

THE SOUL-CONCEPT: MEANINGFULLY DISREGARD OR MEANINGFULLY EMBRACE

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Abstract: *The notion of the soul has come under attack in contemporary philosophical, scientific, and theological literature. In this essay, the question is raised as to whether or not the soul has meaning and ought to be affirmed as a real metaphysical entity. I affirm that the soul is rooted in a common-sense framework reaching back through history, and is not only intuitive but is still commonly accepted. I put forth three arguments in favor of the soul-concept and argue that it is not only meaningful, but ought to be affirmed by persons. I see these arguments as inter-related and mutually affirming. First, I consider the argument from first-person knowledge. Second, I put forth a variation of the knowledge argument. Third, I put forth an argument from personal identity. All three arguments comprise a robust cumulative case argument wherein one can derive meaning and content concerning the soul-concept. I conclude that the soul-concept is meaningful and ought to be accepted.*

Keywords: soul, substance dualism, first-person, knowledge, enduring

As I reflect on the question, does the soul-concept have meaning?¹ Given the role, it has played throughout history, most incline to answering this question in the affirmative.² The notion of the soul may be questionable or even fuzzy in the minds of many today, but if one were to attend more closely to his/her own mental life then he/she could see that the soul is the clearest concept of all. The metaphysical notion of the soul reduces to a question of substance dualism or immaterialism.³ This is the notion that persons are strictly identified with the soul or the immaterial part in contrast to the material part – e.g. the body. While I am not concerned with the variations of each metaphysical position, I am concerned with whether or not the concept of a soul has meaning. I answer with a definitive yes to the question that the

¹ I would like to thank Oliver Crisp, Jordan Wessling, Mark Hamilton, and Scott Prather for looking at sections of this essay or distinct but similar arguments in other papers. I would also like to thank the Science and Religion Forum 2012 for encouraging the writing of this essay.

² The concept of the soul has had currency throughout all of Ecclesiastical history, has been a common-sense belief, and is experiencing a renaissance. See *Soul, Body, and Survival* Ed. By Kevin Corcoran; *Persons: Human and Divine* Ed. By Dean Zimmerman and Peter van Inwagen; *Body and Soul* by J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rea; *The Evolution of the Soul* by Richard Swinburne; *The Emergent Self* by William Hasker; *The Soul Hypothesis* ed. By Mark C. Baker and Stuart C. Goetz.

³ Substance Dualism, in reference to persons, is the position that there are two concrete parts.

soul as a concept still has meaning. It is my contention that upon reflection of our own mental lives we can have a clear and robust concept of the soul. The reason for this is that the concept of the soul is rooted in common sense and basic knowledge through direct acquaintance with self or soul.

I argue for the meaningful concept of the soul in three parts. First, I argue that the soul has meaning based on our first-person perspective. Second, I argue based on the knowledge argument and the access argument that we have direct acquaintance with the soul for which all other knowledge is predicable. Third, I argue for the meaningful concept of the soul through discussing recent work in personal identity. All three arguments comprise a robust concept of the soul with meaning.

The first-person perspective and the Concept of Souls

To begin, I discuss the first-person perspective or first-person knowledge, this I believe offers some support and semblance of meaning as to what the soul actually is by nature.⁴ The first-person perspective is characteristic of persons that is, arguably, not shareable with other distinct individual objects. In fact, no two persons share the exact same conscious perspectives. The first-person perspective is irreducible to scientific knowledge, material objects or material processes. There are four distinctive characteristics predicable of the first-person perspective including deep subjectivity, internal knowledge, introspection, and qualitative feel. Opposite of this is third-person knowledge, the notion that knowledge is public, passively received, external, and observable. When contrasting these two kinds of knowledge, there is a massive dis-similarity whereby both are distinct. One is describable or reducible to scientific processes and the other is describable only in terms of something contrary to scientific processes. The first-person perspective is not reducible to or describable in terms of material events. The argument is that physicality does not capture the first-person perspective. If in fact this is true, then it seems that the first-person perspective must be reducible to or describable in terms of something different than material objects or material processes. It is describable in terms of something that is substantial, yet not material but immaterial – call this the particularity of consciousness problem for materialism. This one might call the soul; hence, a concept of the soul includes the notion of first-person perspectives rooted in a soul as substance. Connected to this notion of first-person knowledge and particular consciousness, I argue for an individual immaterial thing as the suitable ground for knowledge and conscious access.

The Concept of the Soul: The Knowledge Argument and the Access Argument

The argument I propose concludes with the notion of self as a simple immaterial thinking thing.⁵ To this end, I consider Frank Jackson's knowledge argument and the nature of personal knowledge. My argument is such that we have an I or soul-concept that implicitly entails an immaterial thinking thing that is not material, a bundle of things, nor a compound of

⁴ See David Chalmers, "How Can we Construct a Science of Consciousness." (M. Gazzaniga, ed) *The Cognitive Neurosciences III*. MIT Press, 2004. <http://consc.net/papers/scicon.pdf> Here Chalmers notes the difficulties of such a project and its limits in terms of correlation studies.

⁵ For examples of this position see: John Foster *The Immaterial Mind: A Cartesian Conception of the Mind*; W.D. Hart, *The Engines of the Soul*; K.R. Popper and J.C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain*; Charles Taliaferro, *Consciousness and the Mind of God*; Roderick Chisholm, *Person and Object* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), 104.

the material and immaterial. The basis of my concluding in favor of a soul as a concept is contained in the following.

- (1) If the Knowledge Argument necessarily entails property dualism co-joined with self-presenting properties, then we either have a bundle thing of material and/or immaterial properties or we have an immaterial substance.
- (2) A material thing alone is excluded because we have property dualism.⁶
- (3) We do not have a bundle-thing.⁷
- (4) Therefore, we have an immaterial substance.
- (5) A Soul is a better alternative with respect to the I-concept and its relation to our mental states/concepts.

I will lay this out and offer evidential support in favor of the premises, then lay out what I take to be the I-concept or soul-concept (hereafter the soul-concept).⁸

Mary is a brilliant scientist living in a black and white room who has studied color, the physics of light, its relation to color, and neurophysiology. Yet she has never experienced the color red. When she steps out of her black and white room, she experiences the color red. At this point, she exclaims, "I see red." At the point that she sees red, I argue that she gains a new concept/mental item of knowledge that is distinct from her knowledge of red prior to seeing red. Accordingly, we know that there is a duality in Mary's knowledge: one that derives from the physical sciences and one that is subject-grounded.⁹ We also know that concepts are distinct from propositions.¹⁰ While propositions can exist on their own mind-independent or mind-extrinsic concepts seem to be mind-dependent and internal to the knower. It is also arguable that the nature of the self can be naturally inferred from this notion that propositions are known internally. If there is a duality of knowledge/concepts, then one might say there is a duality of things to which those items of knowledge subsist. Moreover, if this is a natural inference to draw, then we do know at least one thing about the nature of the thing having knowledge/concepts, namely, that it is the kind of thing that is able to know and think. Chisholm has argued for the mode or presentation of mental properties. He says that there are two properties distinct with every piece of knowledge or concept. Those properties include the thing directly in the purview of one's perceptual states and the self as presented with the perceptual state. The property of presentation or consciousness he calls 'self-presenting properties'.¹¹ I shall call the concept that follows from this the soul-concept. This is the concept that we have of ourselves directly, and immediately attending all

6 For this debate see Gullick, Robert Van. *Understanding the Phenomenal Mind: Are We All Just Armadillos?* Part I: Phenomenal Knowledge and Explanatory Gaps. Ed. By Martin Davies and Glynn Humphries. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). Most physicalists, if honest, must eliminate *qualia* from their ontology. See Kim, Jaegwon. *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

7 For a brief discussion, see Howard Robinson, "Dualism" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism> see specifically 5.2.1.

8 These reasons could comprise a case against a nihilist 'I'. A contemporary argument for a nihilistic 'I' see Mark Johnston, *Surviving Death* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010). See especially chapter 2.

9 The reality is that scientific knowledge requires and presupposes a first-person knower.

10 See Frank Jackson, *From Metaphysics to Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

11 See Roderick Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 3d ed., 1989), 18-25. *The First Person* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 79-83.

other concepts and properties in light of the property of the object presenting itself to the self. When Mary sees red, she knows not only red, but also that *she* sees red or at least upon reflection she can know that *she* sees red. Knowledge and subject-hood seem to be foundational to the knowledge of red and everything else. Thus, knowledge and self-consciousness is co-terminus.¹² From this, it seems not only to support the inextricable connection between mental items and minds, but also the duality of the body/brain with persons who think and have characteristics of persons. I argue for the concept of a soul by arguing the 'I' as co-extensive with knowledge/mental items.

If I co-exist with my thoughts then that reveals my nature as an enduring continuant.¹³ In fact, I must be a simple enduring continuant if I am to make sense of the fact of my mental items.¹⁴ My mental items of seeing red are just that *my* mental items of seeing red. This is similarly applicable with desires, sensations, ideas and the point is still the same that 'I' endure with these desires, sensations, ideas and other mental items. This is rather unlike propositions. There may be such a thing as propositions that are objective, non-subjective and not dependent on the mind—it seems in fact that there are. Mental items are different. Individuals can share propositions, while concepts cannot – in some significant sense. First-person observers can verify propositions, yet concepts are internally knowable by individual first-person knowers. Although having mental items correlate, at times, with neural activity concepts are not empirically known through some third-person manner of inquiry at least of the awareness of the perceptual state of seeing red. Thus, it seems that material things do not know red, but I do. It seems upon reflection that concepts are this way and I instantiate those concepts. In part, the soul-concept includes the notion of endurance. The concept also includes the notion of simplicity. To this we turn.

Potentially, the concepts themselves tell us something about the thing having them. Concepts are dependent on the first-person conceiver conceiving the concepts. It also appears that concepts are simple, intrinsic and subjective. 'I' that has first-person awareness and a unified presentation of his concepts that actually is best accounted for by a simple enduring thing with persistence conditions uncharacteristic of material things this. Both material things and property-bundle things do not have the persistence conditions to account for my having the property of co-existing with all my concepts/mental items. Pace Hume, there has been this notion that there is no subject present, but this defies common sense, introspection, and the fact that sensations are bound and unified by something. Thus, if I am to be of the sort to have these kinds of mental items/concepts, then I am probably a simple thing and not a material thing nor composed of a material thing. It might be that the body helps in my perceptual intake of information, but that is not the same as saying the body/soul composing me is the ground for my knowing some object or having a mental item. The soul-concept excludes the notion of a complex person, and is best accounted for by a simple.

The evidence against a property-bundle view is great. First, if one considers the unity-of-consciousness argument the notion that a person's conscious field of awareness is unified and singular, then we have reason to think that a bundle view cannot account for this.

12 This is a kind of Knowledge by Acquaintance that is a brute given without it nothing else really makes sense.

13 For a useful defense of endurantism see Ned Markosian, "A Defense of Presentism" in *Persistence: Contemporary Readings* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2006), ch. 17.

14 One could argue in favor of stage theory and say that these memories are 'apparent' memories. This seems to defy common sense.

For bundles, do not have the tight unity reflective of our conscious mental states. Bundles of properties lack the internal depth characteristic of a conscious field. Bundles of properties lack the intrinsic relation between things and properties that are reflective of the conscious field. Second, as demonstrated above *something* has the concepts and *something has access to them*—this might be called the privileged access argument, argued by Richard Swinburne.¹⁵ He says that mental events, like in the cases above when Mary sees red, are mental properties that are accessible only by substances. Material things do not have access to certain facets of the world like qualia-red.¹⁶ The knowledge argument reveals property dualism, but there is also something deeper, which is that the self as substance that has access to that which is not physical. Third, a bundle of material and/or immaterial properties will not do because of the close relation between concepts and conceivers, as discussed briefly above. Bundles do not have ownership of things the way a mental thing has ownership of a concept. Bundles may have relational connections or causal connections, but they seem to lack internal and intrinsic depth. Mental substances seem to have an intimate and internal relation to concepts/mental items. If it is not a property-bundle thing, then I suggest it is unlikely that a compound is the kind of thing to have access to mental items/concepts.

One argument in favor of a soul is based on the reality that knowledge/mental items are simple, irreducible to the physical, and intrinsically non-physical in conjunction with self-presenting properties. It goes something like this, given the previous premises, it seems natural to infer as one did above that persons are simple because of a singular binding thing that unifies the experienceables in a mental state/concept. As shown above, it seems that ‘I’ attend every mental item/concept and I unify these states.¹⁷ What might be the lines of evidence for such a conclusion? One might argue that the nature of mental items/concepts is an alteration or mode of the mind, thus not a *part* of the mind. If this is the case then concepts that are non-composed and simple then it, also, makes sense to think that there is a simple non-composed ‘I’ that has those thoughts, assuming self-presenting properties and the ‘I’ that attends the mental items. This ‘I’ generates the simple thoughts that are *sui generis* in nature. It is not that when new concepts come into the mind that I am somehow added to or subtracted from in the sense of adding or subtracting from material things. When I have a new concept in mind, it is not like that of an organism that might take on the addition of a limb or the subtraction of a limb. Mental items do not seem to work that way. Considering the difference between propositions and concepts, it is not as if I am adding a proposition from the abstract realm to my mind. Concepts do not have the *feel* that a material thing has when we add material to it. Concepts do not come from anywhere else but my mind.¹⁸ *Sui generis* things are deeply foundational, new, and simple in nature. The phenomenology of my mental items is deeply dependent on me not anything else, and if there is a pure mental property to be had it seems it is had by a pure immaterial thing because the pure property is had by a thing and the characteristics of that thing resemble a simple immaterial thing dissimilar from material things – hence a soul.

15 Richard Swinburne, “*From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism.*” See especially pages 151-165.

16 Qualia are a universal property for things that are experienciable. These require an experiencing subject.

17 This is famously called the “unity of consciousness” argument for the soul. See Charles Taliaferro and Stuart Goetz in *A Brief History of the Soul* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

18 On a traditional realist understanding, propositions really exist as mind-independent.

From the conclusion of the knowledge argument one might infer a metaphysical substance – soul. In fact, it seems to me, that in order to ground the notion that Mary has knowledge of red through acquaintance with the color implies a substance that is not material nor is a bundle of non-material properties but is more likely an immaterial substance or soul. The access argument in conjunction with the knowledge argument demonstrates that it is not simply a material substance or a proper-bundle thing that has a concept, but it is a substance of a different kind that is able to access mental items or concepts. At every moment that a mental item presents itself there is an attending mental item that presupposes the self in question. From this, the individual person is able to think, reflect, and investigate further in a first-person manner. Thus, scientific knowledge and third-person knowledge is grounded in a first-person perspective. From a phenomenological perspective, the soul is enduring, simple, and has the power of self-reflexive thinking. Additionally, the soul is epistemically foundational in some sense, and unifying. Call this the soul-concept. I turn to one final argument based on personal identity in conjunction with what precedes.

Personal Identity and the Concept of a Soul

In connection to the above, I argue positively that we can have a meaningful concept of the soul through interaction with the literature on personal identity – specifically, individuation of individual persons through a rational soulish act. When considering common-sense data, intuitive data, and other thought-experiments it appears that the soul-view – often referred to as the simple-view – best accounts for our understanding of persons. Hence, the results comprise a particular understanding of the soul as a meaningful concept.

a. The ‘Body View’

The first position is known as the ‘body view’.¹⁹ The body view has traditionally come from Aristotle and has some present-day proponents. The bodily criterion for personal identity is the view that persons are identifiable by virtue of the body or the biological organism. The Body view identifies persons with their bodies or with a bodily constitutional relation. Broadly speaking the view does not say that I identify with one aspect of my body nor one physical part connected with my body. In fact, the ‘I’ is a linguistic reference for the body or biological organism. Alternatively, related to this one could say that the body constitutes me.²⁰ It treats the person as identical to the relationship to the body. Thus, I am my body. This is one popular view held by philosophical and theological physicalists, respectively.

The recent Harry Potter films have illustrated the body view. In book two, *The Chamber of Secrets* and book seven *Deathly Hallows* J.K. Rowling introduces the reader to the polyjuice potion. This potion can turn one’s body into the body of another by simply dropping the hair of the person’s body for the purposes of transformation. In book two Hermione transforms herself into a cat by accident. In book seven, there is an attempt from

19 See Eric T. Olson’s Animalism in *The Human Animal: Personal Identity without Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Also see Trenton Merricks. *Objects and Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Kevin J. Corcoran. *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing, 2006). Lynne Rudder Baker, *Persons and Bodies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

20 See David Shoemaker’s *Personal Identity and Ethics* (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2009), chapter 2. Also see David DeGrazia, *Human Identity and Bioethics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Harry's friends to protect Harry from Voldemort's followers by transforming into Harry's body to transport Harry from one place to another. Both of these illustrations reveal the problem with the body view. We know intuitively that a person is not strictly identical with his body, bodily constitution, or his own biological organism.

I wish to mention one problem. The problem is one of persistence of identity. It is difficult to see how persistence in and through time works on a bodily/bodily constitution view. The body changes every day and takes on new cells; it seems that it is not the same body. The idea of personal identity with the body rubs against some basic intuitions about personal identity. Is it appropriate to identify persons with their bodies? It seems, intuitively that the person is something more fixed, stable, unified, and enduring. For these reasons, I believe another view is a more satisfactory depiction of persons.²¹

b. The 'Brain View'

A second view that is another popular physicalist or materialist view is the view often termed the 'brain view' of personal identity. The brain view is similar to the bodily criterion view because thinkers from both vantage points identify the 'I' with some physical or biological thing. It seems very natural indeed for proponents of materialism to link the self or the linguistic 'I' with the brain considering the brain is responsible for much of the "goings on" in the biological organism, e.g. body.²² The 'brain view' is the view that the person identifies with the brain in a holistic sense or identifies with some aspect of the brain, say, the cerebral cortex, wherein the brain controls the functioning of the rest of the body. Call this the 'control center'. Here again philosophers seem to assume a linguistic reference 'I' as identical with the brain controlling the body. This, as well, seems to have problems. Let me ask a couple of questions and explicitly draw out the implicit answers of those questions. Am I a brain? Do brains think? At first glance, these two questions seem very odd. The question "Am I a brain?" seems to imply a response of "no," but I do have a brain. The second question seems very odd as well, "Do brains think?" Normally, this is not how humans talk or think assuming language is a reflection of how we think. A brain does not seem to think. Usually, when speaking of thinking we implicitly speak of the person doing the thinking, not a faculty of the person. The brain seems to be a faculty or part of the person. We could say it this way, "I use my brain to think." This seems much more natural. I can hardly imagine what it means for a brain to think. It is similar to someone saying, "Hand picks up the cup." A hand may pick up a cup, but it is someone's hand picking up the cup. I use my hand to pick up the cup. As a result, the brain view will not work as a satisfactory view of personal identity, either.²³

c. The 'Character/Memory Continuity View'

The memory or character theory of personal identity is a third and prominent view. Historically, Locke adheres to this view or something like it or at least this view is attributed

²¹ This is not a full-proof case.

²² Peter Van Inwagen makes a persuasive case for the person following the brain in his *Material Beings* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), chapter 15 – he holds a non-reductive view.

²³ See Foster's *The Immaterial Self: A Defence of a Cartesian Conception of the Mind* (London and New York: Routledge Publishing, 1991).

to him.²⁴ Ultimately, I think these two views are one view but could be distinguished one from the other. Proponents of this theory might come from the camp of materialism/physicalism or from the position that persons are immaterial kinds of things. A noticeable difference between this view and the previous two views is that personal identity, according to the memory-character theory, is not, and cannot be reducible to some physical thing. This requires a materialism of a non-reductive sort. The memory or character view of personal identity associates the person with his memories or character. The assumption is that the person cannot be strictly identified with a physical thing or a physical part, but personhood itself must be more than a physical kind of thing. Personhood must be something of a non-physical kind. Naturally then some other thing must account for personal identity. That other thing on this view is thoughts, generally, and memories specifically. The thoughts or mental items in the brain make up personhood. Personhood is a bundle of properties instantiated in a non-physical thing or a physical thing with epiphenomenal or emergent properties. The issue is that something must link these properties of the mental together. The mental properties are causally connected. Here we have a causal link making continuous thoughts united, thus resulting in personhood. This too seems an inadequate accounting of human persons as a ground for personal identity.²⁵

d. The ‘Simple View’

Fourth, the defender of the simple or ‘soul’ view identifies persons with souls.²⁶ The simple view is distinguishable from various materialist constructions of human persons and the memory-character view of human persons. Persons identify with souls or an immaterial mental thing.²⁷ This view of the person is that the person is not identified with any biological organism, physical part, the brain, or the body. It is also distinct from a memory-character view in that the person must exist for mental items to exist, memories, and states of character. The simple view of persons says that persons are not reducible to matter and are not a bundle with properties of both material and non-material qualities. Persons are irreducibly simple, as argued above from first-person knowledge, particular consciousness, the nature of human knowledge, and a pure mental property that requires a pure immaterial soul.²⁸ The advantages of this view are clear.²⁹

24 Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Abridged and Edited by Kenneth P. Winkler. (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1689) 1996.

25 Swinburne, Richard. *The Evolution of the Soul: Revised Ed.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), see chapters 8 and 9. See Swinburne in “Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory” in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* ed. By Peter Van Inwagen and Dean W. Zimmerman (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Press, 1998). Also, see Swinburne in *The Christian God*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Chapter 2 “Thisness,” p. 45.

26 Swinburne, Richard. *The Evolution of the Soul: Revised Ed.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). A fine argument for the simple view is found in chapter 8 and 9 of Swinburne’s *The Evolution of the Soul*. In addition, a fine argument is found in Swinburne’s essay entitled *Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory*. In addition, E.J. Lowe’s essay entitled “Identity, Composition and the Simplicity of the Self” in *Soul, Body and Survival*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

27 A materialist could develop a simple view, possibly. A materialist could say ‘I’ exist somewhere in my brain as a simple self that is not divisible (Roderick Chisholm view).

28 This can be brought out by distinguishing intrinsic properties and relational properties.

29 With the simple view, one is able to say that persons can be numerically identical through change, yet can change qualitatively.

The distinct features of the simple view of personhood include independence and the endurance of the substantial soul. The soul is independent with respect to non-dependence for the soul's identity on anything else. The soul has a kind of identity not dependent on or reducible to other properties or substances. The soul precedes its properties in some sense, thus having a kind of independence from them. Next, the soul is an enduring kind of thing. It endures through time. If the soul were a bundle of properties that fluctuates identity would fluctuate, or so it seems. On a simple view, predicating properties and identity of the *thing* is possible. It has a stable kind of identity that does not fluctuate according to the various sortal-phases it encounters. Sortal-phases are non-essential properties wherein a substance exists in and through various moments of existence.

Given the preceding, it is unlikely that persons are material, a continuity of memories, a property, property-bundle or a complex thing. In fact, for a substance to have cognitive access to its own mental states, to endure through time, to lose physical parts and remain, to have first-person knowledge a soul is presupposed.

Conclusion

Many throughout history have had a concept of the soul. In fact, this concept seems to follow from common sense. Whilst a common-sense view of the world may not be sufficient or persuasive evidence in favor of a metaphysical position, it certainly does provide reason for thinking that the soul is a meaningful concept. Additionally, I argued above from intuition, conceivability, and from the nature of our human knowledge that the concept of the soul is meaningful in terms of that, which is distinct from material things, material events, and property-bundles. The soul, as I have defined it, is that which we have direct and immediate knowledge and is meaningful in terms of our belief-desire structures that are deeply subjective. If anything has a concept of anything else, it must be a soul as substance. Otherwise, how would I know? However, I do. To answer the question that started the discussion, I must answer by asking a question: "How could the concept of the soul not have meaning?" If the soul-concept lacks meaning, then it is difficult to see how we have meaningful knowledge of anything else. I am unsure. Thus, even the practice of science is predicable upon this foundation of a soul as substance that has internal access, first-person knowledge, particular consciousness, the ability to introspect and think about what is publically observable through a third-person manner, and the necessity for rational/soulful individuation of persons. Thus, I encourage the meaningful embrace of the soul-concept.

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