

WISDOM'S GOLDENROD, JEFF COX CLASS NOTES
(TYPED)
OCTOBER 20a, 1974
EPISTEMOLOGY; KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

TOPIC: Epistemology

SUBJECT: Knowledge and Reality

SUBSUBJECTS: World-Image, Maya, Avidya, Symbolization, Universal and Particular,
Thought as Foundational Principle, Nous

CONTENTS:

Schopenhauer's concept: the world is my will

World-image vs. world itself

Relativity of knowledge; appearance vs. ultimate reality

Avidya (ignorance) and misperception

Summary of previous class (#3):

1) Existence of objects prior to knowledge

2) Realist vs. Vedantist perspectives

3) Perception and illusion

AD Paper 4A -- Abridgment of G.R. Malkani's "Knowledge by Symbolization"

1) All knowledge as symbols

2) Types of symbolic knowledge

3) Relation between symbol and symbolized

4) Universal vs. particular in knowledge

5) Critique of positivism

6) Maya and the nature of perception

**AD Paper 4B -- Abridgment of A.C. Mukerji's "Reality and Ideality in the Western
and the Indian Idealistic Thought"**

1) Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness as foundational principle

2) Error of objectivistic attitude

3) Transcendental nature of Thought

4) Thought as Nous

Psychological vs. epistemological thinking

Avidya and universal manifestation

Ahamkara, Buddhi

Image is first, experience follows; reflection and the second cosmogony

Primacy of consciousness

**Investigating into and expanding maya; thought as an organ of soul, as
metaphysical organ of knowledge**

Overself as function of World-Mind

Not-I as avidya

BOOKS / ARTICLES READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*
- Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself*
- G.R. Malkani, “Knowledge by Symbolization” (in *Philosophical Quarterly* 31, 1958)
- A.C. Mukerji, “Reality and Ideality in the Western and the Indian Idealistic Thought,” in *Radhakrishnan: Comparative Studies in Philosophy Presented in Honour of His Sixtieth Birthday* (1951)

AD PAPERS read in class:

- Abridgment of G.R. Malkani’s “Knowledge by Symbolization.” Retyped, with the Mukerji abridgment, as 1974 1020b V09BN. Epistemology - Knowledge and Reality. A handwritten version by AD also appears in AD Supplementary Material, pp. 144-148.
- Abridgment of A.C. Mukerji’s “Reality and Ideality in the Western and the Indian Idealistic Thought.” Retyped, with the Malkani abridgment, as 1974 1020b V09BN. Epistemology - Knowledge and Reality. A handwritten version by AD also appears in AD Supplementary Material, pp. 149-153. The version read in this class does not include the material found on p. 149 or the first half of p. 150.

TYPED AND REFORMATTED by IT 2024

NOTES:

- **RETYPE STUDENT NOTES (hence V08).** From Jeff Cox Class Notes.
- This is **1974 10/20a, Epistemology; Knowledge and Reality Class, and the first entry associated with this date. 1974 10/20b = Epistemology; Knowledge and Reality Book Notes.**
- This is the fourth of five classes in the 1974 “Epistemology Review” series. See also WG Classes (and related papers) 1974 0929(a, b), 1006(a, b), 1013(a, b), and 1027(a, b).
- Tony is Anthony Damiani (AD).
- All spelling, capitalization, and punctuation corrected, abbreviations spelled out.

1974 10/20a at Wisdom's Goldenrod Epistemology; Knowledge and Reality

[JC Notes 1974 1020 Begin]

10/20/74 Epistemology Review – 4

Schopenhauer said the world is my will (that's what he thinks). [Note: See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*.] Your image is your world and not the world.

The world-image is determined by something "outside".

The world-image will be different for each different cognitional apparatus. If each of two creatures say their image is real, they are talking of something which appears but which has no reality. As soon as it doesn't appear it's gone, over, it doesn't exist. You say the image doesn't need you to exist, whereas the whole image is manufactured by the fact that you have sense organs and produce that image. The functioning of the sense organs and the knowledge they deliver are two ends of the same stick

Although knowledge is relative and all you have is an appearance of knowledge, yet it is an appearance of *something*. We have to get to a stage of knowledge which is ultimate (PB -- World-Mind has a fixed knowledge of the cosmos, cosmic idea). Even this ultimate knowledge is only an appearance of the ultimately real, and so even this knowledge goes.

Maybe there isn't any unknown reality -- I'm just accommodating you. It's your attachment that makes you think that there is a thing in itself there.

To say I only have a knowledge of appearances and therefore it's worthless -- that's non-sense, you can only say that when you reach the top and then can throw it all away. Until you reach the goal all your knowledge is infested with avidya which means absolute relativism, fragmentary. In other words, you're constantly confronted with God but you don't see God, you see a world. Ignorance helps you misperceive reality and see a world.

Summary of #3 [Note: See WG Class 1974 1013a.]

You say the object exists prior to my knowledge? Prove it.

The thought which contains our whole universe corresponds to the Nous (PB -- the thought which produces the space-time world). Realist says the object's out there and knowledge is in here. The Vedantist says no, all that comes under thought, within which are all distinctions. You can't produce knowledge, it's knowledge that produces the subject and the object.

An independent thing must be unknown. To conceive of the unknownness is a contradiction or it occurs in knowledge.

Examples of illusion show the mind to be outside the head. Brains checked while illusions were perceived showed no alterations from their behavior in normal perceptions.

Perception is the only time you can properly speak of creation. Things which appear are illusory and we can't get to the real through the appearances of it in knowledge.

Realist says knowing is like feeling and willing an activity, a function. Like when you will something you have a goal in mind, so too when you want to know something you have a definite object in mind. I have different sense organs and they assure me that the object exists independent of my knowledge.

Vedantist would say you first have knowledge of a rose as a thought in your mind and then you know about it through the senses. First you have a thought, then it translates itself into the perception you call the dream. There is no way to experience a pure sensation except as embedded in thought. You (can't) perceive an object without the thought.

Tony's Paper #4[A] — Symbolization of Knowledge

All your knowledge is in terms of 'what' (not the 'that'). How knowledge gets symbolized.

The symbolization of knowledge shows that we never have any knowledge but symbols of knowledge, i.e., we are always in the world of thought and never anywhere else.

All knowledge needs symbols and in different kinds of knowledge they perform different kinds of functions. There is a knowledge of pure symbols, symbols that represent a name. The highest kind of knowledge tries to point to reality.

In mathematics we have a knowledge of symbols ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$). This kind of knowledge of symbols is not literally knowledge -- it deals with certain thinkables but it's not knowledge, you could refer to anything. It's a kind of knowledge that depends on abstraction from real things and we get these points and lines.

We get actual knowledge in sense experience but not directly and without symbolization. We can't think without language. The most general character of reality is that it's something speakable. Anytime you observe the world you are thinking about it.

In sensible reality the symbol has a further function, it has a literal meaning -- it refers beyond itself to reality. We have to learn how to use the symbol which refers to reality by the rules of language. Its nature is to suppose that as we learn the language by reference to reality in sense perception so we must use it to refer to objective reality which can be sensibly known. As we learn so we must use.

Science is also based on sensible intuition, all scientific concepts and theories are therefore analyzable in terms of those sense perceptions.

Let's accept the direct reference of the symbol to the symbolized in all genuine knowledge. What is the nature of the relation between the symbol and the symbolized or between the sentence and the empirical (or sensible) reality?

A complete symbol in the form of a sentence or proposition represents a picture of an objective situation. We know an actual fact in the objective world and all truth is eventually based on sentences which directly refer to a reality sensibly known.

How do you get to the empirical reality? Every term of the proposition are all knowledge of universals. But yet what you are sensibly referring to is a particular and sensible fact in the world. But words are universal (except names of people etc). Our knowledge is always about universal and not specific facts.

Therefore our sentences stand alone and by themselves and have nothing at all to do with empirical reality.

The positivists claim there can't be a knowledge of metaphysics because it deals with non sense experience. But show me a sentence that deals with empirical reality. You have no knowledge of the unique. You live in an imaginary world of concepts and you keep talking about an empirical reality that you can't bring into the imaginary language.

When you say you see a red pole. Did you ever see the pure sensation that you want to call red? It is an imaginary inference to say you see a pure red. This takes the symbols apart for the purpose of showing you that the object never existed and was purely inference and that the only knowledge you have is of thoughts.

The grasping psychological attitude makes you believe something is there other than what you think, because the so-called object does not have independence of you. All your knowledge is in terms of thought. When a person says "I see red and don't tell me otherwise" -- but that red is a quality, a class concept or universal, you never see the particular red. This is maya.

PB also shows that all sensations are thoughts. The red is a subjective interpretation on your part. Perceiving the flower is not different than the perception of it. As each sense functions an image is created. What manifest them is something outside them -- pure consciousness.

[Note: What follows is a second paper, abridging Mukerji's "Reality and Ideality in the Western and the Indian Idealistic Thought." JC's notes do not distinguish it from the preceding paper, which abridges Malkani's "Knowledge by Symbolization."]

[Tony's Paper #4B]

Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness is the foundational principle and it is this which invests each term of the triple relationship with meaning and significance; we fall into the error of supposing that knowledge is the product of a certain type of relation between one thing and another. Once this error occurs it gives rise to impossibilities (such as saying *my* thought).

In a triple distinction the foundationality of thought is missed leading to its identification with one of the superstructure items. It is ingrained in the very nature of our objectivistic attitude of mind. The transference of the character of the object of thought or consciousness to thought itself is the error.

It is impossible to have a correct notion of Thought (Knowledge, Consciousness) by ascribing to it the characters belonging to the object, placing Knowledge which is transcendental on a level of the objects conditioned by it. (Like placing the law of contradiction on a level of the judgments conditioned by it.)

[Note: JC notes say "law of contradiction"; Mukerji's essay has "Law of Non-Contradiction." The two names are interchangeable.]

Thought has a different part to play from what it has if we speak of a faculty of thought (three levels of thinking), one among a crowd of others such as perception, with which it stands on the same level. In its objective meaning it is the same as the Nous and is not a subjective process. We must realize that man is a being who thinks and as a thinker he is universal and feels his own universality. Thought as the universal

background of all distinctions can't be identified with a particular faculty. Universal, irrepressible, transcendental as a principle which lies at the foundation of all we can ever think and all distinctions between objects.

Thought when used in a transcendental sense falls beyond the relational description and yet supplies the basis of every object of thought that is necessarily ideal. If it is thought then anything that is subsumed under it has to be ideal. The Nous (Thought) produces and manifests the universe and anything in that universe must participate in thought.

[Note: Paper 4B ends here.]

We have four psychological faculties (not epistemological which is Nous) -- psychological thinking is not the Nous, but is a superimposition on your part when you think that you think. The dream subject only thinks he is thinking -- he doesn't know what thinking is, only the epistemological subject can think and his thought includes your psychological functions and the tree. The vasanas operate and you say "I'm thinking" but that is the trouble when you personalize knowledge and say "my knowledge," but how can it be yours? There's no claim to knowledge. Who's going to claim it? The subject? He's in knowledge, included under thought. He doesn't have knowledge. How do you understand Jung when he says I deal only with the categories of the imagination, not epistemology?

Thought (Nous) provides you (the subject) with the particular kind of space-timed consciousness. The subject is a bit of the knowledge just as the object and the mind that relates. They are ignorance divided into three.

One thought (avidya, ignorance) follows another and represents the whole of universal manifestation.

Bert: The entity that calls himself Bert is a reinterpretation of his own creation of the thought and that is the symbolic. That's the reflective consciousness.

Wisdom of the Overself, "Birth of the Individual," p. 39 [Note: Rider, 1943 edition.] -- "The conventional conception ... single stream of integral awareness."

The I-thought is prior to the empirical ego and is ahamkara. The Thought is Buddhi. Once you reach this you can start speaking of the Absolute. One thought follows another but that's viewing it from down here, but from (Buddhi?) the mind of God it is contained in a totally fixed way. It is one thought following another (the totally fixed knowledge in pieces) for us. Our perception of the world is a perception of Brahman but infected with ignorance as to who and what we are. The confrontation is that to the extent that you perceive the world you are infected with maya. When you perceive Brahman then there is no more maya and there can't be both at the same time.

The experience is derived from the image which is given. The Vedantists say your eyes don't see that object, the whole thing is given and then you talk about seeing the object. PB says knowledge is given and you are in that image which is given and from that image the ego-complex starts leaving and perceiving and builds up a world of concepts. The reflective ability comes into operation and he recognizes that the ego-complex mirrors the universal process. The mind becomes a reflecting apparatus and reflects the whole of universal manifestation (Jung's second cosmogony).

My own consciousness is primary but for most people, if it exists at all, it's an afterthought. If you recognize that your consciousness is the world, this is the immediacy of knowledge which is given to him instant after instant. If he starts breaking through the ignorance surrounding him he starts recognizing the immensity of this knowledge.

There has to be first the epistemological subject (which is the thought). The Thought includes the body-mind and the objects and their distinctions. We distinguish the tree from our thought about it and say they are different. The attachment to the body and mind is presupposed.

Maya is the mis-perception of God. He has to go on investigating into this maya and expand it. *Thought* as an organ of the soul will lead you to deliverance -- which means an encompassing knowledge that's unbelievable. Every state of consciousness as it manifests reveals more and more of what that ultimate reality is. When he reaches the image of the totally fixed universe, now there is one step beyond, for the total knowledge is a manifestation of the Supreme Being and is an appearance of it.

Thought is a metaphysical organ of knowledge for the I (Overself) which is a function of World-Mind.

The not-I is avidya.

[JC Notes 1974 1020 End]