

“Pointing Out” in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “Sense-Certainty”

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“Sense-Certainty” has been one of the most extensively discussed arguments in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Hegel, “Sense-Certainty” is the consciousness that regards singular things as Truth and unmediated sensuous recognition as Certain. Hegel refutes this conscious stage and displays how “Sense-Certainty” is erroneous. He explains that our Understanding always affects our Recognition every moment we recognize a singular thing. However, the concept of “Sense-Certainty” has not been thoroughly analyzed. Given that this argument is renowned, researching previous studies was not sufficient. In fact, from the two issues that “Sense-Certainty” explores, “Language” and “Pointing Out,” the discussion on “Pointing Out” has been overshadowed by the discussion on “Language.”

There is a reason why discussion has focused solely on “Language.” Analysis of “Language” and “Pointing Out” leads us to the same conclusion, “the singular is mediated by the universal,” and therefore deliberating on “Language” enables us to attain a wide range of topics in “Sense-Certainty.” However, the only time “Sense-Certainty” can be limited to “Language” is when both possess the same logical structures. Is it feasible to reduce “Pointing Out” solely due to “Language”? In this paper, I argue that there is a unique logical structure in the discussion on “Pointing Out” and thus it cannot be conflated with “Language.”

This discussion compels us to understand the function of “Pointing Out” for the philosophical development in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. “Pointing Out” indicates the Idealistic conclusion, confuting the realistic premise. The recognition of a singular thing consists not in realistic objects outside consciousness, but effects of consciousness. If we had no conscious function superior to receiving sense data, we would not perceive objects that seem to be certain in the “Sense-Certainty” perspective. Essentially, through an examination of “Pointing Out,” it is possible to understand that the working of consciousness—objectification—precedes receiving sense data in recognition. Thus, comprehending Hegel’s Idealistic conclusion reveals a new aspect of “Sense-Certainty.”