

# ***The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object:*** **The Epilogue to the Published Manuscript**

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April 8, 1970

The following is suggested as an epilogue to the volume *Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*:

This writing has no logical end. It is brought to an end rather arbitrarily in much the way that a fugue composition in music is brought to an end; it could have continued forever as a flight of musical voices. The development from that base of reference which was defined by the Realization called the High Indifference could have continued through all fields of human thought, and there is no conceivable end. In the development that has been presented, there are only two points covered that are of a central importance: first, the factuality of a third organ, faculty, or function of cognition which was called “introception”; and, the possibility through its office of a metaphysical knowledge.

The problem is fundamental. Is a metaphysical knowledge possible? I think we may conclude from the work of David Hume and Immanuel Kant that a pure metaphysical knowledge is not possible if we are limited to the cognitive forms of sense perception and conceptual cognition. Efforts at metaphysical statement have typically been dogmatic and not in agreement with each other as they were known at the time of Immanuel Kant. And there existed no means of critical discrimination between these more or less incompatible dogmatic statements. It’s not only Immanuel Kant, but also Dr. Carl G. Jung challenges the validity of any metaphysical conception. Jung says, and this is completely in conformity with the position of Immanuel Kant, that our conceptions concerning a supposed metaphysical subject matter is only a statement concerning the structure of the mind. I’ll quote from his essay, or psychological commentary, introductory to *The Book of the Great Liberation*:<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, the structure of the mind is responsible for anything we may assert about metaphysical matters, as I have already pointed out. We have also begun to understand that the intellect is not an *ens per se*, or an independent mental faculty, but a psychic function dependent upon the conditions of the psyche as a whole. A philosophical statement is the product of a certain personality living at a certain time in a certain place, and not the outcome of a purely logical and impersonal procedure. To that extent it is chiefly subjective; whether it has an objective validity or not depends on whether there are few or many persons who argue in the same way. The isolation of man within his mind as a result of epistemological criticism has naturally led to psychological criticism. This kind of criticism is not popular with the philosophers, since they like to consider

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<sup>1</sup> Wolff meant to say “The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation.”

the philosophic intellect as the perfect and unconditioned instrument of philosophy. Yet this intellect of theirs is a function dependent upon an individual psyche and determined on all sides by subjective conditions, quite apart from environmental influences. Indeed, we have already become so accustomed to this point of view that ‘mind’ has lost its universal character altogether. It has become a more or less individualized affair, with no trace of its former cosmic aspect as the *anima rationalis*.<sup>2</sup>

This would challenge any possibility of an *a priori* determination. But let us turn to Immanuel Kant. He recognized that the problem was not quite so simple as that. Quoting from the Introduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Meiklejohn translation:

That metaphysical science has hitherto remained in so vacillating a state of uncertainty and contradiction, is only to be attributed to the fact that this great problem, and perhaps even the difference between analytical and synthetical judgments, did not sooner suggest itself to philosophers. Upon the solution of this problem, or upon sufficient proof of the impossibility of synthetical knowledge *a priori*, depends the existence or [the] downfall of the science of metaphysics. Among philosophers, David Hume came the nearest of all to this problem; yet it never acquired in his mind sufficient precision, nor did he regard the question in its universality. On the contrary, he stopped short at the synthetical proposition of the connection of an effect with its cause (*principium causalitatis*), insisting that such proposition *a priori* was impossible. According to his conclusions, then, all that we [can] term metaphysical science is a mere delusion, arising from the fancied insight of reason into that which is in truth borrowed from experience, and to which habit has given the appearance of necessity. Against this assertion, destructive to all pure philosophy, he would have been guarded, had he had our problem before his eyes in its universality. For he would then have perceived that, according to his own argument, there likewise could not be any pure mathematical science, which assuredly cannot exist without synthetical propositions *a priori*—an absurdity from which his good understanding must have saved him.

In the solution of the above problem is at the same time comprehended the possibility of the use of pure reason in the foundation and construction of all sciences which contain theoretical knowledge *a priori* of objects, that is to say, the answer to the following questions:

How is pure mathematical science possible?

How is pure natural science possible?

Respecting these sciences, as they do certainly exist, it may with propriety be asked, *how* they are [they] possible?—for that they must be possible is

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<sup>2</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (London: Oxford University Press 1954), xxxii-xxxiii.

shown by the fact of their really existing. But as to metaphysics, the miserable progress it has hitherto made, and the fact that [of] no one system yet brought forward, [as] far as regards its true aim, can it be said that this science really exists, leaves anyone at liberty to doubt with reason the [very] possibility of its existence.<sup>3</sup>

And then there's a further question put by Immanuel Kant:

How is metaphysics, as a natural disposition, possible?

These questions, in my mind, are just about as fundamental as exist anywhere. If our knowledge is empiric and only empiric, we are shut in helplessly in the world of phenomena without even the faintest knowledge of law, or necessity, or order. We could have no certainty concerning the great problems of God, freedom, or immortality. We could have no certainty in the domain that properly belongs to religion.

Concerning mathematics, I wish to give a quotation from something said by Einstein:

How can it be that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought independent of experience, is so admirably adapted to the objects of reality?<sup>4</sup>

The quotation from Einstein carries one back into the history of the development of the General Theory of Relativity. He found the mathematical pattern which could give form to that theory in the work of a pure mathematician known as Riemann. Riemann was a mathematical thinker in an ivory tower without any reference in his thought to experience. He was concerned with a pure problem that from the ordinary point of view would seem very abstruse. The problem grew up out of the question as to whether the parallel axiom in Euclid was actually an axiom, or a proposition, or theorem which could be deduced from previous so-called axioms. The effort in this direction failed. Then the effort was made to see if a system could be developed in which the assumption of the parallel axiom was altered. Out of this grew, at that time, two systems of non-Euclidean geometry: that associated with the names of Lobachevsky and Bolyai and the one associated with the name of Riemann. The former assumed that through a point on a plane outside of a given line on that plane, that two parallel lines could be drawn that would not meet the given line in a finite distance. And that between these two lines there were an infinite number of other lines that were called non-intersectors. A perfectly logical and coherent geometry was built upon this assumption.

Riemann followed the other course and assumed that no line could be drawn through such a point which would not meet the given line in a finite distance; in other words, parallelity in the sense of two lines that meet only at infinity was abandoned. This would mean that if you had two lines such that the interior angles formed on a transversal

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<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (New York: Wiley Book Co., 1943), 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> E. T. Bell, *Men of Mathematics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1937), xvii.

on one side in their sum were equal to two right angles, instead of these lines continuing separate to infinity, they would meet in a finite distance. This defines a conception of a limited or finite space when carried through to its final conclusions. The only image we have that we can imagine of such a space is the two dimensional space on the surface of a sphere where the great circles are the analogue of straight lines, and in that case you can have great circles that meet in a finite distance.

Now, this was a pure construction, a pure development, without any thought of its having a practical application, but many years later Einstein found that it supplies the mathematical conception—the basic mathematical conception which served to integrate his General Theory of Relativity. And the question thus arose in his mind, how is it possible that the pure *a priori* thought of the mathematician could ultimately prove to fit the domain of experience so well? What I submit is that the problem of how pure mathematics is possible is closely connected to the problem of whether a pure metaphysics is possible. The thought of the pure mathematician moves everlastingly to the infinite, as also does the disposition of man to think metaphysically concerning the infinite. The call of the metaphysical is a fact in the psychology of man's mind. But how can it be justified? How can he attain to a metaphysical certainty analogous to the certainty he does attain in pure mathematics? I think the two problems are very closely related.

The importance of the thesis that there is a third organ, faculty, or function of cognition other than sense perception and conceptual cognition is that this, it is maintained, leads to metaphysical certainty; however, it is viewed as a function latent in the total psychology of man, active generally only as an unconscious influence, and that because of this influence, man has a metaphysical disposition, an urge to achieve metaphysical certainty. It is also suggested that this function is in the background operating and influencing the work of all genius, and thus distinguishing the thought of genius from the thought of mere talent. But the influence of the third organ of cognition may be present without that organ having been isolated as an object of cognition itself. No doubt, the emergence and isolation of this function calls for that which we regard as yogic Realization or Awakening—not a general fact among men, but a fact with the few and presumptively potential in all men. If the actuality of such a function is entertained as a possibility, then we may see how metaphysical certainty is possible, and thus the resolution may be available of all basic philosophic and religious questions so that we are no longer dependent up faith alone. The truth of this thesis, that there is such a third organ of cognition, cannot be proven on the basis of the two-fold form of cognition through sense perception and conceptual cognition alone and is vulnerable to criticism from that point of view. Its validity is dependent upon, or its validation rather, is dependent upon at least the assumption that there is such a thing as a Realization that gives not only affective value and moral elevation, but also essential knowledge. This point is the central one of the whole text of the book.

There is frequent reference in the book to mathematical analogues. There's a reason for that. The underlying thesis is that the factuality of pure mathematics is as much in doubt as the factuality of pure metaphysics. But as the factuality of pure mathematics is abundantly proven there is the presumption that equally well the factuality of pure metaphysics may be proven. In any case, unless the philosopher seriously considers this possibility, he has not completed his obligation to the determination of truth.

I do not reject criticism in the sense that Immanuel Kant used that term and in the sense that Jung used that term. It simply means discriminate evaluation. I, in fact, solicit it. I am more concerned that this conception shall be given serious consideration than that it should be simply and arbitrarily accepted. But criticism, to be competent, involves a good deal. Only he can be a competent critic who also has awakened within himself the introceptive function. For all others, it can only be entertained as a possibility, but that is enough. I seek that the mind should not be closed in this direction. I do not seek that it should be accepting or rejecting blindly, but to entertain, simply, this possibility. Competent criticism would require the equipment of a Shankara or a Plotinus, plus a knowledge of modern epistemological criticism and psychological criticism, as well as a knowledge of modern pure mathematics. Therefore, there are not many who can qualify as competent critics.

I present the evidence as far as possible for the factuality of this organ—*samadhindriya*, if you please, or “inner organ” of Fichte—that involved the explicit report of the events that led to the awakening of the function. This falls within the field of subjective biography—a field that one is a bit sensitive about in giving it formal expression. It does open the door, however, to psychological criticism and evaluation, and it seemed to me that it was an obligation to render this material available, for the last thing I want is a blind acceptance or rejection.

Most psychologists are not competent in this field, least of all the Freudians, who see in all culture only a perversion of sexuality. I call to their attention that they’re not saying only that all metaphysical thought, and all religion, and all art is only a perversion of sex, they’re also saying that pure mathematics is only a perversion of sex, and it was pure mathematics, in the last analysis, which was the principle factor in making the landing on the moon possible—an empiric fact. I submit that this orientation, this attitude of interpretation is puerile, is otiose, and wholly incompetent, and reflects mainly the perversions of Freud’s own mind—something rendered rather clearly in Jung’s account of his meeting with Freud as given in Jung’s book *Memories, Dreams, [and] Reflections*.

When Jung says that our thought is only an expression of our personal limitations, our personal subjective conditioning of the mind, and that it attains a general validity only by its corresponding to a similar impress in the thoughts of others, in the consciousness of others, it must be borne in mind that his charge of subjectivism would apply equally well to pure mathematics as well as to pure metaphysics; and I submit that the authority of the pure mathematician is as objective as anything we know, and that its truth is not determined by the vote of persons who read his works, that it is authentically universalistic, and that it works in the pragmatic domain of experience. But I submit that the proof of its truth is not simply the fact that it works pragmatically, but lies in the fact that it follows logically from its premises.

I owe a good deal to Dr. Jung, and I feel that he said much that is very valid; and while his statements are pejorative with respect to the possibility of metaphysics in general, yet there is one place I remember where he said that if we clear away certain things, we may find such metaphysical truth as there may be. Truth is a complex of two determinants: one is the form and one is the substance. In the empiric realm, the form is logic and the substance comes from experience of the senses. I submit that the same holds true on the metaphysical level, that there is a substantive truth attained only by the

function of Realization and that there is a logical form in which it is dressed, that the logical form without the Realization becomes, with respect to metaphysical material, only speculation; but in combination with the introceptual content, it becomes a transcriptive presentation of a transcendent reality.

This, thus, is a brief summation of the principle theses presented by the whole volume. They are presented so that the reader may judge as far as may be for himself, being freed as far as possible from all mere dogmatic assertion or categoricalism, but having the ideas presented in such a way that discriminative evaluation may be possible.