

**Abridgment of S.K. Chattopadhyaya's "The Object and Sensibility"
and "The Real, the Given, and the Objective"
by Anthony J. Damiani
Book Notes V09BN**

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CONTENTS:

Object is what is known by a subject

Russell says we can conceive of a possible object

Possible object not immediately known as such

The existence of a thing is its perception

Possible object is a thought construction

**Object given to the knowing act/sensibility of the subject; this gives rise to notion of
transcendental background**

Sensibility and understanding

The real, the given, and the objective

BOOKS / ARTICLES QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- S.K. Chattopadhyaya, "The Object and Sensibility" (in *Philosophical Quarterly* 24, 1952)
- S.K. Chattopadhyaya, "The Real, the Given, and the Objective" (in *Philosophical Quarterly* 28, 1955)
- Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

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NOTES:

- **RETYPE BOOK NOTES presented in class (V09BN).**
- This is **1974 10/06b, Epistemology; The Given Book Notes, and the second entry associated with this date. 1974 10/06a = Epistemology; The Given Class.**
- This is an abridgment of two articles by S.K. Chattopadhyaya: 1) “The Object and Sensibility” (Philosophical Quarterly 24, 1952); 2) “The Real, the Given, and the Objective” (Philosophical Quarterly 28, 1955).
- Most of these Book Notes (up until the discussion of sense and understanding) are read and discussed in WG Class 1974 1006a, the second of five classes in the 1974 “Epistemology Review” series. See also WG Classes (and related papers) 1974 0929(a, b), 1013(a, b), 1020(a, b), and 1027(a, b).
- All spelling and other errors have been corrected.

ABRIDGMENT OF S.K. CHATTOPADHYAYA'S "THE OBJECT AND SENSIBILITY" AND "THE REAL, THE GIVEN, AND THE OBJECTIVE"

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EPISTEMOLOGY LECTURES: Lecture Two

What is an object? An object (or thought) as far as known refers to an act of knowing--apart from that context it's not an object. As a relative term it is meaningful only through reference to a subject that knows it. When not thus related it may be anything but should not be called an object. *The object is that which we know or that which is known* (not concerned with nature, status, or locus).

A possible object is a mere term of talk, unless substantially like the known object. So an object forms the content of cognition -- it is something and not mere nothing, thus its being something or felt as something may be regarded as its generic character. The object as object is as much something as the tree is something which we call object. The specific character of this something which we call object--its differentia--is its *relatedness to some act of knowing*.

Can we conceive of an object which is not so related (or a knowing act with no content)? A neutral object - objectless knowing? Bertrand Russell says we can!

What is this 'maybe' object before it is even known? What does he mean by possible object which is not actual but is a possible object content of cognition? It cannot be anything given! What is this before it is known, can there be an a priori idea of a possibility possible?

The possible object is the neutral being of the object or the thing before it is known and made into an object of cognition. Our knowing presupposes it. But before our knowing of it, it was something -- had it not been anything it could be nothing when actually known. Thus the possible object is the prior being of the object before appropriated by the knowing as its actual content -- this may be allowed.

Yet though logically admissible the neutral object is not conceived as an object. It is not immediately known as such -- since that would render it into an actual object. And could we know a possible object before experienced we could claim omniscience. No! Are there other modes of knowing to accommodate Bertrand Russell?

Now in so far as an object is known some sort of sensuous representation has to be granted. Is a non-sensuous way of cognition of an object possible? The possible or neutral object is a past experience constructed subsequent to our knowing of the object.

The existence of a thing or object is its perception, and that perception forces us to think of the object as capable of remaining outside our knowing, when it is no longer known, and also as being somewhere before our knowing it.

In knowing we have it and do not construct it out of nothing. The prior existence and posterior being in relation to our actual knowing of it are *thought constructions, made up hypotheses* which hinge upon an axis of reference, the actual knowing of it. The past and future are inconceivable without reference to a living present. Thus a neutral object is not known as such but referred to, thought of -- based on our actual knowing.

We distinguish *object known from our knowing of it* and since *knowing is not making the object* out of nothing we are led to believe it was something before we knew it and will remain something after the knowing. It is not a self-evident truth that cognition makes no difference to content cognized. For outside of that cognition it is not known to be this, or that.

Since object is a content of knowledge and is intra-cognitive, its extra-cognitive being rejects (militates against) its objecthood. It can no longer be object. What it will be then is unknowable, indeterminate.

The object is apprehended as something other than the knowing act because it is given to the knowing act. Its otherness and independence can be explained as to its being given to the knowing act. The cognition doesn't conjure it up. It presupposes it as something given. The faculty to which it is given is the sensibility of the subject. Cognition *reveals* it as sensed, given, intuited. It is not itself the faculty of sensibility -- it presupposes that. The reason is that our faculty of cognition awaits the given and does not enjoy the freedom to conceive it in any way it likes.

To be an object to the knowing act is the equivalent as being given to the knowing act.

What is known is what is given and knowing makes it its content. It is as it is given, and it is given as it is known. We know it as it is given to us, and as given to us it is something different both from ourselves and our knowing acts. It becomes a given content in being intuited by our sensibility and when not given or sensed it is no more an object.

What is it when not given? It is no longer itself -- and so it is meaningless to ask the question.

This givenness gives rise to our notion of a transcendental background.

Is it a thing in itself (Kant) or Avyakta (Samkhya) or Avidya (Vedanta) or Maya or Reality? The givenness of the known content presupposes it (a transcendental background) -- but tells us nothing concerning this ungiven and transcendental background of all givenness.

It is thinkable as the many -- in reference to the plurality of objects we know things in themselves, this can only be thought, or as our Avyakta of Samkhya, even this has thinkability but not knowability, or as an indeterminable (anirvacaniya).

This unintelligible background of all givenness, the transcendental thing in itself is a presupposition of the object as given.

Sense gives us the matter of knowledge which comes from outside while understanding gives us the generic forms that are in it.

Sense gives the sense data -- the indefinite sense matter, undistinguished from other subjects.

Understanding gives the specific relations of identity and difference, and spatio-temporal order. Sense cannot distinguish the object from the subject but understanding can and it does this through the relations which it first gathers from experience. These relations are the determinants of objectivity. They are so just because they are found to be in nature, and not in the understanding itself.

The real, given and objective are often confused. To be real means not constructed -- givenness, the ultimate foundation of any construction has always self acclaimed as real. The given is the real and the real is the given.

The real is the objective, that which doesn't owe a cent to the subject but independent of and indifferent to the subject.

The subject may be a substantive entity, or epiphenomena, as cross-section of objective facts defined by specific response of the nervous system -- desubjectify the subject and reduce it.

All agree that to be real means to be objective, to be independent of the subject. Is the real the same as the given, and the same as the objective? To be independent of subject, objectivity becomes criterion of reality.

That the given or objective is in some sense real -- I'll let pass, but the point here is whether the real is the same as the given or the same as the objective. We are concerned with the criterion of reality. Can givenness or objectivity be that criterion? Evidently not.

The given is presented, forced upon us -- and free from any subjective construction. But is it always real? Is not the false also presented? Are all our experiences of reality?

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