

## EPISTEMOLOGY & THE SOUL

### Preface

It was shortly after finishing the second edition of [Natural Theology & Classical Apologetics](#) that I wrote this essay. It is clear that at the time of this writing I did not possess the understanding of some of the ideas that I now have. Some ideas in this essay are oversimplified and reflect the infancy of my own understanding.

### Epistemology and the Metaphysics of the Soul

*by Joshua Synon*

*If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a doctor who decides my diet, I need not trouble myself. If I am willing to pay, I need not think. Others will do it for me.*

– Immanuel Kant

When I began to inquire into the relationship of the body to the mind, spirit, or soul, I had no idea how deeply profound the topic really is, and how hotly debated it has been throughout history. Most people today would explain, in a very Neoplatonic way, that the human soul is analogous to a truck driver with the body being the truck. This is an ancient approach to the issue that is termed *dualism* in which the human being is comprised of two ontologically separate substances, namely the body and the soul. In this vitalistic understanding, the soul, the *vital essence* of life, is said to live on after bodily death and, hence, is the *real us*, the truck *driver*. In most cases, it seems, the soul is synonymous with the *mind*. But dualism is not the only view of reality prevalent in history. What evidence do we have that a *soul* or a vital substance that is ontologically separate from matter actually exists? Cannot the natural sciences explain self-consciousness and thought in totality? Many have thought so and, if so, then there seems to be no need to postulate a separate substance that animates our body. This latter group posits that all that exists is the material world of matter and energy.

The ancient Eastern sages did not develop great epistemological systems, mostly because they were a more practical lot, but they seem to believe the nature of the human soul to be part of a mystical grand system of order, perhaps a universal consciousness or a type of pantheism, which has moral responsibilities to other beings. They seem to presume that we are spiritual creatures. Some claim that reality is multifaceted and therefore ultimately inarticulate. The goal of the Buddhist, for instance, is to achieve a state of complete emptiness or “no-thing-ness” with only experience of the moment remaining, a completely spiritual and selfless state of being. Western thinkers, however, have attacked the notion that consciousness can exist without sense data to interpret or *think about*. In this case, what is one really conscious of? To answer that one is conscious of his own consciousness is only begging the question. As soon as consciousness is conscious of some “thing” an interpretation has already taken place.

As Eastern mysticism has not satisfied the majority of Western thinkers, the West has developed grand epistemological and metaphysical systems, grounded in reason, that attempt to make sense of reality and discover the true nature and purpose of human being. In order to counter the antifoundational and relativistic thinking of the sophists, Plato (427-348 B.C.) argued that for us to even have *ideas* in our

mind there must be an external world (a foundational reality) that we do not directly interact with where these ideas come from. The world that we experience merely takes part in or resembles this *perfect* and timeless world of *Forms* (a type of emanationism). From this he developed the notion that all knowledge is recollection. He invoked his famous allegories of the divided line and the cave to explain this point. Plato ultimately divided the soul into three parts: reason, spirit, and appetite. Reason is our rational side, spirit has to do with our will, and appetite is synonymous with our natural desires. Plato taught that reason should rule our spirit and appetite. The nature of the soul was said to be immortal and upon bodily death, then, it was said that the soul is released into this perfect reality of Forms, which later became adopted by the Christians as the concept of Heaven. This dualistic view led Plato's followers, including said Christians, to view the body as evil or a type of prison for the soul.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was by far Plato's greatest student and, even so, disagreed with his teacher on many grounds. Aristotle was a naturalist and thus rejected the existence of a separate world of perfect Forms. He rather took the stance that the "Form" of a thing is actually in the thing itself. Aristotle posited that everything can be explained in totality in terms of four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final. The material cause is simply the substance or matter that a thing consists of. The formal cause is what makes a thing as it is. The form of a thing, for Aristotle, was synonymous with the soul. The efficient cause is simply the *how* of a thing; how it has come into existence, what (materially speaking) caused it to be. The final cause is synonymous with the end or purpose of a thing. Consider the example of a statue of a woman. The material cause would be stone; the formal cause a statue of a woman; the efficient cause the sculptor; the final cause the depiction of a woman for the sake of aesthetic or religious value. Aristotle had this idea that formed matter held its final cause, its *entelechy* as he called it, its ultimate purpose, *within* itself. It is the job of the formed matter to realize this purpose or entelechy. Modern functionalism is reminiscent of Aristotle's concept of the soul.

Aristotle held that the human soul *is* entelechy. It is therefore incoherent to suggest that the soul could be separated from the body. Additionally, he suggested that there exist three types of soul: vegetative, sensitive, and rational. All the vegetative soul does is absorb matter from other things. Plants could be said to possess this type of soul. The sensitive soul is a step up in that it can "register information regarding the form of things, but does not absorb or become those things" (Soccio 170). Animals possess the sensitive soul. Human beings are said to possess the highest form of soul, the rational form. This form includes the other two, but goes beyond with "capacities for analyzing things, understanding various forms of relationships, and making reasoned decisions" (ibid). A human being can choose to realize his entelechy or not. For Aristotle, the soul is not a separate mystical reality such as dualism might suggest. The formed body cannot exist without the soul, and vice versa. It is nonsensical to speak of the soul without reference to a body of some sort. In effect, his approach is dissatisfying to many because it seems to deny any notion of life after death. But in all actuality, his view does not, indeed cannot, negate a personal afterlife. It simply has nothing to say of such matters. In any case, the ancient Greeks were of diverse opinion with some considering biological reproduction (or even "intellectual offspring") sufficient to constitute the notion of human immortality.

One intriguing view that is related to Aristotle's is termed nonreductive physicalism. This is a form of materialism, but it claims that the form of something, including mental processes, cannot be reduced to merely physical aspects. Thus, physics alone can never fully explain the universe. "Philosophers of mind call the subjective aspects of mental events *qualia* (or raw feels). There is something that it's like to feel pain, to see a familiar shade of blue, and so on; there are qualia involved in these mental events. And

the claim is that qualia seem particularly difficult to reduce to anything physical" ("Dualism"). There have been many attempts to explain these qualia, both physically and mentally based theories. Nonreductive physicalism seems to hold to a form of property dualism, which "asserts that when matter is organized in the appropriate way (i.e. in the way that living human bodies are organized), mental properties emerge" (ibid). Like Aristotle's position, this position cannot say anything about life after bodily death. Any notion of an afterlife would be purely speculative.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), an English political philosopher, was of the opinion that, "All that exists is bodies in motion." The natural sciences and modern psychology seem to be inclined to a materialistic *monism*, or physicalism, which claims that matter is all that exists. In this system, mental states are reduced to nothing more than physical states. Consciousness is then merely an artificial property that we ascribe to ourselves in an attempt to meaningfully describe the interaction of various atoms and chemicals in an otherwise random and meaningless system. Colors and sounds are merely waves and vibrations that we artificially apply meaning to. It must follow that we also ascribe artificial meaning to morality, the soul, and free will.

Hobbes believed that before each decision we make, we unconsciously (and/or consciously) and mechanistically weigh a list of pros against a list of cons to decide which choice to make in a matter. We will always choose, it is claimed, whichever decision will bring the most pleasure and/or relieve the most pain, whichever decision will fulfill the strongest present desire. If we do happen to choose otherwise, it is only because we were ignorant of the opposing list, and the result is a "bad" decision. This way of thinking is reminiscent of Socrates' view that it is impossible for a human to knowingly will evil. The trouble that I run into with this theory is in finding a basic principle that defines pleasure.

The natural schools of science such as behaviorism, eliminative materialism, and type identity theory hold that everything can be explained in full by physical laws and natural processes. As such, they are deterministic and mechanistic views that seem to deny the reality of *free will* and an external supernatural or nonphysical reality. Indeed, a truly free will makes no sense in a determined universe, it is quite inconceivable. If our actions are just effects of biological and physical processes, then there is no such thing as morality or responsibility. Free will is then an illusion. Atoms cannot make choices. Mind, therefore, is really matter and there is no getting past our human nature. Modern psychology has attempted in many ways to describe the human mind in purely physical ways.

Hobbes, however, was a compatibilist with regard to free will. He would define free will in a different way than most would today. Rather than claim that free will is the absolute ability to choose between two or more options concerning a matter, he would claim that free will is "a hypothetical ability to have chosen differently if one had been differently psychologically disposed by some different beliefs or desires" ("Compatibilism"). With this definition, free will is said to be compatible with a determined universe. But this definition seems to lack the complete and utter *freedom* that "free will" implies. It would seem, rather, that we are definitely *influenced* by beliefs, desires, and physical "laws," but by no means determined. However, more problems arise when we attempt to prove the free will of beings other than ourselves.

It seems a mistake, as Hume would suggest, to generalize these laws of physics and then apply them back to human actions and claim that mankind is completely deterministic, thereby opposing the commonsensical notion of free will. As Kant argued, which we will see later, "[W]hen a theory results in conclusions that are clearly inconsistent with experience, real-world evidence must outweigh theoretical

*consistency*" (Soccio 325). Though some people argue for a strict determinism, nobody lives as though they actually believe it. It must be noted, however, that even if the mind can be fully explained via natural processes it seems that, although it would rule out the *need* to invoke a soul, it cannot deny the *possibility* of a soul (as we will also see later).

Some claim that modern quantum mechanics lends support to the notion of free will. In the tiny world of quantum physics, it is said that events can occur without any reason whatsoever, essentially randomly. To some, this implies that not everything is determined, including the human will. But the problem here is that this would reduce free will to a purely random, chaotic phenomenon. Free will is indeed indeterminate in a sense, but it is still caused by an act of volition on the free agent's part. Since both pure determinism and pure chaos are opposed to free will, quantum physics does not seem to lend much help to the argument for free will. It does, however, go to show that we cannot definitely state that the universe is strictly determined, thus leaving the door open for faith in free will.

René Descartes (1596-1650), a noted French philosopher, is generally considered the father of rationalism in modern philosophy. He posited that the only way to gain absolutely certain knowledge is through reason alone (i.e. *a priori*). He chose to doubt everything that his senses told him because he believed that they could be deceiving him: perhaps we are all now dreaming, or perhaps there is an evil demon that is deceiving us. In doing so, he started with a blank slate and his first conclusive, undoubtable claim was the knowledge that he exists as a thinking being. This thinking being, he concludes, is his mind or soul and exists independent of the body. The view he espouses is termed substance dualism, which holds that the mind and body are distinct and separate substances. Unlike much of Christendom, Descartes makes no distinction between the mind, spirit, or soul. But if the dualistic model is true, then how can the soul actually interact with the body and vice versa (save the speculative and mystical notions of occasionalism or parallelism, both of which invoke God, but have no real explanatory power)? If the mind is substantially different than the body, then why is it that when the body drinks, the mind becomes drunk? Descartes would reject the truck driver analogy in favor of a more intimately united theory with the pineal gland being the epicenter of interaction between body and soul. He then proceeds to prove the existence of a good God *a priori* via ontological arguments and develops a trust of his basic senses on that foundation.

While reading Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, however, I began to ask some serious questions and found that I was not alone in my inquiry. What can a mind without a body know or even think about? Is it really possible to know anything *a priori*? Certainly a spirit cannot know anything *a priori* pertaining to bodily or sensational experience because it lacks a body itself. It has been postulated that things such as mathematics and geometry are true *a priori* independent of whether anybody knows this or not. But can a spirit know such things *a priori*? Concepts such as mathematics and time exist as human ideas of relations of objects and events, but do they actually exist in and of themselves as Plato would claim? How can mathematics or geometry be knowable in a purely spiritual or rational realm, as they are both merely descriptions of relationships between material objects of human perception? Once we invoke bodies, then mathematics seems to apply. But before that, there is nothing for mathematics to explain. It seems impossible to teach a spirit the concept of numbers or for a spirit to even think about mathematics. Indeed, I cannot think of *anything* that a spirit could think about without reference to any material form. Similarly, it would seem that if we were to shut off all of our senses, we could not think of anything other than, perhaps, our past experiences while in the body. It seems, then, that experience must be the ultimate seat and cause of all knowledge. Furthermore, if a spirit cannot think

about anything or know anything (besides, perhaps, past bodily experiences), and a spirit is defined as mind without body, then is it really mind? Is it not rather *nothing*? This is not even to mention the complex processes involved in the human brain. It seems to follow that if God is spirit, as is traditionally thought, the only conclusion to be reached is that God is nothing – nonexistent. As we will see later, Descartes failed in his attempt to prove the existence of God or even the reality of the self.

The view that all knowledge comes from experience (*a posteriori*) is termed empiricism and was espoused by an influential English philosopher named John Locke (1632-1704). This man came to deny the possibility of innate, *a priori*, ideas. He believed that human beings are born with a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*, which is gradually filled with sense data. Locke claims that, “Nothing exists in the mind that was not first in the senses.” He does recognize, however, along with Descartes, that we do seem to possess a substance that is separate from our body; a thinking substance. Locke divided qualities of experience into two categories, namely primary and secondary qualities. Primary (i.e. objective) qualities are those that are independent of any perception of them, such as shape, size, and location in space. Secondary (i.e. subjective) qualities are those that depend on the perceiver, such as color, sound, or taste (Soccio 290). In Locke’s epistemology our experiences are nothing more than photographs or copies of the real thing (think *re-presentation*). As we all know, a photograph is never equal to the real thing. Therefore, we can *never* experience any thing-in-itself as it exists objectively. But if everything that we think we know about external things is actually just sense data in our own minds, then how can we even be sure that there exists *anything* outside of our own minds (cf. solipsism)?

Ah, but what if the only thing that actually exists *is* mind (or will)? What if what we call reality and matter is actually an effect of, and dependent on, the mind or soul, an active product of the thinking spirit? Would this not solve our problem? George Berkeley thought so. He took Locke’s epistemology a step further to one of its extreme, albeit logical, ends. Berkeley contends that all that really exists are Locke’s secondary qualities. We cannot even say anything about primary qualities, for it would be unintelligible to attempt speaking of them. So who is to say that they exist when nobody is perceiving them? This would relieve us from looking for meaning in our existence because existence would *be* meaning. God would, of course, be the ultimate mind, which makes all other minds possible. If this were the case, however, it would seem that I could simply *will* certain things to happen, such as bending a spoon with my mind. But perhaps there are mental limits imposed by God that prohibit my mental bending of the spoon. God is what holds everything in existence while we are not experiencing it, for he is the all-perceiver. This can easily lead to a form of pantheism, such as that which Spinoza espoused. However, Berkeley failed to prove the existence of an all-perceiver. In this case, however, it seems to make absolutely no difference to our experience whether noumena exist or not, whether we label it as *matter* or *mind*. It seems that Berkeley was simply giving a different name to the same thing as the materialists.

The renowned British empiricist David Hume (1711-1776) pursued Locke’s epistemology to its furthest logical end. In his works, Hume “makes compelling arguments *against* materialism, the possibility of a spiritual, supernatural reality, and personal immortality... [and] challenged established religious beliefs, moral judgments, reason and rationalism, earlier forms of empiricism, and the certainty of science” (Soccio 296). He was of the opinion that neither matter *nor* mind exist, a complete skeptic or agnostic. He denied that we can know *anything*. He even denied the concept of a persisting *self*. When I speak of *me*, what am I speaking of? This thing that is doing the speaking of course. But can I explain the concept of *me* outside of any sensational experience? I cannot think of a way to do so, to describe my

mind, or my *self*, without reference to my body or its perceptions. It seems, then, that the mind is inseparable from the body. We seem to be merely a bundle of sense perceptions, *impressions* as Hume called them, that are diluted into “ideas” (synonymous with Locke’s copy theory). If something did not come from an impression then it is meaningless. His conclusion is “that *identity* is not a property of things, but a mental act” (Soccio 302).

Furthermore, Hume tells us that “beliefs that cannot be reduced to sense experience are technically not ‘ideas’ at all: They are *meaningless utterances*” (Soccio 300). Included in these beliefs that are not empirically experienced are those of God and the spirit or soul. If my body is not different in any sense from my spirit or my *self*, then life after bodily death seems to be ruled out. Again taking Locke’s epistemology to its logical conclusion, Hume concludes that the only thing we can know is our own perceptions, which occur in some type of pattern or regularity to which we ascribe meaning and coherence. He denies the rationality of inductive logic, which science depends on. Induction “reasons from the particular to the general” (Soccio 304). But Hume would claim that we have no right to make that jump. This is why he rejects even seemingly self-evident concepts such as cause and effect or objective morality. David Hume’s philosophy has devastating effects on faith, reason, and science. He concluded that we can be sure of *absolutely nothing*. But surely nobody can consistently *live* a truly skeptical life. The only reason Hume gives for being able to live a normal life in light of his skepticism is that nature tends to take over and fill in the gaps when he is not thinking about it (Soccio 304). This complete skepticism really leaves us nowhere and gives us nowhere to go, not only concerning the relationship of the mind to the body, but concerning anything at all.

Thus far we have explored dualistic and monistic (both physical and mental) views of reality. However, there also exist two other less widely known views: pluralism and neutral monism. While the former posits that there exist more than two essential substances in the universe, the latter suggests that there does indeed exist only one substance, but that substance is neither material nor immaterial. Rather, this single substance is said to be neutral, capable of existing as both matter and non-matter. Some have claimed, however, that this is simply a rehash of Berkeleian idealism. Each of these, however, seem to be venturing into the metaphysical realm of unfalsifiability.

Perhaps it is again a mistake to generalize things. Strict materialism, any type of monism really, seems to be begging the question in that it defines everything that exists and is sensible as matter and natural and then claims that nothing exists besides matter and the natural. If any *genuinely new* type of thing were to be discovered, including something that many would deem supernatural or somehow inherently new, it could then be labeled natural, sensible, and material. Idealism seems to do the same exact thing. In this way they are both unfalsifiable and seem to be giving different names or descriptions for the same exact stuff.

Perhaps our definition of spirit as mind without body is flawed. Perhaps the soul is as complex, in some way, as the body. Perhaps we *cannot* properly understand the nature of spirit. As my studies continued I inevitably encountered the German philosopher named Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant’s philosophy was an effect of the inadequacies of the two major philosophical schools and the deterministic implications of science in his day. The rationalists “established grand systems of logical relationships ungrounded in observation or perception,” while the British empiricists viewed “the human mind as the passive receiver of impressions and experiences” (Soccio 322-3). All the empiricists were left with in the end were ideas, which could never really bring them back to experience of external realities, the result

of which was “Hume’s admission that we must believe in an external world, in selves, and in causes and effects, without ever knowing them” (ibid).

Kant saw philosophy tending toward absurd conclusions and science leading to a mechanistic universe with no basis for free will or morality. Moreover, a strict empiricism, Kant claims, aside from presupposing what it sets out to disprove, restricts us from making judgments about our experience, while a strict rationalism produces antinomies such as it being possible to prove both that the world had a beginning in time and is limited in space *and* that the world had no beginning and has no limits. As both notions are absurd, it would seem that neither *reason* alone nor *sensations* alone can render knowledge.

Kant began by stating that the normal division of knowledge into *a priori* and *a posteriori* was insufficient:

[The] old division between a priori truths and a posteriori truths employed by both camps [rationalism and empiricism] was insufficient to describe the sort of metaphysical claims that were under dispute. An analysis of knowledge also requires a distinction between **synthetic** and **analytic** truths. In an analytic claim, the predicate is contained within the subject. In the claim, “Every body occupies space,” the property of occupying space is revealed in an analysis of what it means to be a body. The subject of a synthetic claim, however, does not contain the predicate. In the phrase, “This tree is 120 feet tall,” the concepts are synthesized or brought together to form a new claim that is not contained in any of the individual concepts. The Empiricists had not been able to prove **synthetic a priori** claims like “Every event must have a cause”, because they had conflated “synthetic” and “a posteriori” as well as “analytic” and “a priori.” Then they had assumed that the two resulting categories were exhaustive. A synthetic a priori claim, Kant argues, is one that must be true without appealing to experience, yet the predicate is not logically contained within the subject, so it is no surprise that the Empiricists failed to produce the sought after justification. The Rationalists had similarly conflated the four terms and mistakenly proceeded as if claims like, “The self is a simple substance,” could be proven analytically and a priori.

Synthetic a priori claims, Kant argues, demand an entirely different kind of proof than those required for analytic, a priori claims or synthetic, a posteriori claims. Indications for how to proceed, Kant says, can be found in the examples of synthetic a priori claims in natural science and mathematics, specifically geometry. Claims like Newton’s, “the quantity of matter is always preserved,” and the geometer’s claim, “the angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees” are known a priori, but they cannot be known merely from an analysis of the concepts of matter or triangle. We must “go outside and beyond the concept... joining to it a priori in thought something which I have not thought in it.” ... A synthetic a priori claim constructs upon and adds to what is contained analytically in a concept without appealing to experience. So if we are to solve the problems generated by Empiricism and Rationalism, the central question of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason* reduces to “How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?” ... If we can answer that question, then we can determine the possibility, legitimacy, and range of all metaphysical claims. (McCormick)

Kant proposed an extraordinary idea, such that he termed it a Copernican Revolution of his own in philosophy: “He would reverse the course of his philosophical predecessors and assume that instead of the mind having to conform to what can be known, what can be known must conform to the mind”

(Soccio 325). Knowledge then becomes a “kind of interaction, a two-way street between the knower (the subject) and the known (the object)” (ibid).

Kant’s answer to the question is complicated, but his conclusion is that a number of synthetic a priori claims, like those from geometry and the natural sciences, are true because of the structure of the mind that knows them. “Every event must have a cause” cannot be proven by experience, but experience is impossible without it because it describes the way the mind must necessarily order its representations. (McCormick)

Kant divides reality into two categories: phenomenal and noumenal. The phenomenal is reality as we experience it, while the noumenal is reality as things are in themselves. The only thing we can know about noumena is that it exists, at least logically:

We can experience only what our human faculty of understanding is capable of... Kant argues that although we cannot directly experience noumena, a special class of transcendental ideas bridges the gap between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds. Empirical ideas are validated by sense data (experience). Transcendental ideas are “triggered” by experience when we rely on them to impose unity on the totality of our experiences. They “unify” or “make possible” having experience in the first place. Without some sort of unifying structure, Kant argues, the mind could not ‘experience’ raw sense data. It would be meaningless, undifferentiated – unexperienced. (Soccio 327)

These transcendental ideas, almost reminiscent of the Greek *logos*, can be said to be structures in the mind that interpret phenomena. It is this structuring in the mind that makes any experience possible. Kant developed a table of categories that is comprised of these ideas or structures. “Kant identified three transcendental ideas: self, cosmos (totality), and God... Kant goes on to say that we must act as if self, cosmos, and God refer to existing things but that, as in the case of all noumena, there is no way empirically to verify that they do. They refer to universal ideas that regulate human understanding” (Soccio 328). These ideas or structures make up the faculties of synthesis and understanding in the mind:

We must assume the ideas of **God, freedom, and immortality**, Kant says, not as objects of knowledge, but as practical necessities for the employment of reason in the realm where we can have knowledge. By denying the possibility of knowledge of these ideas, yet arguing for their role in the system of reason, Kant had to, “annul knowledge in order to make room for faith.” (McCormick)

Kant holds that the very intelligibility of the universe necessarily implies certain ideas, including God, but that the nature of human reason renders direct (noumenal) knowledge of the ontological status of such a transcendental (noumenal) being utterly impossible. In saying this, “Kant means that God is not the kind of thing that can be verified by an appeal to experience... Kant, however, claims that it is not possible to dismiss the *idea of God...*” (Soccio328). However, “a consciousness that apprehends objects directly, as they are in themselves and not by means of space and time, is possible – God, Kant says, has a purely intuitive consciousness – but our apprehension of objects is always mediated by the conditions of sensibility” (McCormick).

The metaphysical implications of Kant’s transcendental idealism are staggering. His philosophy is to be differentiated from the idealism of, say, Berkeley because Kant is an empirical realist. However, he says that we can only know things as they appear to us. His revolution ratified the sense of self and an



external reality, and therefore the natural sciences, from Hume's radical skepticism, pronounced the subjectivity of truth (which was later expounded on by the existentialists), and threw most metaphysics and speculative theology out the window. There could be an infinite amount of things *out there* that are *real*, but we as human beings *cannot* say anything about them.

We *cannot* possibly *comprehend* them, unless we are afforded some new type of sense. It would be like trying to teach a man blind from birth the concept of color; like a sphere trying to describe the concept of three dimensions to a circle. Even then, we could still only know some new phenomena, but not the noumena directly. It seems to follow that the only way for human beings to understand *anything* about a metaphysical reality outside of the five senses must be in the form of analogy from a divine or supernatural source. Even then we cannot properly *understand* the details of any different metaphysical reality. We can only be certain that a reality outside of what we experience *does* indeed exist. This would seem, then, to lead toward a type of theological agnosticism. Moreover, it appears that Plato's cave allegory fits quite nicely with Kant's philosophy. Any man that has indeed seen beyond what normal humans sense would have trouble explaining it to others.

Kant also lays out a remarkable moral philosophy that is described as a sense of duty found within all rational creatures, which posits the reality of free will and moral responsibility: "Kant asserts that it is possible to be both determined, or unfree (in the phenomenal world), and free (in the noumenal world)" (Soccio 330).

While it is interesting to speculate, it may not be possible until bodily death to say anything absolute about the nature of the human soul or what happens to it thereof. Perhaps we shall never know. Where any of this gets us in life I have failed to ascertain. Perhaps the ancient Eastern sages were wise in not wasting time developing elaborate epistemological systems. Any system that attempts to explain the universe is going to be inadequate and insufficient. Perhaps we should stop all of this nonsensical reasoning and begin to live life instead of attempting to make sense of it.

*It is easier to indulge in abstract thought than it is to exist.*

– Kierkegaard

*You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.*

– Albert Camus

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