



## IN MEMORIAM

Hubert R. G. Schwyzer  
Professor of Philosophy  
UC Santa Barbara  
1935-2006

Hubert Rudolf Georg Schwyzer, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of California, Santa Barbara, died of stomach cancer on June 22, 2006.

Hubert was born in Vienna, Austria, on March 16, 1935, to Dr. Georg Clemens Schwyzer, a physician, and Elisabeth Schuh Schwyzer. The family was forced to flee Austria in 1938, nine months after the Anschluss. Hubert grew up in England and attended a Jesuit boarding school before joining the Royal Air Force, where he served from 1953 to 1955. He went on to study at Reading University, where he graduated with a degree in philosophy in 1958. In 1959 he came to the United States for graduate study at the University of California at Berkeley, earning his doctorate in 1968. He taught philosophy at the University of Alberta, Canada, for two years from 1963 to 1965, and then at UC Santa Barbara for 37 years from 1965 until his retirement in 2002. At UCSB he served three separate terms as Department Chair and was active for many years in the University's Education Abroad Program.

Hubert's work centered on Kant and Wittgenstein and sought to examine and make accessible their insights into the nature of the relationship between thought and reality. He published many articles in the leading journals of our profession. His principle work, *The Unity of Understanding: A Study in Kantian Problems*, was published in 1990 by Clarendon Press- Oxford. In this work, Hubert examines Kant's theory of the understanding – a theory, he argues, that is underpinned by three theses: (1) The human understanding is autonomous, in the sense that it grasps objects by means of concepts that arise spontaneously from the understanding itself (rather than from the understanding's mirroring of its objects); yet (2) the objects grasped by the understanding are precisely those we perceive by our senses; further, (3) in its functioning, the understanding must follow rules – rules that are not private or subjective, but rather are what make it possible for us to communicate with one another by language.

Hubert maintains that Kant succeeds in making a very good case for each of these theses and also that they are in themselves highly plausible. Yet, he argues, Kant is unable to hold them together in a unified account of the nature of understanding. Not only is he obliged to make ad hoc maneuvers and adjustments to meet the different demands made by these theses, he is, further, unable to provide the kinds of arguments and explanations that his theory is designed to provide. Hubert shows that Kant's inability to hold his three theses together has deep roots in the philosophical tradition to which he belongs. The requirements which he adduces for the nature of understanding cannot be satisfied within the general picture of what it is to be a thinking being that he shares with his predecessors, a picture in which the idea of representing something to oneself is taken to be the fundamental feature of consciousness. Those requirements, laid down by Kant himself, necessitate a complete break with that picture, and in fact call for a picture of a quite different kind.

Hubert also proposes a solution to the problem Kant is unable to solve, a solution inspired by the Wittgensteinian tradition in which he worked during much of his career. Offering a detailed discussion of the nature of rule- following, he argues that Kant's central problem can be resolved only if rule- consciousness is construed in fundamentally practical terms.

After his retirement, Hubert had more time to pursue his passion of playing his cello in chamber music ensembles, including the Bow's Art Trio, a group he helped found. Music and his friendships with his fellow musicians were great joys to him.

Hubert Schwyzer was a kind and gentle human being, loved by all who knew him. He was a popular teacher and an admired and respected colleague, whose wise and humane counsel made him highly influential in departmental deliberations. A remarkably selfless philosopher, his work was motivated solely by the desire to win his way to philosophical insight and understanding.

He is survived by his wife, Carol Schwyzer, of Santa Barbara; daughters Elizabeth of Santa Barbara and Diana of San Francisco; his former wife Alison Schwyzer of Carmel, his sons Hugo of Pasadena and Philip of Exeter, England; his grandchildren Edward and Sophia; his sister Christa Pongratz- Lippitt of Vienna and his brother George Schwyzer of New York.

William Forgie  
Charles McCracken, Michigan State University  
Merrill Ring, California State University, Fullerton