

Abridgments: G.R. Malkani's "Knowledge by Symbolization"; A.C. Mukerji's "Reality and Ideality in the Western and the Indian Idealistic Thought"
by Anthony J. Damiani
Book Notes V09BN

3-LETTER CODE: EPI

TOPIC: Epistemology

SUBJECT: Knowledge and Reality

SUBSUBJECTS: Symbolization, Universal and Particular, Language, Thought as Foundational Principle, Nous

ORIGINAL LOCATION & FILE NAME (of PDF used for typing): Jeff Cox Class Notes, 10/20/1974

CONTENTS:

Abridgment of G.R. Malkani's "Knowledge by Symbolization"

We only have symbols of knowledge

Knowledge of symbols in mathematics not literally knowledge

No direct sense knowledge without symbolization/language

Science based on sensible intuition

What is the nature of the relation between symbol and symbolized?

All truth is based on sentences which refer directly to a reality sensibly known

All terms of the sentence are universals; you live in an imaginary world of concepts; maya

PB: all sensations are thoughts

Abridgment of A.C. Mukerji's "Reality and Ideality in the Western and the Indian Idealistic Thought"

Consciousness/Knowledge/Thought is the foundational principle, knowledge not the product of a relation between two things

Thought is Nous, not a faculty or a subjective process

Man as a being who thinks is universal

Nous (Thought) produces and manifests the universe and anything in that universe must participate in thought

ARTICLES QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- 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 HANDWRITING: Papers as found in JC notes, no edits

COMPLETENESS: Both papers appear more or less complete, per comparison with the versions in AD Supplementary Material, except that the second omits the material on p. 149 and the first half of p. 150

PUBLISHABILITY: No, already published

ALTERNATE VERSIONS: AD Supplementary Material, pp. 144-153

DATE ASSOCIATED WITH THESE PAPERS: 1974 1020

RETYPE, REFORMAT, AND PROOFREAD by IT 2026

NOTES:

- **RETYPE BOOK NOTES presented in class (V09BN).**
- This is **1974 10/20b, Epistemology; Knowledge and Reality Book Notes, and the second entry associated with this date. 1974 10/20a = Epistemology; Knowledge and Reality Class.**
- These Book Notes are read and discussed in WG Class 1974 1020a, 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 and other errors have been corrected.

ABRIDGMENT OF G.R. MALKANI'S "KNOWLEDGE BY SYMBOLIZATION"

[JC Notes 1974 1020, Tony's Paper # 4, Begin]

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.

— • • • —

ABRIDGMENT OF A.C. MUKERJI’S “REALITY AND IDEALITY IN THE WESTERN AND THE INDIAN IDEALISTIC THOUGHT”

[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.

[JC Notes 1974 1020, Tony's Paper # 4, End]