

Rethinking Kants Metaphysics of Consciousness

Dr. Jitendra Ram

Associate Professor, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Del

Abstract

This article is rethinking Kant's metaphysics of consciousness. This is rethinking apriori faculty of Apperception and of consciousness. It is rethinking 'as I appear to myself'. It is also rethinking Kants Copernican Revolution of consciousness and rethinking Kant's transcendental method of metaphysics of consciousness. The above all rethinking is founded on objective scientific method in Neuroscience, Genetics and Physics of Consciousness, mind, and self. The above all rethinking is based on neurophilosophy and philosophy of neuroscience.

Keywords: Kant, Intuition, Understanding, Apperception, Transcendental Method, Scientific Method, Neuroscience of Consciousness, Physics of Mind, Genetic of Self Neuro-philosophy.

I. Introduction

Kant's metaphysics of consciousness and apperception is constituted by apriori mental faculties which are the conditions of consciousness, perception and apperception. Perception and apperceptions happens when mental faculties come together. Through the apriori mental faculty we knows, we as we appear to ourselves and never as we are as we are ourselves. Kants rejects Descartes claim of immateriality and immortality of self.

This article is divided into five section. In section II 'Kants' Metaphysics of consciousness' is stating his metaphysics of consciousness as in his Critique of Pure Reason. Section III is 'Rethinking Kants metaphysis of consciousness which is rethinking Kants apriori mental faculty as the condition of perception, apperception. This section is rethinking as I appear to myself' and it is also rethinking Kants' Copernicus revolution that brain or self must conform to apriori knowledge.

The section IV, is rethinking Kants transcendental method of metaphysics of consciousness.

The above all rethinking is based on the philosophy of neuroscience of consciousness, physics of mind and genetics of self and their objective scientific method.

The section V the 'conclusions' claims that scientific and neurophilosophical explanation of metaphysics of consciousness is better explanation of consciousness, of mind, of self than the Kantian explanation.

II. Kant's Metaphysics of Consciousness

Kant in critique of pure reason claims that consciousness or self emerges from the mental objective structure or mental faculty which are apriori (like Sensibility's space and time, Understanding Imagination and Reasons). These structure are presupposed and pre-exist before consciousness

experience or experience of consciousness happens. These mental faculty or category of understanding are necessary condition for experience of consciousness. Kant says:

"The objective validity of the categories, as a priori concepts, rests on the fact that though them alone is experience possible ... they (mental faculties) must be recognized as apriori conditions of possibility of experience" Kant, Critique of Pure Reason (A93-94).

Kant claims that without these apriori mental faculties experience is impossible. These faculties are necessary for phenomenal consciousness, for self consciousness, or what Kant calls apperception (The term Kant borrows from Leibniz and uses in the same way for self consciousness).

Kant says that knowledge of soul as substance which is immaterial, immortal and persisting through time is impossible because there is no intuition or no direct intuition of soul. The knowledge of 'I' as substance is not possible argues Kant as Hume. The soul or 'I' is purely logical and involves no intuitions. Those who claims the existence of immortal soul, their reason wrongly erroneously operate beyond the limit of possible knowledge. The claim of such soul substance is the result of false reasoning. Soul is simple and indivisible and different from matter, says Descartes, but Kant says that simplicity or indivisibility as substratum or soul's simplicity or indivisibility is never known through experience. We know nothing about substratum. Descartes mistakes unity of apperception for unity of an indivisible substance or soul.

Kant rejects persisting soul or persisting person or personal identity on the ground 'I' as the unity of apperception persisting in the every and all unity of apperception is mistakenly thought to be the permanent or persisting person. This thought gives the illusion of permanent and persisting self. Kant claims that soul as immortal substance, soul as indivisible and soul as persisting entity is result of misinterpreting 'I' as the unity of apperception, for the immortal, indivisible and permanent or persisting soul.

Kant makes distinction between self as it appears (phenomenal self and self as it is in itself which is purely logical and doesn't exist (Neumental self).

"Inner sense (introspection or inner perception) represents to consciousness even our own selves as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves." Kant, Critique of Pure Reason (B153)

"When we know ourselves as the object of a representation in inner sense, we known even ourselves only as appearance."

Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A 278.

"Yet know myself, like other phenomena, only as I appear to myself, not as I am". Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, B 155.

Kant in all three quotations above claims that 'I' which is known to us is the 'I' as it appears to us as other objects or phenomena appear to us. I as I am. In in itself, we in ourselves as we are, is never known because nominal self is not given in intuition and therefore is purely logical and does not exist.

The consciousness of self as it appears to us is based on synthesis of apriori mental faculty and empirical intuition (outer intuition coming from objects and inner intuition like memory thought). In being conscious of self we have knowledge of self as it appears and not as it is in itself because it is non-existent.

III. Rethinking Kants Metaphysics of Consciousness

This section is rethinking metaphysical claims of apriori faculty of consciousness and rethinking 'I' as it appear.

Kants (metaphysical claim) apriori mental structure of consciousness which the seat of consciousness or where the consciousness is situated, must be rethought in the sense that Kants claim and explanation of apriori faculty is very superficial and nothing more than guess work or imagination. His claims is rejected by philosophy of neuroscience and neuro-philosophy because first according to philosophy of neuroscience there are many parts of brain involved is consciousness experience and in experience of self as it appears and certainly there are more than four faculty as enumerated by Kant (sensibility, understanding, imagination and reason). Secondly, according o philosophy of evolution of brain and consciousness the parts of brain are not apriori because evolution of brain, its cognitive faculty and complex experience have emerges from the interaction of nature and nurture simultaneously. Experience have shaped mental faculty and mental faculties shaped experience. So the mental faculty (according to Kant) that these are apriori is false and rejected. Thirdly the Neural Darwinism of Nobel Laureate G.M. Edelman in *A Universe of consciousness*, claims that mental faculty are evolutionary (not apriori, rather posteriori because mental capacity of Human has evolve over billions of years). Francis Crick the Nobel Laureate in his book the *Astonishing Hypothesis*, he claims that consciousness should be explained through Neural Correlates.

Fourthly, physicist Stephen Hawking in *Grand Design : The Meaning of Life*, a Documentary claims that every phenomena, consciousness, mind and meaning of life must be explained through the law of physics (some of which are, Strong force, Weak force, Electromagnetic Force and Gravitational Force). The brain as grand design of nature is not apriori rather evolved guided by Laws of Physics.

Fifthly Kants, second metaphysical claim that what we are consciousness introspectively is not the 'I as it is' "rather" I as it appears". (because 'I as it is' is never given in intuition and will never be known) must be rethought because his claim is superficial and theoretical claim based on armchair philosophy and not based on experimental research.

He does not explain how exactly "I as it appears" emerges from the mental structure. For the reasons above mentioned Kants metaphysical claims about mind consciousness, self-consciousness must be rethought and rejected. There is clash of claims of reasons in his books The theoretical reasons about intuitions in *Critique of Pure Reason* reject soul as immaterial immortal and persisting entity and the practical reason in *Critique of Practical Reason* postulate the existence of immortal soul. In view of contradicting reasons in his works his metaphysical claims about self consciousness must be rejected.

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787) edition claims that apriori mental structure of consciousness determine metaphysics as it appears. He says :

"So metaphysics "proceeding precisely on the line of Copernicus's primary hypothesis." should move from assuming that "knowledge must conform to object's to the supposition that, "objects must conform to our a priori knowledge."

Kant, Critique of Pure Reason

The claim of Kant that objects must conform to apriori knowledge or cognitive structure is revolutionary mistake. It is not the apriori category that determine rather from scientific point of view epistemology and metaphysics must independent of apriori structure of consciousness. Quine rejected the analytic or apriori claiming that all the concepts or all proposition that are to be analyzed lead to empirical.

IV. Rethinking Kants Method of Metaphysics of Consciousness

Kant in *critique of Pure Reason* and in *Metaphysical Foundation of Natural Science*, describes his transcendental method of studying mind and consciousness. He says that mind cannot be studied scientifically. The mind can be studied only through apriori method called Transcendental method.

Kant says that the knowledge of apriori truth or necessary truth and universal truth about apriori faculty of consciousness or mind can be obtained only through apriori method called transcendental method. The Kants method of metaphysics of consciousness must be rethought. Kants transcendental method of metaphysics of mind is only theoretical method – an armchair method and is not based on objective scientific research. The neuro-philosophical claim about mind is based on neuro-scientific method which claims that there are many parts of brain these parts are not apriori rather the brain, parts of brain have evolved through natural selection. Kant claim that consciousness, mind cannot be studied scientifically because the contents of mind cannot be expressed through scientific model or scientific model and because the contents of consciousness can be known only introspectively.

But this claim of Kant that scientific study of mind and its metaphysics is impossible must be rethought because Nobel Laureate. G.M. Edelman in his *A Universe of Consciousness* and Nobel Laureate Francis Crick in his book *Astonishing Hypothesis* claims that structure of mind and consciousness can be studied successfully through innovative neurotechnology. Transcendental method is not satisfactory because this method is theoretical method and cannot reveal the how exactly structure of consciousness work and processes mind and consciousness. Edelman says that :

"Consciousness can be considered a scientific subject and it is not the sole province of philosophers".
Edelman, *A Universe of Consciousness*, Chapter I.

We take the position that consciousness is not an object but a process and it is indeed of fitting scientific subject."

Edelman, *A Universe of Consciousness*, Chapter I.

Therefore Kant claim that consciousness cannot be studied scientifically and his method must be rethought for the reasons mentioned above.

V. Conclusion

Kants explanation of consciousness, perception and apperception his explanation of 'I' as I appear to my self and his Copernicus revolution is superficial, inadequate, theoretical, subjective and based on armchair reasoning. G.M. Edelman's claim that mental faculty is evolutionary and the mental faculty shapes experiences and experiences shape mental faculties through nature. Nurture interaction is rejection is apriori of mental faculty.

Physicists Stephen Hawking's claim that grand design of universe and human brain and mental faculties have evolved through long time guided by laws of physics, rejects apriori mental faculty. Kants Copernican revolution that brain should conform to apriori knowledge is rejected by third person method or scientific method claims that apriori knowledge must conform to science of brain.

The transcendental method of metaphysics of consciousness is unsatisfactory superficial and theoretical, such method cannot yield truth about how we have perception, consciousness and apperception only the objective scientific method in science of consciousness on which neuro-philosophy and philosophy of neuroscience of mind, consciousness is based, can provide better and detailed explanation of consciousness.

References

1. Crick, F. (1995). *Astonishing Hypothesis : The Scientific Search for the Soul*. USA: Scribner.
2. Edelman, G. (2001). *A Universe of Consciousness : How Matter Becomes Imagination*. USA : Basic Books.
3. Guyer, P. ed (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cambridge : Cambridge University.
4. Hawking, S. (2012). *The Grand Design*. UK : Bantam.