’ role in cognizing beings. That is to say, when the object has the determining role in what cognition is, a host of problems will arise for sensuous-certainty. Hegel explains, by saying: ***“If we compare the relation in which knowing and the object first came on the scene with the relations in which they come to stand in the result, then the relation has reversed itself”***

(¶100). When the object was the essence in the relation, it determined what the knowing's conception of the object had to be. However, the problem in this former version of the relation occurs when sense-certainty tries to think *anything* about the object of cognition. Although sensuous-certainty claims its objects are immediately given and external to its cognition of them, any attempt to cognize anything particular about the object falls flat because in order to locate the object spatiotemporally, the use of cognitive capacities is necessary. For example, in thinking 'this being', you've got to designate what you've just cognized to a particular place in space and time (e.g., 'this being, right here and now'). But in doing so, the 'here and now' that you've stated doesn't actually refer to a particular place in space or time – it's a universal concept that points to arbitrarily any moment in time and arbitrarily any region in space. Although the subject indeed experienced something particular in nature, sensuous-certainty can't preserve the particularity of the *being* by uttering it in universal terms. Additionally, these universal terms are not immediate since they have no meaning apart from their difference to the concepts that they're not about (i.e., 'this being right here and now' has to be differentiated from 'this being right not-here and not-now'). Therefore, the subject cannot be thought of as merely playing the unessential role in cognizing objects (because it brings concepts to bare on the objects of its cognition), nor can the object be thought of as determining what knowing is.

Hegel writes "*the object, which was supposed to be what was essential to sensuous-certainty, is now the inessential, since the universal, which the object has come to be, is no longer the kind of universal which the object was essentially supposed to be for sensuous-certainty*" (¶100) to express that we've lost the object by basing the essentiality in it, since sensuous-certainty restricted our usage of mediate concepts and thereby our ability to characterize the 'this'. To

remedy this dilemma, Hegel contends that a reversal in the relation will let the subject use concepts and thereby universals in order to pick out particular instances of the object. The ‘*universal in which the object has come to be*’ refers to the ‘this’ that kept implying the cognitive faculties of judgement via universal concepts. Sensuous-certainty has thereby recognized its role in the determination of the object depends in part upon the knowing subject’s judgement faculties.

Consequently, Hegel writes “***rather, sensuous-certainty is now present in what is opposed to it, namely, in the knowing which previously was the inessential***” (§100) to say that ever since assigning *knowing* the role of determining what the object of cognition is, the reversed essentiality has afforded sensuous-certainty meaning to what previously was un-preservable. That is, the ‘this’ which previously could not be predicated by reference to universal concepts now appears possible, because “***its truth is in the object as my object, or, in what I mean; the object is because I know it***” (§100). What Hegel means is that the object is no longer thought of as existing whether it was known or not. Instead, it’s thought of by association to the knowing subject’s experience of it. Now, the truth is in the object as the knowing subject’s object. Thus, the ‘this being right here and now’ is graspable because its truth lies in its being perceived by the knowing subject. That is why “***sensuous-certainty is, to be sure, thus driven out of the object, but it is not yet thereby sublated***” (§100). In driving sensuous-certainty out of the object, it is not the case that the object is deprived of all determination, but rather that its logical role has been changed so that the knowing subject can use concepts to actually think about the objects. This is because the relationship between the universal and the conceptual is one where the universality of, for example, mahogany-ness exists in every mahogany-colored thing but only the concept of

mahogany allows me to recognize the universality of mahogany-ness in all mahogany-colored things. Now Hegel is saying that the subjective side determines the way the object is for consciousness because we do something in knowing, which affects the range of objects that we can know. When Hegel writes “*rather, it is only pushed back into the I, and it is still to be seen what experience will show us about sensuous-certainty’s reality*” (§100), it’s meant that the subject being the essence doesn’t entail that the subject causes the object to exist. It’s rather that the subject is active in determining how objects that are known by it will be like insofar as they’re known. The nature of the object known is explained by something the knowing subject does. And this is not to say that experience will match up with the new way that sensuous-certainty thinks it can know particular truths about its objects.

Work cited

Friedrich, Hegel Georg Wilhelm. The Phenomenology of Spirit, translated and edited by Terry P. Pinkard, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2018.