

**A Comparative Study of the Epistemology of Immanuel Kant
and that of Buddhism**

by

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Abstract

The epistemology of the Buddhism and that of Kantian philosophy *prima facie* resemble each other in a number of ways. Buddhism is known as *majjhimā paṭipadā* by not taking either side of the pair of extremes. Kantian philosophy is also known to have synthesized the philosophical extremes and thereby reconciled some of the major philosophical conflicts of his time. Both are characterized with their rational approach in explaining their systems of thought. Both restrain the practice of speculative reasoning while emphasizing the importance of basing claims on experience. Despite the outer resemblances, however, the study reveals that they are fundamentally different in their modes of inquiry. This research analyzes the foundational difference between the epistemology of Kantian philosophy and that of Buddhism, on the basis of which their distinctive doctrines stand.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Immanuel Kant is a German philosopher considered to be “one of the most influential philosophers in the history of Western philosophy”.¹ He is sometimes hailed to be “one of the greatest philosophers mankind has produced”² to the degree that his philosophy “continues to exercise a significant influence today in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and other fields”.³ It has been said that the “heart of Kant’s philosophical system is the triad of books”, which consists of the following: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Critique of Judgment* (1790).⁴ The impact of the three *Critiques* is considered to be “revolutionary” in that “the history of philosophy became radically different from what it had been before its publication”.⁵ He lived during the Age of Enlightenment, a period in the European history also “characterized by dramatic revolutions in science, philosophy, society and politics”.⁶

On the other hand, Siddhārtha Gautama, or Śākyamuni the Buddha, is considered to be “one of the most important Asian thinkers and spiritual masters of all time”.⁷ He also lived during the transitional period when “there was a great change in Indian thought and ideology”, and “the old religions in Western India were shaken, and the new religions, with various groups of ascetics in Eastern India were very extreme, and this created many doubts among the people”.⁸ ⁹ From the philosophical point of view, he had also made contributions to “many areas of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics and ethics”.¹⁰

¹ Matt McCormick, “Immanuel Kant: Metaphysics,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/kantmeta/>>.

² It has been said that “any study of the history of modern philosophy must have its center in a study of Kant.” See Justus Hartnack, *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge: An Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. M. Holmes Hartshorne, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 3.

³ Michael Rohlf, “Immanuel Kant,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>>.

⁴ Wayne P. Pomerleau, “Immanuel Kant: Philosophy of Religion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/kant-rel/>>.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ William Bristow, “Enlightenment,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/>>.

⁷ Abraham Velez, “Buddha (c. 480 BCE—c. 400 BCE),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/buddha/>>.

⁸ Shi Neng Rong, “Buddhism - the middle path,” *Buddha Dharma Education Association*, 21 Nov. 2014 <http://www.buddhanet.net/cbp2_f4.htm>.

⁹ It was a period of philosophical crisis in which “there was an interminable variety of views on matters pertaining to metaphysics, morality and religion.” See Kulatissa Nanda Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (Delhi: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), p. 115.

¹⁰ Velez, *op. cit.*

The Buddha and Kant, then, resemble each other in the way they both appeared during the crucial periods in the East and the West characterized by philosophical multiplicity, conflicts, and confusions. A comparative analysis of the epistemology of the two systems reveals that there are a number of resemblances, not only in their historical backgrounds but in their responses to the philosophical crisis of their periods.

Chapter 2: Historical Backgrounds behind the Two Thinkers

K. N. Jayatilleke starts his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* with an overview of the historical parallel between Europe and India in their philosophical evolutions:

When we consider the history of thought in Greece, we find that metaphysics first develops out of mythology and it is only when metaphysical speculation attains a certain maturity and results in the formulation of a variety of theories that an interest is shown in the problem of knowledge and epistemological questions are first mooted. If we turn to the Indian context we can trace an analogous ... development.¹¹

He begins with an examination of the historical background of India in its pre-Buddhist philosophico-religious setting. He observes that, “by the time of the Late Upaniṣads” – the period in which the Buddha appeared, – “there were three main schools of thought in the Vedic tradition”, which he lists as follows: (1) “the orthodox brahmins who believed in the supernatural revelation of the Vedas and held the Vedas to be the supreme source of knowledge;” (2) “the metaphysicians ... who held that the highest knowledge was to be had by rational argument and speculation bases on their faith in or acceptance of premises;” (3) “the contemplatives, who believed that the highest knowledge was personal and intuitional ... by extrasensory perception ... depended ultimately on the will of the ātman or Ísvara.”..¹²

All three groups had been dominant up to and including the time when the Buddha appeared. They thus represent the philosophical climate under which the Buddhism had arisen, as well as the targets to which it had responded. The three main schools of thought also coincide with the three major epistemological groups which were present in India. Jayatilleke refers to the three epistemological groups as follows: “(1) the traditionalists (Anussavikā), (2) rationalists and Metaphysicians (Takki Vimamsi), and (3) the ‘Experientialists’”.¹³ The first school consists of those early thinkers “from the period of the Brāhmaṇas who considered the sacred scriptures to be the most valuable source of knowledge”; the second school consists of the Early Upaniṣads thinkers who considered that “knowledge of reality was possible by reasoning and metaphysical speculation”; the third school appeared during the Middle and Late Upaniṣads, consisting of those who “claimed that the only means of knowing reality was by having a personal and direct acquaintance or experience of it, by practicing meditative techniques (yoga) and depending on

¹¹. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 21.

¹². ibid., p. 63.

¹³. ibid., p. 172.

the grace of God for the final vision or revelation”.¹⁴ Here the sequential order reflects the historical evolution of how each successive group arises in response to the problem posed by the preceding group.¹⁵

In the case of Europe, however, only those which correspond to the first and second epistemological groups had been dominant. The first group, the “traditionalists”, existed in the form of the Church – of Scholasticism in particular¹⁶ – which had long been dominant up to and during the Middle Ages. The Western counterpart to the second epistemological group – the “rationalists” – arose during the successive Age of Enlightenment – indicative by its other nomenclature, Age of Reason.¹⁷ In fact, it is this particular group which represents the Western philosophical tradition as a whole – an enterprise of rational endeavor characterized by the very use of reason,¹⁸ – history of which can be traced back to the time of ancient Greece. As to the group “rationalists and Metaphysicians” – also referred to as dogmatic rationalists, – its Western counterpart had already been influential since the Middle Ages, especially in the form of Scholasticism.¹⁹ But it may also be said that this group of thinkers had been dominant within the philosophical tradition as well especially in the school of Rationalism, which includes the names of some of the representative philosophers as René Descartes,²⁰ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz,²¹ and Baruch Spinoza.²²

¹⁴. *ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁵. *ibid.*, p. 482.

¹⁶. “Virtually all medieval philosophers of any significance were theologians,” and what’s “basic to all scholastic thought was the conjunction of faith and reason.” See “scholasticism,” *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press. 2013), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/scholasticism>>.

¹⁷. The Enlightenment Age is “sometimes called ‘the Age of Reason’.” See Bristow, *op. cit.*

¹⁸. The predominant role of reason in the Western philosophy may be indicated by one of the definitions given to the word *philosophy*: “Investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods.” See “philosophy,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/philosophy>>.

¹⁹. “One of the most carefully constructed systems is that of the scholastic philosophy ... which essentially is based on Aristotle’s metaphysical system.” See “metaphysics,” *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press. 2013), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Metaphysics>>

²⁰. “[I]t is in Descartes’ metaphysics where an absolutely certain and secure epistemological foundation is discovered.” See Justin Skirry, “René Descartes (1596—1650),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 24 Feb. 2015 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/>>.

²¹. It is recognized that “Leibniz is a metaphysician.” See Douglas Burnham, “Gottfried Leibniz: Metaphysics,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/leib-met/>>.

²². It is said that his philosophy “stands as one of the great monuments in the tradition of grand metaphysical speculation.” See Blake D. Dutton, “Benedict De Spinoza (1632—1677),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/spinoza/>>.

Section i: Epistemological Resemblance between the Two

The present study begins by observing a resemblance between the two systems of thought. Both may be said to resemble each other, in the way they had been influenced by, and had subsequently responded to, the dominant epistemological theses of their times. In the case of Europe, the dispute between Empiricism and Rationalism has long remained one of the major philosophical controversies.²³ This came about when the philosophical tradition – i.e. the European counterpart to the Indian “rationalists” group – had split into two epistemologically opposing camps. In brief, Empiricism is a “philosophic doctrine that all knowledge is derived from sense experience”²⁴ whereas Rationalism is a “philosophic doctrine that reason alone is a source of knowledge and is independent of experience”.²⁵ This dichotomic conflict in the branch of epistemology has had considerable influence upon the thinking of philosophers up to the time of Kant, and it also made major impact onto his philosophical development.²⁶

This dichotomy may partially be traced back to the tremendous impact René Descartes had upon the whole stream of Western philosophy afterwards.²⁷ One of the origins of the Empiricism vs. Rationalism controversy may be traced back to “his thesis that mind and body are really distinct” – also known as the Cartesian Dualism.²⁸ Henceforth, there had been a chasm, so to speak, in the totality of human condition creating a split between the inner and outer realms.

When the inner realm is chosen as the philosophical point of the departure, under this dualistic world view, there arises a problem of explaining the access to the outer realm, to which we supposedly have no direct access and the knowledge of which we have no certainty. Consequently, there arises the epistemological problem of justifying the knowledge of the external reality. The controversy between Empiricism and Rationalism may be described as a problem of “determining how we can escape from within the confines of the human mind and the

²³. “There are two classic theories on the acquisition of knowledge, *rationalism* and *empiricism*,” and the “first comprehensive rationalist theory was put forth by Plato ... who distinguished between two approaches to knowledge: sense perception and reason.” See Louis P. Pojman, *What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge Second Edition*, (Wadsworth, 2001), p. 16.

²⁴. “Empiricism,” *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary* (Random House, Inc. 2010), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/empiricism>>.

²⁵. “Rationalism,” *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary* (Random House, Inc. 2010), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/rationalism>>.

²⁶. “There are two major historical movements ... that had a significant impact on Kant: Empiricism and Rationalism.” See McCormick, op. cit.

²⁷. “René Descartes' rationalist system of philosophy is foundational for the Enlightenment.” Along with Rationalism and Empiricism, Skepticism, which is exemplified prominently in Cartesian method of skeptical questioning, constitutes the three major epistemological foundations during the time. See Bristow, op. cit.

²⁸. Justin Skirry, “René Descartes: The Mind-Body Distinction,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/descmind/>>.

immediately knowable content of our own thoughts to acquire knowledge of the world outside of us”.²⁹ Empiricism, on the one hand, “sought to accomplish this through the senses and a posteriori reasoning”, and Rationalism, on the other hand, “attempted to use a priori reasoning to build the necessary bridge”.³⁰ This dichotomy resulted into a conflict in the epistemological choice of prioritizing either reason over experience or experience over reason.

There was no exact Indian counterpart to Cartesian Dualism during the Buddha’s time. Hence its philosophical crisis may not exactly be described as one of a dialectic tension as happened in the West.³¹ Yet it may be shown that there were at least approximate Indian counterparts to the Rationalism and Empiricism movements. Despite their dualistic tension being not as pronounced as in the West,³² the Buddha had in fact responded to the challenges from both sides. For example, among the thinkers of the Śramanic movement, there were “Materialists”, which belong to the aforementioned second group of “rationalists and Metaphysicians”. Here Jayatilleke observes how the essential arguments used by the Indian Materialism were similar or essentially identical with those used in the Western Empiricism.³³ He adds that the resemblance between the Indian Materialism and Empiricism is even more pronounced when the former is compared to the Western Positivism³⁴ – a modern, stronger variation of Empiricism.³⁵ On the other hand, there were also Indian counterparts to the Western Rationalism during the time of the Buddha – indicated obviously by the fact that Jayatilleke calls the second group as the “rationalists”.³⁶ The Pāli Canon records how the Buddha had examined and evaluated the claims made by other thinkers during his time, and it occasionally describes the presence of thinkers

²⁹. This constituted a “central epistemological problem for philosophers in both movements” of Empiricism and Rationalism. See McCormick, op. cit.

³⁰. McCormick, op. cit.

³¹. “The opposition between rationalism and empiricism and the sharp distinction between senses and reason is foreign to Buddhism.” See Velez, op. cit.

³². “There is ... no evidence that the distinction between *a priori* reasoning and empirical reasoning was recognized in the Nikāyas.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 268

³³. He observes that “empiricism was the keynote of their arguments,”³³ due to a particular “importance that the Materialists attached to verification in the light of sense-experience.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 100.

³⁴. He observes that a particular “group of Materialists ... did almost the same” as what the Positivists did, “in trying to distinguish between empirical or verifiable inference and unverifiable or metaphysical inference.” He goes so far as to say that “it is this school which best deserves to be called the positivist school in Indian thought.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 88.

³⁵. A dictionary defines Positivism as “a strong form of empiricism ... that rejects metaphysics and theology as seeking knowledge beyond the scope of experience, and holds that experimental investigation and observation are the only sources of substantial knowledge.” See “positivism,” *Collins English Dictionary* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/positivism>>.

³⁶. They were called “takkī ... a ‘rationalist’ in the sense of a ‘pure reasoner’ ... who constructed a metaphysical theory on the basis of reasoning.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 264.

who are characterized by their employment of reason, or *takka*, in constructing their philosophical systems.³⁷

Jayatileke informs us that a number of Western scholars had observed how India “had produced ... a remarkable epistemology”, and that “the principal lines of its development showed parallels with those of Western philosophy, including rationalism and empiricism”.³⁸ It may therefore be said that, to a certain degree, a kind of epistemological tension between Empiricism and Rationalism was also present in India during the Buddha’s time. It may be said, then, that this kind of epistemological conflict constitutes a common background shared by the two thinkers, and that it had significant impacts upon the rise of both systems of thought. The subsequent sections analyze and compare the Kant and the Buddha’s way of responding to this epistemological problem.

Section ii: Their Relations to Rationalism

Rationalism has had strong influence on Kant since the beginning of his philosophical career.³⁹ Under the aforementioned Cartesian chasm, it was the Rationalism which sought to cross the bridge, so to speak, between the two separated realms, “by constructing knowledge of the external world, the self, the soul, God, ethics, and science out of the simplest, indubitable ideas possessed innately by the mind”.⁴⁰ Kant had later reacted against the practice of this kind of metaphysical speculation which had been prevalent up to his time. He observed in such practice a misuse or overreaching use of reason, which “results in the empty and illusory transcendent metaphysics”.⁴¹

The project of his *Critique of Pure Reason* is therefore just as the title indicates; it is a critique against the Rationalists’ project of using reason alone in acquiring knowledge of the metaphysics. By establishing an epistemological limit to the use of reason, Kant wished “to obtain a 'decision about the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general and the

³⁷. There were “people [who] say the two things ‘true’ and ‘false’ by employing *takka* on views’ (Sn. 886).” See *ibid.*, p. 239.

³⁸. In particular, he attributes Stcherbatsky in making this remark. See *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

³⁹. He first studied under a “young professor who had studied Christian Wolff, a systematizer of rationalist philosophy,” and the topic of his dissertation is centered on the rationalism of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and it was not until later that he “became increasingly critical of Leibnizianism.” See Otto Allen Bird, “Immanuel Kant,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/311398/Immanuel-Kant>>.

⁴⁰. McCormick, *op. cit.*

⁴¹. *ibid.*

determination of its sources, its scope and its boundaries”.⁴² The critique of reason, then, naturally implies the critique of metaphysics,⁴³ as it sets the “limits on metaphysical knowledge”.⁴⁴ However, his critique is not an altogether denial of reason, as it “should not be read as a demolition of reason's cognitive role”.⁴⁵ After all, Kant himself had set the limit of reason through the very use of reason.^{46 47} An additional aim of his critical project is also “to examine whether, how, and to what extent human reason is capable of a priori knowledge”⁴⁸ – i.e. to what extent synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible without grounding the basis to empirical data. So his critique is not an altogether demolition of metaphysics, and it may also be said that an outcome of which in fact provides a justification for holding certain metaphysical ideas – as is examined under a forthcoming section. It may perhaps be said then that, even in his strong critique, Kant, at his core and throughout his career, had more or less remained in the Rationalism outlook and attitude.

Kant’s philosophy of morals and religion is also characterized by the dominant use of reason. In his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, he intends to construct the bare body of religion without committing the error of holding dogmatic or implicit metaphysical premises. For instance, Kant argues that, “by the use of our own reason in its broadest sense human beings can discover and live up to the basic principles of knowledge and action”.⁴⁹ He considered that the innermost sphere of religion “contains those principles that constitute what he calls the ‘pure rational system of religion’”, and that “these are principles that can be derived from reason alone and are considered by Kant to be essential”.⁵⁰

⁴². Guyer, “Project,” op. cit.

⁴³. Kant reacted against the “metaphysical illusions that arise when human reason tries to extend those principles beyond the limits of human experience.” See Paul Guyer, “The project of the Critique of Pure Reason,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/DB047SECT4>>.

⁴⁴. Garrath Williams, “Kant's Account of Reason,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-reason>>.

⁴⁵. For example, Kant also “explicitly says that reason is the arbiter of truth in all judgments.” See Garrath, op. cit.

⁴⁶. “We must use the faculties of knowledge to determine the limits of knowledge, so Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is both a critique that takes pure reason as its subject matter, and a critique that is conducted by pure reason.” See McCormick, op. cit.

⁴⁷. After all, “sound philosophical reasoning requires that reason gain knowledge of itself.” See Williams, op. cit.

⁴⁸. Rohlf, op. cit.

⁴⁹. Paul Guyer, “Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804),” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/DB047>>.

⁵⁰. Lawrence Pasternack and Philip Rossi, “Kant's Philosophy of Religion,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-religion/>>.

The Buddhism has long being portrayed as a rational religion,⁵¹ and such characterization often invites a naïve association with philosophical traditions of the West.⁵² Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, for example, goes so far as to say that the Buddha “wanted to establish a religion within the bounds of pure reason”.⁵³ Bertrand Russell also makes a similar remark that “Buddhism is a combination of both speculative and scientific philosophy”, and that it “advocates the scientific method and pursues that to a finality that may be called Rationalistic”.⁵⁴ Leaving aside the accuracy of such remarks, such portrayal nonetheless does capture one of the significant aspects of this religion. It may be said that its rational aspect is reflected to some degree in the Theravāda Buddhism’s other nomenclature, *vibhajjavāda*.⁵⁵ Jayatilleke observes how “the Buddha did reason with those who came to debate with him”, and that he was well versed with “the trick of turning (his opponents over to his views) with which he converted the disciples of heretical teachers”.⁵⁶ In the Kalama Sutta, the audience extolled the Buddha’s discourse characterized by the rational way of explanation:

Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One — through many lines of *reasoning* — made the Dhamma clear [emphasis mine].⁵⁷

It may thus be said that both Kant and the Buddha resemble each other in the way that both forms of religion are often characterized as being rational. However, it must be reminded here that the same Kalama Sutta lists the ten grounds of unsatisfactory religions, under which

⁵¹. Early scholars had “detected rationality within Buddhism.” See Elizabeth J. Harris, *Theravada Buddhism and the British Encounter: Religious, Missionary and Colonial Experience in Nineteenth Century Sri Lanka*, (Routledge, 2006), p. 78.

⁵². “Many British were disenchanted with Christianity and were genuinely impressed by the practical, rational religion promulgated in the Pāli canon,” as the nineteenth century Britain was in the climate of an “anti-religious, rationalistic secularism” and thus inspired the “development of . . . rationalistic interpretation of Buddhism.” See Ross Reat, *Buddhism: A History*, (Asian Humanities Press, 1994), p. 97.

⁵³. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 403.

⁵⁴. Martin J. Verhoeven, *Buddhism and Science: Probing the Boundaries of Faith and Reason*, Religion East and West, Issue 1, (June 2001), pp. 77-97, as cited in 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://online.sfsu.edu/rone/Buddhism/VerhoevenBuddhismScience.htm>>.

⁵⁵. More accurately speaking, this nomenclature is context dependent. It may refer to the qualified, analytical way the Buddha had replied and answered to the questions given to him. It may also refer to the particular dharma theory which claims the qualified status of the tritemporal dharmas. In the latter context, then, this nomenclature actually refers to Kāśyapīyas school. The present usage however simply refers to the general image the term possesses of the practice of rational analysis. This image is reflected in the popular definition also: “the Vibhajja doctrine, i. e. the doctrine which analyses, or the ‘religion of logic or reason’; a term identical with *theravāda*.” See T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, “Vibhajja,” *Pali-English Dictionary*, (The Pali Text Society, 2009), p. 698.

⁵⁶. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 408.

⁵⁷. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Kalama Sutta: To the Kalamas,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than.html>>.

“four are claims to knowledge on the basis of some kind of reasoning or reflection”.^{58 59} The Brahmajāla Sutta records that, among the list of sixty-two views which the Buddha rejects, “four ... are specifically associated with the takkī and are said to be ‘constructed by takka’”.^{60 61} The Sandaka Sutta describes “a certain teacher is a reasoner, an inquirer. He teaches a Dhamma hammered out by reasoning, following a line of inquiry as it occurs to him”, and it teaches that “some is well reasoned and some is wrongly reasoned, some is true and some is otherwise”,^{62 63} Curiously, the Mahasihanada Sutta records how the Buddha’s contemporaries falsely describe him as a rationalist philosopher:

The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma (merely) hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him.⁶⁴

The Buddha categorically denies such accusations, and this denial constitutes “a veritable denial that he was a rationalist”.⁶⁵ But such record shows that, even during his time, the Buddha had occasionally given a false image of a rationalist philosopher who developed a rational religion on the basis of reason alone.

What correspond to the European Rationalism was also present in India in the form of the aforementioned second group – the “rationalists and Metaphysicians”.⁶⁶ Similar to how Kant had rejected the rationalist project of constructing philosophical systems out of *a priori* reason, the

⁵⁸. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 205.

⁵⁹. Thanissaro Bhikkhu observes how the popular reading of the Kalama Sutta today takes it out of total context to mean that one must follow his own reason, whereas the Buddha is in fact “saying that you can't always trust your sense of reason.” See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Lost in Quotation,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/lostinquotation.html>>.

⁶⁰. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p 240.

⁶¹. The Buddha refers to these four as “recluse or a certain brahmin [who] is a rationalist, an investigator,” and who “declares his view — hammered out by reason, deduced from his investigations, following his own flight of thought.” See Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Brahmajāla Sutta: The All-embracing Net of Views,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.01.0.bodh.html>>.

⁶². Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Nanamoli, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*, (Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 624.

⁶³. In the words of Jayatilleke, it refers to “a certain teacher [who] is a reasoned and investigator; he teaches a doctrine which is self-evident and is a product of reasoning and the pursuit of speculation,” but such theory is “unsatisfactory but not necessarily false,” in the way that “his reasoning may be good or bad, true or false,” and therefore is See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 272.

⁶⁴. Nanamoli Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Maha-sihanada Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lion's Roar,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.012.ntbb.html>>.

⁶⁵. The Buddhism holds that “pure reasoning was ... no safeguide for the discovery of truth,” but instead holds the truth to be “empirically or experientially verifiable.” Jayatilleke, p. 404.

⁶⁶. “Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz are considered the typically rationalist philosophers, since they tried to evolve systems of deductive metaphysics on the basis of a few premisses, axioms and principles which they considered self-evident or true *a priori*. The closest approximation to this kind of rational metaphysics in the time of the Buddha were the systems evolved out of *takka*-, which were described as being ‘beaten out of logic, based on speculation and self evident’.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 403.

Buddha also rejected the theories which “were based on *a priori* reasoning”⁶⁷ as being unsatisfactory – albeit being not necessarily false.⁶⁸ The Buddha taught “reasoning in the sense of takka- (indirect proof, or *a priori* proof) as an unsatisfactory means of knowledge”.⁶⁹ In short, the Buddha and Kant resemble each other in the way both are characterized as being rational, while at the same time being critical of the use of reason alone.

Despite the similarity, it may be said that the Buddha’s critique towards the use of reason is stronger than that of Kant. The general attitude of Buddhism is that the “reason was of limited value”⁷⁰ and is critical towards the Jayatilleke’s second group, “rationalists and Metaphysicians”, for the reason that “one cannot hope to have perfect knowledge ... of a proposition or theory by the consideration of some reasons for it ... or by the conviction that dawns by merely reflecting on it”.⁷¹ Jayatilleke also cites the Canonical statement which teaches that “‘the dhamma’ is said to ‘fall outside the scope of *takka-* but be verifiable by the wise’”,⁷² – i.e. knowledge may not be accessible by reason and go beyond the sphere of reasoning but is still verifiable. This statement is rather indicative of its stronger inclination towards Empiricism than towards Rationalism, as the subsequent section shows.

Similar to the Buddha, Kant subscribed limited value to the use of reason and was particularly critical of the abuse of reason in acquiring metaphysical knowledge.⁷³ But Kant, as a philosopher, did not altogether deny the construction of a theory on the basis of the use of reason alone.⁷⁴ For example, it is still possible for him to arrive at synthetic *a priori* knowledge on the basis of reason alone without any *a posteriori* basis.⁷⁵ He also advocates the use of *a priori*

⁶⁷. Like the systems developed by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, “the closest approximation ... in the time of the Buddha were the systems evolved out of *takka-*,” which are the “systems of deductive metaphysics on the basis of a few premises, axioms and principles which they considered self-evident or true *a priori*.” See *ibid.*, p. 403.

⁶⁸. “The Sandaka Sutta classifies religious theories based on *takka-* as not necessarily false.” See Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

⁶⁹. *ibid.*, p. 431.

⁷⁰. *ibid.*, p. 407.

⁷¹. According to the Pāli Canon, a religion based on reason is “turning out to be either true or false for ‘even that which is well reflected upon ... or well thought out ... is liable to be baseless, unfounded and false, while that which is not well reflected upon or not well thought may turn out to be true, factual and not false’.” See *ibid.*, p. 276.

⁷². *ibid.*, p. 391.

⁷³. Williams, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴. Kant not only suggests that “synthetic *a priori* judgments exist in what he calls ‘pure mathematics’ and ‘pure physics,’” but also that “his project is to show that what explains these also explains other such propositions, in metaphysics,” despite Kant still being unclear about his actual stance. See Guyer, “Project,” *op. cit.*

⁷⁵. “Kant asserts the existence of synthetic *a priori* judgments in mathematics, physics, and metaphysics.” See Robert Hanna, “Kant’s Theory of Judgment,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-judgment/>>.

reason in rationally deriving universal moral principles.⁷⁶ For him, it is possible to acquire moral truths in the realm of reason and thereby constructing rational religion.⁷⁷ In spite of his critique of pure reason,⁷⁸ he still held that “[i]t is through reason that we discover basic moral principles”, and he “makes explicit that the supreme moral principle itself must be discovered a priori”.⁷⁹ A forthcoming section shows how Kant had classified the use of reason into two kinds.

It may be said then that, in the Kantian epistemology, there is a stronger affinity towards Rationalism than towards Empiricism. It must be reminded that this inclination probably relates to his reaction against David Hume’s extreme form of empiricist philosophy.⁸⁰ The latter had resulted into a radical Skepticism claiming that our notions of reason and knowledge are altogether groundless and unjustified.^{81 82} It must also be reminded that Kant’s epistemological choice is made within the confine of the philosophical horizon in which he lived, as exemplified by the Empiricism vs. Rationalism controversy. In the face of other remaining epistemological alternatives, he is being left with the choice of either Empiricism, or else that of going back to Tradition. This particular philosophical horizon excludes the alternative possibility of supersensory experience, which, as is discussed in a forthcoming section, happened to play the foremost important role in the Buddhist epistemology, and it perhaps is what authorizes Buddhism to favor Empiricism over Rationalism.

Section iii: Their Relations to Empiricism

Jayatileke compares the Indian Materialists to George Berkeley, who was one of the three main philosophers representing the side of European Empiricism.⁸³ He observes how the “Materialists seem to have adopted Berkeley’s empiricist principle of, esse est percipi [to be is to

⁷⁶. “Kant places special importance on the a priori or “pure” part of moral philosophy,” See Denis, op. cit.

⁷⁷. Kant holds that “the underlying truth of religion ‘must always be based on reason’.” See Laurence Pasternack, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant on Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 189.

⁷⁸. It may also be said that it is actually *by virtue of* – not *in spite of* – the limitation of theoretical reason that he considered it possible to use practical reason in establishing a rational religion, as in the oft-quoted Kant’s statement implies: “I must ... abolish knowledge, to make room for belief.” See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm>>.

⁷⁹. Denis, op. cit.

⁸⁰. Kant’s “attempt to establish the validity of knowledge is oriented at the outset towards David Hume, whose form of empiricism led with logical necessity to skepticism.” See Hartnack, op. cit., p. 5.

⁸¹. “Hume’s method of moral philosophy is experimental and empirical; Kant emphasizes the necessity of grounding morality in a priori principles.” See Denis, op. cit.

⁸². For Hume, “[r]eason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals.” See Williams, op. cit.

⁸³. “George Berkeley was one of the three most famous British Empiricists. (The other two are John Locke and David Hume.)” See Daniel E. Flage, “George Berkeley (1685—1753),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/berkeley/>>.

be perceived]”.⁸⁴ It appears to be ironic that Berkeley, a priest and a bishop, who denounced that “materialism promotes skepticism and atheism” and had been advocating “idealism by attacking the materialist alternative”,⁸⁵ is being associated with the Indian Materialists. However it must be noted that Jayatilleke here speaks in the context of epistemology, and the metaphysical opposition between Idealism and Materialism that Berkeley speaks of is that of the derivative philosophies, being logical outcome of the initial epistemological commitment made to Empiricism. In other words, a particular means of knowledge could lead a thinker towards either side of the metaphysical spectrum – such as Theism vs. Atheism or Idealism vs. Materialism. In the case of Berkeley, then, his initial commitment to Empiricism had led to a stance that happened to be a polar opposite of Materialism, even though both share in their epistemological point of departure. To emphasize this point, the subsequent reference to the Indian Materialism in this paper is thus made, unless stated otherwise, to its epistemological aspect.

Among the prominent philosophers in Europe, it was the empiricist David Hume who exerted a particular influence on Kant in escaping from the Rationalist tradition in which he was educated.⁸⁶ In connection to the aforementioned affinity between Indian Materialism and European Positivism, Jayatilleke also observes a similar affinity the Humean Empiricism has towards Positivism, and he in fact identifies Hume as a positivist.⁸⁷ It may be said that the particular influence Hume had on Kant is essentially his positivist epistemology, and that Kantian epistemology has a positivist outlook and orientation. It is likely for this reason that associations are often made between the Kantianism and the Positivism.⁸⁸ For instance, by the mid-twentieth century, “the image of Kant as a proto-positivist gained dominance”.⁸⁹ Leaving aside the accuracy of such an image, the popular association nevertheless indicates the actual presence of the positivist outlook and orientation within the Kantian epistemology.

⁸⁴. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 101.

⁸⁵. Lisa Downing, “George Berkeley,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berkeley/>>.

⁸⁶. He famously stated that it was Hume who had “interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a completely different direction.” See Graciela De Pierris, “Kant and Hume on Causality,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-hume-causality/>>.

⁸⁷. Jayatilleke remarks that the “[e]mpiricists like Hume and Mach have been called positivists.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 88.

⁸⁸. It is due to Kant’s “insistence on the need for an empirical component in knowledge and his antipathy to speculative metaphysics, Kant is sometimes presented as a positivist before his time.” See Otto Allen Bird, “The Critique of Practical Reason,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/311398/Immanuel-Kant/27123/The-Critique-of-Practical-Reason>>.

⁸⁹. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

In the case of the Buddhism, Jayatilleke also observes how a form of argumentation employed by the Materialists “seems to have had its repercussions in Buddhism”,⁹⁰ to the degree that the “Positivist school of Materialists ... seems to have made a strong impact on the epistemological theories of Early Buddhism”.⁹¹ Curiously, in addition to the aforementioned association of Buddhism to Rationalism,⁹² Radhakrishnan also makes an association to Positivism: “Early Buddhism was positivist in its outlook and confines its attention to what we perceive”⁹³ – perhaps this association is more accurate than the other one he makes with Rationalism. Jayatilleke also observes how the “impact of Materialist thinking on the thought of the [Pali] Canon is strong”⁹⁴ in its epistemological outlook.⁹⁵ The means of knowledge held by Buddhism and Positivism may even be said to be structurally identical, in the way both are essentially “perception and inductive inference based on perception”, – albeit the former “uses ‘perception’ in a wider sense to include extra-sensory perception”.⁹⁶ ⁹⁷ For this reason, Jayatilleke even goes so far to claim that Buddhism is empirical: “The Buddhism theory is therefore empirical since it spoke only of observable causes without any metaphysical pre-suppositions of any except for the fact that it speaks of the empirical necessity”.⁹⁸ But again, the likeness Buddhism has to the Indian Materialism is only in regard to the means of knowledge, and it does not necessarily imply the likeness in regard to the end of knowledge – the derivative philosophies.

Analogous to how an epistemological commitment to Empiricism had resulted into either side of the metaphysical extremes of Berkeleyan Theism and Materialism, Kant’s positivist orientation, as influenced by Hume, had not necessarily resulted into the latter’s overall “irreligious”⁹⁹ stance, but had instead resulted into a favorable stance towards religion.¹⁰⁰ The

⁹⁰. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 100.

⁹¹. ibid., p. 98.

⁹². According to Radhakrishnan, the Buddha “wanted to establish a religion within the bounds of pure reason’.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 403.

⁹³. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy, Vol. II*, (London, 1931), p. 472, as cited in Jayatilleke, p. 9.

⁹⁴. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 69.

⁹⁵. “Buddhists seem to have been influenced by the Materialists in their emphasis on perception, although perception here is both sensory as well as extrasensory.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 428.

⁹⁶. ibid., p. 76.

⁹⁷. The structural commonality is indicated by Jayatilleke’s further observation that, in a certain respect, “... extrasensory perception is treated at the same level as normal perception.” See ibid, p. 459.

⁹⁸. ibid., p. 453.

⁹⁹. “The most accurate and informative label for describing Hume's views on this subject, I suggest, is irreligion,” and “Hume's fundamental attitude towards religion (qua various forms of thick theism) is one of systematic hostility.” See Paul Russell, “Hume on Religion,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-religion/>>.

¹⁰⁰. Although “Kant gives priority to morality over religion” and “is highly critical of religion as commonly practiced,” he also believes that “true religion is possible and highly desirable” and that “moral commitment

form of Empiricism endorsed by Hume has a strong skeptical character, and his “position on religious belief is also skeptical”.¹⁰¹ In contrast, Kant’s position on religious belief is favorable, as is demonstrated in a forthcoming section.

Analogously, the Buddhist epistemology as influenced by the Materialism had not resulted into favorably approving the latter’s philosophical stance but had instead resulted into a disapproval of it. Jayatilleke explains that the Buddha generally identifies the Materialism not as an *unsatisfactory religion* – which may turn out to be either true or false,^{102 103 104} – but condemns as a *false religion*.^{105 106 107} However, it needs to be reminded that, in the same Sandaka Sutta, the Buddha identifies a religion constructed merely on the basis of reason as “one of the four types of religions which are said to be unsatisfactory but not necessarily false”.¹⁰⁸ The sutta thereby teaches that the truthfulness of a particular theory is not indicated by its epistemology alone, but is judged by the end product of the latter’s employment. Had Materialism been constructed instead on the epistemological basis of Rationalism, then, it would no longer have been identified as an unsatisfactory religion but as a false religion. In other words, the two classes of religions – *unsatisfactory religions* and *false religions* – are not exclusive alternatives, and what the sutta teaches in reference to *unsatisfactory religions* is the indeterminate status of their epistemological stances.

leads to religious belief,” and, as himself being a theist, he holds “moral criticisms of atheism.” See Denis, op. cit.

¹⁰¹. James Fieser, “David Hume (1711—1776),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/hume/>>.

¹⁰². The difference between the false religions and the unsatisfactory religions is explained in the Sandaka Sutta, which describes “four type of religions which are false” and “four which are unsatisfactory ... but not necessarily false.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁰³. Jayatilleke observes that “the attitude to the takkī in the Sandaka Sutta ... is a favorable one, since they are classified not among the upholders of false religions but of religions which are unsatisfactory or unconsoling.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 264.

¹⁰⁴. The four unsatisfactory religions or “comfortless vocations” are: “the teacher who claims to be all knowing and all seeing; the teacher whose doctrine is traditional and scriptural; the rationalist of pure reason and criticism teaching a doctrine of his own reasoning; and, lastly, the teacher who is stupid and deficient.” See Gunapala Piyasena Malalaseker, “Sandaka Sutta,” *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, Volume 1*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2007), p. 1026.

¹⁰⁵. The four false religions or “wrong views of sect-leaders [were those] who held [that] there was no existence after death, that there was no evil nor [*sic*] good, [that there was] no cause for any phenomena, and that there were only aggregates of seven elements.” See “Majjhima Pannāsa Pāli,” *Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.buddhanet.net/majjpana.htm>>.

¹⁰⁶. Jayatilleke list “the ‘religions’ that are condemned as false” as follows: “(1) Materialism (M. I.515), (2) a religion denying moral values (i.e. that there is no puñña or pāpa, M. I.516), (3) a religion denying moral responsibility (i.e. there is no cause – hetu – for moral degeneration, regeneration or salvation (M. I.517), and (4) a religion denying freewill (akiriyavāda, M. I.517-8).” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 187.

¹⁰⁷. The Buddha “speaks of the four antitheses to the higher life” which are the views holding that: “it does not matter whether actions are good or bad,” “no evil is done by him who acts himself or causes others to act,” “there is no cause for either depravity or purity,” and “among other things, that men make an end of ill only when they have completed their course of transmigrations” See Malalaseker, op. cit, p. 1026.

¹⁰⁸. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 272.

While it is tempting to claim that Buddhism is a form of Empiricism, perhaps some reservation ought to be made to a categorical assertion of it.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the question as to whether or not Buddhism, in its totality, is really a form of Empiricism depends on the philosophical context in which the latter is taken, as well as a particular mode of thought in which this question is raised. The next chapter compares the differences in the historical context and the mode of thought between the two epistemological traditions of Europe and India.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹. “Some scholars have interpreted the Buddha’s emphasis on direct experience and the verifiable nature of Buddhist faith as a form of ... logical empiricism (Jayatilleke 1963),” but “[c]ritiques of the empiricist interpretation point out that, at least at the beginning of the path, Buddhist faith is not always based on empirical evidence.” See Velez, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰. “Whether or not the Buddha’s epistemology can be considered empiricist depends on what we mean by empiricism and experience.” Furthermore, “[n]owhere in the Pāli Nikāyas does the Buddha say that all knowledge begins in or is acquired from sense experience. In this sense, the Buddha is not an empiricist.” See *ibid.*

Chapter 3: Their Epistemological Stances

So far, the study has demonstrated the apparent resemblances between the two thoughts in the ways both had responded toward the prevailing epistemological conflicts of their times. The study now proceeds to the comparative analysis of the epistemology of the two systems of thought, while addressing the differences in the cultural contexts from which the corresponding philosophical inquiries arose. The epistemological analysis reveals a number of foundational differences between the two in their very notions of knowledge.

Section i: Modes of Inquiry and Justification

Before embarking on the comparative analysis, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* suggests to first examine the fundamental problem of “commensurability” when a comparison is made in between the philosophies of two remote traditions –such as in the case of the present study.¹¹¹ In particular, the article mentions the “issue of metaphysical and epistemological commensurability” which involves a “comparison of traditions on their conceptions of the real and their modes of inquiry and justification”.¹¹² The present comparative study is obviously in the context of epistemology. Therefore the subsequent analysis makes occasional reminders that the two systems of thought may differ in their “modes of inquiry and justification”. Such modes of thought constitute the background motives and the implicit, underlying presumptions responsible for directing the way each responds to a given philosophical problem and subsequently develops the philosophical solution.

An examination into the mode of inquiry, in turns, calls for an overview of what epistemology is, since the very nature of its study may not overlap perfectly between the two cultures. In the context of the Western philosophical tradition, *epistemology* is generally defined as: the “theory of knowledge”,¹¹³ “the study of knowledge and justified belief”,¹¹⁴ or “a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge”.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹. “Comparative philosophy brings together philosophical traditions that have developed in relative isolation from one another and that are defined quite broadly along cultural and regional lines — Chinese versus Western, for example.” David Wong, “Comparative Philosophy: Chinese and Western,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comparphil-chiwes/>>.

¹¹². Wong, op. cit.

¹¹³. David A. Truncellito, “Epistemology,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/epistemo/>>.

¹¹⁴. Matthias Steup, “Epistemology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/>>.

¹¹⁵. “Epistemology,” *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary*, (Random House, Inc., 2005), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/epistemology>>.

These definitions all indicate that it is the study of *knowledge* as the main object of concern, and they may also be applied to the Indian counterpart. However the notion of knowledge itself may differ between the two cultures, so the definitions of epistemology, in turn, call for the examination of their notions of knowledge.

Louis P. Pojman, in *What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, lists three different types of knowledge: “knowledge by acquaintance, competence knowledge, and descriptive or propositional knowledge”.¹¹⁶ The *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* lists as many as four kinds of knowledge: “knowing by acquaintance”, the “knowledge-that”, the “knowledge-wh” – which includes knowledge of whether, who, why, what, etc. – and the “knowledge-how”.¹¹⁷ In this list, *knowledge-that* and *knowledge-wh* both refer to the sort of knowledge expressed in a sentential expression or “a proposition *that such-and-such is so*”, in contrast to the other remaining kinds which are not propositional,¹¹⁸ and they correspond to the Pojman’s “propositional knowledge”. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* highlights this distinction and lists only two kinds of knowledge: “knowledge-that” and “knowledge-how”.¹¹⁹ The former indicates “propositional knowledge”, whereas the latter is described as “practical knowledge” involving not only “how to do something” – as in the forms of “skills” and “abilities” – but also includes “inclinations” and “capacities”, and it also corresponds to the Pojman’s “competence knowledge”.¹²⁰ The present study primarily borrows the distinction that is made in between the two kinds of knowledge – knowledge-that and knowledge-how, – for the purpose of identifying the exact sense in which a given use of the word *knowledge* is to be taken.

In the Western epistemology, “most philosophical discussion of knowledge is directed at knowledge-that”,¹²¹ so this kind of knowledge had long dominated the attentions of the Western philosophers over other kinds.^{122 123} The conscious attention to knowledge-how had long been absent until Gilbert Ryle, in the mid 20th century, had “made apparent to other philosophers the

¹¹⁶ Pojman, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Hetherington, “Knowledge,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/knowledge/>>.

¹¹⁸ Hetherington, op. cit.

¹¹⁹ Jeremy Fantl, “Knowledge How,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-how/>>.

¹²⁰ It is “*know-how*” which “involves an ability to perform a skill and may be done consciously or unconsciously,” and it is “sometimes called skill knowledge.” See Pojman, op. cit., p.2.

¹²¹ Hetherington, op. cit.

¹²² In the West, knowledge-that has dominated over knowledge-how to a point that “[t]he tradition assimilates knowing how to knowing that.” See Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, “knowing how,” *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 373-374.

¹²³ “Epistemology is primarily interested in propositional knowledge.” See Pojman, op. cit., p. 3.

potential importance of distinguishing knowledge-that from knowledge-how”.¹²⁴ He highlighted the dominating role knowledge-how¹²⁵ actually plays over knowledge-that¹²⁶ in the reality of the human conditions and experiences.

India, on the other hand, has had its own rich counterpart to the Western epistemology.¹²⁷ While its analysis of knowledge does include that of propositional knowledge, what particularly distinguishes from the Western epistemology is its intimate tie to the practice of religiosity. Indian epistemology is intimately tied to the matters of “the religious goal of life”¹²⁸ – i.e. soteriology – and of religions experiences – i.e. mystical, supersensory experiences attained from cultivation. For instance, many Indian thinkers assert “yogic perception and/or meditative experience as crucial for religious knowledge, which is distinguished from the everyday knowledge analyzed in the textbooks of epistemology”.¹²⁹ Consequently, its notions of knowledge and the means of knowledge are inseparable to religious and moral *praxis*.

In examining the Indian epistemology during the pre-Buddhist era, Jayatilleke observes the presence of four means of knowledge in total: “normal perception”, “scriptural or traditional authority”, “reason”, and “extrasensory perception”.¹³⁰ The first item “normal perception” obviously applies to every group, but the last three items in fact correspond to the aforementioned three main epistemological groups: the “traditionalists”, the “rationalists and Metaphysicians”, and the “Experientialists”.

Such cultural-historical setting strongly contrasts to that of the Western philosophical tradition, which had historically arisen from the conscious departure from religiosity and characterizes itself as an independence from the latter. It began in ancient Greece, in which the “philosophical tradition broke away from a mythological approach to explaining the world, and it initiated an approach based on reason and evidence”¹³¹ – hence the Rationalism vs. Empiricism controversy of the Enlightenment Age may be said to be more or less a natural consequence of

¹²⁴. Hetherington, op. cit.

¹²⁵. Ryle argues that the “factual knowledge and theorizing on the basis of such knowledge is not the core of intelligence and not the fundamental form of mental life.” See Bunnin and Yu, op. cit., p. 374.

¹²⁶. He argues that “knowing how is logically prior to knowing that.” See *ibid.*, p. 373

¹²⁷. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* remarks that the “[t]heory of knowledge, *pramāṇa-śāstra*, is a rich genre of Sanskrit literature, spanning almost twenty centuries, carried out in texts belonging to distinct schools of philosophy.” See Stephen Phillips, “Epistemology in Classical Indian Philosophy,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-india/>>.

¹²⁸. Phillips, op. cit.

¹²⁹. *ibid.*

¹³⁰. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 62.

¹³¹. “Ancient Greek Philosophy,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/greekphi/>>.

this tradition. In examining the Kantian “mode of inquiry”, then, it needs to be reminded that, unlike the Buddha, he was foremost a philosopher in this Western context and not a founder of a religion.

The difference between philosophy and religion is the latter’s dominant attention to *praxis*, whereas the former is primarily concerned with *theoria*.¹³² The attention to *praxis* naturally demands the role of knowledge-how, the kind of knowledge that deals with the practices and performances of “how to do something”; it naturally includes “skills” and “abilities” but also “inclinations” and “capacities” that result from their continuous practice.¹³³

It may therefore be expected already that the Kant’s notion of knowledge would have much more to do with knowledge-that than with knowledge-how, whereas the Buddha’s notion of knowledge would place a heavy emphasis on knowledge-how. In fact, among the triad of Kant’s *Critique*’s – which is said to constitute the heart of his philosophy – the very first *Critique* is what we today consider a work of epistemology¹³⁴ that deals with the issue of what can we know,¹³⁵ and which lays out “the foundations of his theory of knowledge”.¹³⁶ It is here that Kant “analyze[s] the roots of all knowledge and the conditions of all possible experience”, and thus “deals with the sources of human knowledge”.¹³⁷ One of the main topics of inquiries in his first *Critique* involves the question of “how are the synthetic a priori propositions of metaphysics possible”,¹³⁸ and this type of an inquiry already suggests that his mode of inquiry is dominantly propositional in kind.¹³⁹ It may be said, then, that the first *Critique* constitutes the point of departure from which his subsequent inquiries are made and answered – it is a foundation upon which he coherently builds and unifies other topics of inquiries in the branches of sciences, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of religion, aesthetics, and political philosophy. So even though

¹³². “In Aristotle’s ethics, *theoria* is distinguished from practical activities. This is the origin of the contrast between theory and practice” See “*theoria*,” *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, (Blackwell Reference Online), 21 Nov. 2014
<http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405106795_chunk_g978140510679521_ss1-42>.

¹³³. Fantl, op. cit.

¹³⁴. It is “the epistemology (theory of knowledge) [that] he develops there.” See Pomerleau, op. cit.

¹³⁵. In the first *Critique*, “[a] large part of Kant’s work addresses the question ‘What can we know?’.” See McCormick, op. cit.

¹³⁶. Guyer, “Kant,” op. cit.

¹³⁷. Bird, op. cit.

¹³⁸. Michelle Grier, “Kant’s Critique of Metaphysics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-metaphysics/>>.

¹³⁹. This does not necessarily imply an altogether absence of non-propositional kind of knowledge but implies the orientation and the predominating way of treating knowledge. For example Hartnack observes that, in the Kant’s analysis of the mind, “not all judgments can be classified as subject-predicate judgments. Existential judgments, for example, cannot be viewed as subject-predicate judgments.” See Hartnack, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

Kant had characterized his own philosophical contribution as a “Copernican revolution”,¹⁴⁰ it must be reminded the possibility that the Western mode of inquiry that any Western philosopher naturally inherits may have remained in him unchecked. The mode of inquiry prevalent during his period must have driven and given direction to the way he had built his epistemological foundation as well as his subsequently derived philosophy of religion.

It is also to be reminded that the Western mode of justification may be different from the Indian one. In the case of Kant in particular, his notion of knowledge is said to “follows its traditional tripartite model as justified-true-belief”,¹⁴¹ which had long been the *de facto* model in the Western epistemology.¹⁴² Here, the phrase *justified-true-belief* is obviously indicative of the attention that is expected to give to the choice of a particular mode of justification. Let’s say a man is assumed to hold the truth in regard to a certain subject matter; under this tripartite model, if the man cannot justify it, then he would not be considered to hold knowledge at all, even if he is somehow aware of it to be true. The conflict between the Empiricism and Rationalism during Kant’s time was essentially a conflict between sensory experience and reason,¹⁴³ and this particular context obviously excludes the possibility of religious or supersensory experience as a legitimate mode of justification. In connection to the Jayatilke’s aforementioned four means of knowledge, this implies that the first three means of knowledge – i.e. “normal perception”, “scriptural or traditional authority”, and “reason” – were present in Europe but the fourth means of knowledge – “extrasensory perception” – had been absent or largely neglected. Furthermore, the conflict between the Empiricism and Rationalism already implies a dominant preoccupation with the propositional kind of knowledge¹⁴⁴ – i.e. knowledge-that, – thereby neglecting the *praxis* and the subsequent religious experience or the state of salvation as a legitimate form of justification.

¹⁴⁰. Kant himself “somewhat immodestly likens his situation to that of Copernicus in revolutionizing our worldview.” See McCormick, op. cit.

¹⁴¹. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

¹⁴². “For some time, the justified true belief (JTB) account was widely agreed to capture the nature of knowledge. However, in 1963, Edmund Gettier published a short but widely influential article which has shaped much subsequent work in epistemology.” See Truncellito, op. cit.

¹⁴³. “Kant’s great contribution was to elucidate both the sensory and the a priori elements in knowledge.” See “Western philosophy,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1350843/Western-philosophy/60964/Critical-examination-of-reason-in-Kant>>.

¹⁴⁴. “The dispute between rationalism and empiricism takes place within epistemology” and “[t]he defining questions of epistemology include ... What is the nature of propositional knowledge, knowledge that a particular proposition about the world is true?” See Peter Markie, “Rationalism vs. Empiricism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>>.

The Buddha's mode of inquiry and justification, on the other hand, is categorically a soteriological one,¹⁴⁵ as the Buddha declares thus: "Both formerly and now, monks, I declare only stress and the cessation of stress".¹⁴⁶ The Buddhist notion of knowledge is within the scope of the Four Noble Truths,¹⁴⁷ which encompasses the entire Dhamma;¹⁴⁸ in other words, it starts with soteriological inquiries, and it is justified in soteriological fruits. The Abhaya Sutta lists the three criteria, upon which the Buddha bases his decision of whether or not to teach a particular subject matter: its truthfulness, usefulness, and pleasantness.¹⁴⁹ The second one is obviously in reference to the soteriological goal. The order of sequence indicates the priority to the truthfulness over the usefulness. The third one merely decides the moment at which he speaks. Therefore his teaching – the Buddhist notion of knowledge – is essentially bounded by two criteria; it is bounded not only by its truthfulness but also by the presence of its usefulness: "[h]e would not assert a statement which he knows to be true, factual, useless ...".¹⁵⁰ In other words, the usefulness is set out to be the overriding criterion.

The Buddha certainly recognized the presence of the sort of knowledge that is "not connected with the goal". In fact, the Simsapa Sutta explains that he had indeed acquired, with his direct knowledge, far more extensive amount of knowledge than that of which he had actually taught to the disciples.¹⁵¹ But it is this soteriological mode of inquiry which sets the limit to the Buddhist notion of knowledge. Yet, the Buddhist notion of knowledge is not limited by the propositional kind of knowledge (knowledge-that), being justified only on the basis of either sensory experience or reason.

¹⁴⁵. According to "[t]he traditional legend of the Buddha's quest for enlightenment," the prince Gautama, in his youth, had "encountered the four 'divine messengers' that were to change his destiny" that "revealed to him the existence of a path whereby all suffering can be fully transcended." See Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Meeting the Divine Messengers," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_32.html>.

¹⁴⁶. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Alagaddupama Sutta: The Water-Snake Simile," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.022.than.html>>.

¹⁴⁷. The Buddha stated thus: "Both formerly and now, monks, I declare only stress and the cessation of stress." See Thanissaro, "Alagaddupama," op. cit.

¹⁴⁸. Sariputta states that, "just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant ... all skillful qualities are gathered under the four noble truths." See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Maha-hatthipadopama Sutta: The Great Elephant Footprint Simile," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.028.than.html>>.

¹⁴⁹. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Abhaya Sutta: To Prince Abhaya," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.058.than.html>>.

¹⁵⁰. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 352.

¹⁵¹. The Buddha compares the amount of leaves in his hand to that of the forest leaves, and says that "those things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught]." See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Simsapa Sutta: The Simsapa Leaves," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.031.than.html>>.

The Buddha appeared during the Late Upaniṣad period when the idea of “‘seeing’ acquires the new connotation of extrasensory perception”,¹⁵² that is, a period when “a new way of knowing, unrecognized in the earlier tradition, acquired by means of meditation [emphasis mine]”.¹⁵³ ¹⁵⁴ It is variably referred to as “personal and intuitional”¹⁵⁵ knowledge, “vision or revelation”,¹⁵⁶ “subtle awakened intuition”,¹⁵⁷ “direct knowing”,¹⁵⁸ or “direct experience of reality”.¹⁵⁹ In contrast to the Western notion of knowledge, Buddhism extends the range of experience to include the supersensory perceptions; in fact, the knowledge attained through the latter kind of perception is said to be of higher order. But here, it must be noted that the Buddha prohibits the acquisition of supersensory knowledge if the soteriological capacity is absent – i.e. if it is not conducive to the attainment of spiritual development, the supersensory faculty is prohibited to use.¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ ¹⁶²

Section ii: The Nature of Reason According to the Two

One of Kant’s aims in his first *Critique* was “to delimit the bounds of reason”,¹⁶³ and consequently, “to show the limitations of our knowledge”.¹⁶⁴ The titles of Kant’s works *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason* here suggests the presence of “two modalities or applications of reason”.¹⁶⁵ The way Kant sets apart the use of reason into *theoretical* and *practical* reason parallels the traditional separation of *theoria* and *praxis*. The separation between *theoria* and *praxis* had began “at the beginning of modern philosophy” when the “development of the modern natural sciences as the model of theoretical knowledge separates thought into

¹⁵². Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁵³. ibid., pp. 61-62.

¹⁵⁴. ibid., p. 63.

¹⁵⁵. ibid., p. 63.

¹⁵⁶. ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵⁷. ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵⁸. ibid., p. 62.

¹⁵⁹. ibid., p. 62.

¹⁶⁰. It could constitute a vinaya offence: “to display psychic powers to lay people is a dukkaṭa.” See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I: The Patimokkha Training Rules Translated and Explained*, (Metta Forest Monastery, 1994), p. 266.

¹⁶¹. Nalakapāna sutta explains that, “unless a bhikkhu had attained the higher stages of Magga and Phala, accomplishments in supernormal psychic powers may prove to be harmful to him. The Buddha himself talked about the destinations of the departed persons not to earn praise and admiration but to arouse enthusiasm and faith in his disciples.” See U Ko Lay ed., *Guide to Tipitaka*, (Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.), p. 74.

¹⁶². Moggallana tried to test how far the Buddha’s voice could reach, and he was proscribed from the use of psychic faculty for acquiring knowledge out of curiosity. See “Maha Moggallana,” *Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/db_02.htm>.

¹⁶³. Williams, op. cit.

¹⁶⁴. McCormick, op. cit.

¹⁶⁵. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

theory and practice".¹⁶⁶ This separation may further be traced back to Aristotle, who divided "the whole field of knowledge into practical, productive and theoretical", of which the latter, *theoria*, is for him the highest pursuit of man, and it is "pursued from no other motive than to acquire knowledge for its own sake".¹⁶⁷ Naturally, for the subsequent philosophers who had inherited the Western mode of thought, including Kant, "*theoria* is the name of the activity singled out ... as the highest good for man and the acme of his happiness".¹⁶⁸

For Kant, *theoretical reason* is what determines "the limits and requirements of the employment of the faculty of reason [, in order] to obtain knowledge".¹⁶⁹ *Practical reason*, on the other hand, "is the foundation of Kant's moral philosophy", and it is what "guide[s] some of our *beliefs*, as well as our actions".¹⁷⁰ The application of *theoretical reason* deals with the theoretical knowledge of what *is*, whereas the application of *practical reason* deals with the moral issues of what *ought* to be.¹⁷¹ What Kant had done here was to define the boundary of knowledge by the application of *theoretical reason* alone. Consequently, what is acquired through the exercise of *practical reason* does not constitute knowledge proper. Kant in other words had set out the proper domain in which each use of reason is allowed to exercise, so as not to overstep its proper role.

The first *Critique* mainly deals with the use of theoretical reason and the corresponding domain of theoretical knowledge. It is in the second *Critique* that he explores "another use of reason, a practical use in which it constructs universal laws and ideals of human conduct".¹⁷² For Kant, the matter of religious or moral claims constitutes a separate domain that belongs outside of knowledge proper,¹⁷³ and he refers to it as the "postulate of pure practical reason".¹⁷⁴ It is to be noted here however, that Kant still treats those postulates as if they constitute propositional kind

¹⁶⁶. Donald Phillip Verene, *Speculative Philosophy*, (Lexington Books, 2009), p. 15.

¹⁶⁷. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 397.

¹⁶⁸. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy: Volume 6, Aristotle: An Encounter* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 396.

¹⁶⁹. McCormick, op. cit.

¹⁷⁰. Williams, op. cit.

¹⁷¹. Theoretical reason "makes it possible to cognize what is," whereas the practical reason is employed "in determining what ought to be." See McCormick, op. cit.

¹⁷². Guyer, "Project," op. cit.

¹⁷³. They "remain objects of faith rather than knowledge." See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

¹⁷⁴. The latter may sometimes be called "practical knowledge," albeit not exactly a form of knowledge proper, for the purpose of making a distinction against the domain of "theoretical knowledge." Kant therefore builds a boundary between "practical knowledge of a practical reality, or cognition 'only for practical purposes'," and "theoretical knowledge based on experience or reflection on the conditions of experience." See Rohlf, op. cit.

of theoretical knowledge – even though they are properly not.¹⁷⁵ Such treatment again demonstrates Kant’s Western mode of inquiry; it demonstrates the predominating role of knowledge-that over knowledge-how, and consequently the matters of *praxis* had effectively been assimilated into the domain of *theoria*.¹⁷⁶

Similar to the way Kant distinguishes “postulate of pure practical reason” from knowledge, Buddhism also distinguishes the domain of faith from that of knowledge proper. But the important difference between them is that, for the latter, the objects of faith constitute “verifiable hypothesis”¹⁷⁷ expected to eventually be replaced by “the final knowledge, which results from the personal verification of the truth”.^{178 179} In other words, it is possible to later acquire knowledge of what initially was merely an object of faith, whereas Kant’s notion of postulate is not something that is expected to be replaced by personal verification. In the case of Buddhism, then, there is no need to distinguish two modalities of reason, as Kant had done, on the basis of the Western distinction between *theoria* and *praxis*.

Jayatilke instead suggests another way of distinguishing the Buddhist use of reason: “(a) the kind of consideration which led to the construction of the theory”, and “(b) the reasons employed in the defense of the theory against their opponents’ criticisms”.^{180 181} The previous chapter discusses how the Buddha was particularly critical of the first use of reason, for the reason that it results into an unsatisfactory religion. As to the second use of reason, Jayatilke observes how “we sometimes meet with the Buddha recommending his doctrines on rational grounds”¹⁸² in the way he employed “reason with those who came to debate with him”, and that he knew “... the trick of turning (his opponents over to his views) with which he converted the disciples of heretical teachers”.¹⁸³ In other words, they indicate the Buddha’s affirmative attitude towards the second use of reason.

¹⁷⁵. “Kant introduces the idea of a ‘postulate,’ defined as ‘a *theoretical* proposition, though one not demonstrable as such’,” and thereby treating it as if it is a proposition, even though it cannot be demonstrated as constituting knowledge proper. See Williams, op. cit.

¹⁷⁶. The Western philosophical “tradition assimilates knowing how to knowing that.” See Bunnin and Yu, op. cit., pp. 373-374.

¹⁷⁷. Jayatilke, op. cit., p. 464.

¹⁷⁸. *ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

¹⁷⁹. The Pāli Canon “unmistakably implying that it is knowledge and not faith which finally helps salvation.” See *ibid.*, p. 395.

¹⁸⁰. *ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁸¹. Or more accurately, “(i) the kind of reasoning with which the theories ... were defended or criticized” and “(ii) the kind of reasoning with which the speculative, rational metaphysical theories were constructed and which the commentator has called ‘pure reasoning’.” See *ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

¹⁸². *ibid.*, p. 405.

¹⁸³. *ibid.*, p. 408.

Reason involves the use of logic, and naturally the latter constitutes an important part of epistemological studies in both Western¹⁸⁴ and Indian¹⁸⁵ traditions. Jayatilleke compares the kind of logic used in the Buddhism to that of the West. The Early Buddhism uses “four-fold logic”¹⁸⁶ – or *catuṣkoṭī*. It provides the option of four alternative forms of replies to a given question: (I) p, (II) “not-p (contrary)”, (III) “both p and not-p”, and (IV) “neither p nor not-p”. Kant seems to have adhered to the traditional Aristotelian form of logic.¹⁸⁷ The Aristotelian logic of two alternatives only provides two options: either p or not-p.¹⁸⁸ Here Jayatilleke remarks that the Aristotelian logic “tends to obscure these finer distinctions” which the Buddhist logic could instead highlight.¹⁸⁹ It may perhaps be said that, in a way, the Aristotelian logic is capable of dealing only a specialized or restricted case of what the Buddhist logic is capable of dealing, for the reason that the third and fourth alternatives pay attention to a more generalized or transcended interpretation of the situation at hand, thereby giving the options of extending beyond the conceptual framework already given in the form of question itself.¹⁹⁰ If so, then the difference in the forms of logic used by the Buddha and Kant may have repercussions in the way each defines the scope of knowledge and the nature of knowledge itself.¹⁹¹ In the Brahmajāla Sutta, for instance, the Buddha speaks of the state of *nibbana* as follows:

¹⁸⁴. Logic constitutes a part of the Western epistemological study, in a way that reason constitutes an established part of its study, and that logic constitutes a part of reason, as indicated by some of the definitions rendered to the word *reason*: “The capacity for logical, rational, and analytic thought; intelligence”; “To use the faculty of reason; think logically.” See “reason,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/reason>>.

¹⁸⁵. “Epistemology and logic are closely linked in the Indian tradition” and “is regarded as a means or instrument of knowledge.” See Jayandra Soni, “Epistemology and logic,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/F005SECT2>>.

¹⁸⁶. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 350.

¹⁸⁷. “Kant thought that Aristotle had discovered everything there was to know about logic,” and “even held that nothing significant had been added to Aristotle’s views in the intervening two millennia.” See Robin Smith “Aristotle’s Logic,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-logic/>>.

¹⁸⁸. Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 345.

¹⁸⁹. *ibid.*, p. 341.

¹⁹⁰. It has been said that Kant’s weakness was “his assumption that the logic of his day, which was based primarily on the logic of Aristotle, contained the final and eternal truth about logic.” See Georges Dicker, *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge: An Analytical Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004), p. 57.

¹⁹¹. Kant “was sufficiently confident of his claim to abstract the categories ... [which are] essential to his supposed theory of the very conditions of knowledge whatsoever, directly from Aristotelian logic,” and, in doing so, “Kant made logic ... central to his own theory.” See Tom Rockmore, *Before and after Hegel: A Historical Introduction to Hegel’s Thought*, (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), p. 111.

... there are, bhikkhus, other dhammas, deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, peaceful and sublime, *beyond the sphere of reasoning*, subtle, comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagata, having realized for himself with direct *knowledge* [emphasis mine].¹⁹²

Nibbana is the state or experience of “the *transcendent* and singularly *ineffable* freedom that stands as the final goal of all the Buddha's teachings [emphasis mine]”.¹⁹³ It is also established that knowledge attained in the state of *nibbana* constitutes the highest level of knowledge. In other words, in Buddhism, an ineffable can be properly known.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, it implies that what cannot be expressed propositionally or logically are not necessarily considered to be trivial or marginal knowledge, but they may in fact constitute the highest level of knowledge. A forthcoming section demonstrates that Buddhism frequently considers such non-propositional kinds of knowledge as being higher in rank.

Section iii: The Nature of Experience According to the Two

The previous chapter demonstrates the commonality between the epistemology of Kantian philosophy and that of Buddhism in their empiricist or positivist orientation. But the way they understand the nature of experience may substantially differ from one another, and consequently their notions of knowledge may not coincide perfectly with each other. What distinguishes the two epistemologies comes down to the range of possible experience and the way they delimit it.

In the account of the Buddha's Awakening, Buddhism claims “six-fold higher knowledge”, which consists of: (1) “psychokinesis (levitation, etc.)”, (2) “clairaudience”, (3) “telepathic knowledge”, (4) “retrocognitive knowledge” or the “knowledge of his diverse past births”, (5) “clairvoyance” or the “knowledge of the decease and survival of beings”, and (6) “the

¹⁹². Bodhi, “Brahmajāla sutta,” op. cit.

¹⁹³. “Nibbana: nibbana,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014
<<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca3/nibbana.html>>.

¹⁹⁴. It may have a repercussion in the way each had successfully synthesized – or taken the middle stance – between the pairs of extreme stances. The four-fold logic highlights the subtle distinction between *both p and not-p* and *neither p nor not-p* – as well as providing the further option of *avyākata* reply – thereby making possible the distinction of the subtlety involved in going beyond the two opposite extremes – as opposed to merely in amalgamating the two opposite extremes in a coherent way so as to qualitatively affirm both stances, or merely in seeking a third alternative that is different from the given two extremes.

knowledge of the destruction of the defiling impulses".^{195 196} They are obtained as the result of the religious practice of jhānic cultivation.^{197 198}

It is to be noted that the first item on the list is strictly speaking “not a cognitive power in the sense of ‘knowing that’”,¹⁹⁹ but it constitutes a form of knowledge in the sense of knowledge-how – i.e. the knowledge of how to maneuver or the means of influencing physical objects. Furthermore, the sixth item includes knowledge of “*the means to* and the fact of Nirvāna [emphasis mine]”,²⁰⁰ which also indicates that the knowledge is also partly a case of knowledge-how.²⁰¹

The previous chapter demonstrates that the Buddhism generally identifies a religion constructed on the basis of *a priori* reasoning as an unsatisfactory religion. Now the question arises as to how it identifies a religion constructed on the basis of *a posteriori* reason – i.e. a religion established on the basis of one’s experience. The previous chapter shows that the Indian Materialists had also established theories on the basis of experience – sensory experience in this case, – yet Buddhism generally identifies Materialism as false religion. So the next question arises as to how Buddhism would identify a religion based on supersensory experiences.

Jayatileke cites the Pañcattaya Sutta, which lists the three ways a theory could arise: “[a] theory may arise as that of the mystic (who reasons on the data of his experiences), the person who remembers his past births (and reasons on this basis) and the (pure) reasoned”.²⁰² The first and second items on the list constitute the kind of theories properly established on the basis of supersensory observations, yet all three are identified as unsatisfactory religions according to the sutta. Jayatileke also cites Buddhaghosa who similarly lists four types of thinkers based on their epistemic origins, all of which could result in unsatisfactory religions: “one who reasons on a premise based on tradition (or report), one who reasons on a premise based on retrocognition, one who reasons on a premise based on jhānic experience and the pure

¹⁹⁵. Jayatileke, op. cit., p. 438.

¹⁹⁶. *ibid.*, pp. 378-379.

¹⁹⁷. “... his mind is emancipated from the inflowing impulses of sensuous gratification, personal immortality and ignorance,” and “along with this emancipation arises the knowledge that emancipation has been attained.” See *ibid.*, p. 466.

¹⁹⁸. To be more precise, “only three are necessary for the salvation knowledge” – i.e. the last three forms of knowledge as indicated above. See *ibid.*, p. 466.

¹⁹⁹. *ibid.*, p. 438.

²⁰⁰. *ibid.*, p. 379.

²⁰¹. *ibid.*, p. 438.

²⁰². *ibid.*, p. 271.

reasoner".²⁰³ The second and third items on the list constitute theories established on the basis of supersensory observations, yet all four are identified as unsatisfactory. It is to be reminded however that the Buddha's teaching itself is also properly established on the basis of his own supersensory experiences. Those designations of unsatisfactory religion, then, appear *prima facie* to contradict the Buddha's own teaching, which certainly is not an unsatisfactory religion.

However, Buddhaghosa's further explanation makes clear the reason they are considered unsatisfactory. It explains that a particular supersensory experience may only reveal a partial aspect of the total reality.²⁰⁴ In other words, it is due to the level of the supersensory capacities one had attained that a theory may be considered as unsatisfactory – i.e. a level of attainment may not have reached to a point of being able to make a conclusive or categorical claim.²⁰⁵ Additionally, it also explains the possibility of subsequent error in interpreting or inferring the meaning of that particular experience.²⁰⁶ The Mahakammavibhanga Sutta describes a mystic who observes an afterlife of an "evil-doer who goes to heaven" and consequently makes an erroneous claim that "[o]nly this is true, anything else is wrong".²⁰⁷ The sutta teaches here the case that "some of the inferences based on one's clairvoyant vision may be invalid."²⁰⁸ The simile of the elephant and the blind men as recorded in the Titttha Sutta also teaches the possibility of constructing various metaphysical theories on the basis of partial supersensory observations, thereby resulting into a number of conflicting schools of thought.²⁰⁹ It is for these reasons that Buddhism generally identifies religions based on extrasensory perceptions still as unsatisfactory – although it is advancement from the false religion status of Materialism.

For Kant, one of the aims of the first *Critique* was in "exposing the metaphysical illusions that arise when human reason tries to extend those principles beyond the limits of human experience".²¹⁰ His prescription here does resemble the teaching of the Buddha as described in the aforementioned Mahakammavibhanga Sutta, which warns against making a categorical claim

²⁰³. *ibid.*, p. 262.

²⁰⁴. "He who, because of his jhānic experience, argues that since his soul is happy in the present, it must have been so in the past and it will be so in the future and accepts the theory (that the soul is eternal)." See *ibid.*, p. 262.

²⁰⁵. "The Buddhist considered it possible to misinterpret this [intuitive] experience and draw erroneous inferences from it." See *ibid.*, p. 426.

²⁰⁶. It is still "considered possible to make both valid and erroneous inferences" – or interpretations – even on the basis of the valid supersensory experience. See *ibid.*, p. 459.

²⁰⁷. Ñanamoli Thera, "Maha Kammavibhanga Sutta: The Great Exposition of Kamma," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.136.nymo.html>>.

²⁰⁸. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 462.

²⁰⁹. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Titttha Sutta: Sectarials (1)," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.6.04.than.html>>.

²¹⁰. Guyer, *op. cit.*

by extending beyond one's experience through reason and interpretation. But the difference here is that the human experience Kant refers does not include the supersensory one. For Kant, "we can have no cognition of supersensible objects" at all, and consequently "we can have no knowledge of the supersensible"²¹¹ either.

In his first *Critique*, Kant engages in an analysis of the mind, and it is here that he establishes an epistemological foundation capable of explaining the production of knowledge. He was motivated in justifying knowledge in response to the Humean Skepticism, under which the notion of knowledge altogether is ungrounded, unjustified, and unsubstantiated. It may thus be said that Kant's mode of inquiry and justification is attributed to such challenge from the radical Skepticism. The downturn however seems to be that, as a by-product of this very process of justification, he had strictly defined the nature of experience and had restricted it to the sensory phenomena alone.

In his analysis of the mind, Kant argues that our mind is inherently equipped with twelve *categories* – also known as the *pure concepts of understanding* – which supply the meaningful concepts to what we perceive through our senses in our experience of the external world. These twelve categories constitute the condition of knowledge.²¹² It is the presence of these categories that enabled him to justify the production of our knowledge – including both *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge.²¹³ However, the significance here is that Kant "believes he has shown that there are twelve and only twelve categories".²¹⁴ Perhaps it is this particular claim of not only the *necessity* but also the *sufficiency* of the twelve in number which had a repercussion in restricting not only his scope of knowledge, but also the scope of cognition in general,²¹⁵ and possibly the nature of experience as well,²¹⁶ thereby making it "impossible ... to extend knowledge to the supersensible realm of speculative metaphysics".²¹⁷ For instance, Kant believed that "we cannot

²¹¹. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²¹². In his analysis of the cognitive process, "the use of categories [is] a necessary condition of knowledge." See Hartnack, op. cit., p. 47.

²¹³. He claims that "[e]verything that is conceived and comprehended is ... by means of the categories." See *ibid.*, p. 58.

²¹⁴. Kant "thinks he has discovered all the categories." See *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

²¹⁵. Under the Kantian analysis of the mind, "the categories ... are a priori necessary for any possible *cognition* of objects [emphasis mine]." See Amie Thomasson, "Categories," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/categories/>>.

²¹⁶. Kant held that "the categories are a condition of *experience*. [emphasis mine]" See Hartnack, op. cit., p. 144.

²¹⁷. McCormick, op. cit.

prove or disprove a miracle, for its alleged supersensible cause is not something whose *conditions* are determinable for us [emphasis mine]".²¹⁸

In contrast to the Indian epistemology which mode of inquiry is religious or soteriological, Kant's altogether denial of the possibility of religious knowledge²¹⁹ may perhaps have to do with such a particular mode of inquiry and justification that he inherits from the Western philosophic tradition.²²⁰ This particular denial is not a "denial of even the intelligibility of religious concepts", but rather, the "problem, for Kant, is ... not about meaning, but rather it is epistemic".²²¹ The epistemic problem here perhaps includes the problem with the mode of justification.²²² It is curious to note that Kant "does not deny that divinely revealed truths are possible, but only that they are knowable",²²³ and consequently, even under a valid religious experience, "none of them refers to an object of empirical knowledge".²²⁴ In short, Kant's notion of knowledge is confined to the sensory experience,²²⁵ and his particular way of analyzing the mind had a possible repercussion in restricting his notion of knowledge.

Kantian epistemology resembles the Indian Materialism in the way both only accept sensory experience as the legitimate source of knowledge. It is perhaps partly for this reason that many scholars have interpreted Kant as the forerunner of Positivism. However, the next section shows that the way his thought resembles Materialism is only to its epistemology and not to the aspect of the moral philosophy.

Section iv: Knowledge and Rational Faith

²¹⁸ Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²¹⁹ "Kant does deny the possibility of religious knowledge." See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²²⁰ "It is impossible, Kant argues, to extend knowledge to the supersensible realm of speculative metaphysics. The reason that knowledge has these constraints, Kant argues, is that the mind plays an active role in constituting the features of experience and limiting the mind's access only to the empirical realm of space and time." See McCormick, op. cit.

²²¹ Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²²² "Even if we experience some event whose cause is supersensible, we have no way whatsoever to establish that this is so, and have nothing to guide our hypotheses about how to test for miracles or how they come to be." See *ibid*.

²²³ Kant held that "we are to remain agnostic regarding the truth of any particular claim about a miracle or revelation," and "that theoretical reason must keep a 'respectful distance' from all claims of miracles and revelation," but on the other hand, "Kant nevertheless endorses an openness to these possibilities," and he "still grants that within this domain there still may be genuine revelation and miracles," and in fact, "in many works of the 1790s, he acknowledges the possibility of miracles and revelation." See *ibid*.

²²⁴ Pomerleau, op. cit.

²²⁵ "A large part of Kant's work addresses the question 'What can we know?'. The answer, if it can be stated simply, is that our knowledge is constrained to mathematics and the science of the natural, empirical world." See McCormick, op. cit.

Kant's denial of the knowledge of the supersensible *prima facie* seems like a move towards an altogether denial of religion and faith.²²⁶ In the domain of religion, he had indeed made a "revolutionary move from his pre-critical, rationalistic Christian orthodoxy to his critical position".²²⁷ Consequently, by the mid-twentieth century his "attempts to 'make room for faith' were being ignored or dismissed", as "the image of Kant as a proto-positivist gained dominance",²²⁸ especially in the academia. Consequently, "his attack upon metaphysics was held by many in his own day to bring both religion and morality down with it", but, in reality, such was "certainly far from Kant's intention".²²⁹

The prior section shows that Kant had delimited the scope of knowledge, not to diminish the human capacity to know, but in order to justify and establish knowledge on a secure ground. Similarly, his real motivation in establishing a barrier between the domain of knowledge and that of faith was not to demolish faith but in order to justify it, and thereby securing the ground of religion.²³⁰ By critiquing the knowledge of the metaphysics,²³¹ Kant was actually establishing the possibility of it on a more secure ground,²³² and he was thereby providing justification for the legitimate belief in it.²³³ It is now recognized that his first *Critique* is "a treatise about metaphysics: it seeks to show the impossibility of one sort of metaphysics and to lay the foundations for another".²³⁴

It is in the second *Critique* that "Kant attempts to unify his account of practical reason with his work in the *Critique of Pure Reason*".²³⁵ It is here that "a significant part of it is devoted to establishing belief ... as a rationally justifiable postulate of practical reason".²³⁶ For Kant, metaphysical objects of faith are necessary for establishing morality, religion, and salvation.²³⁷

²²⁶. For this reason, among others, "Kant has long been seen as hostile to faith," and consequently, "the secular interpretation of Kant is widespread." See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²²⁷. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²²⁸. *ibid.*

²²⁹. Bird, op. cit.

²³⁰. The irony is that "despite more than two centuries of interpreters who have regarded Kant's criticisms as expressions of hostility, the barriers he establishes are not meant to abolish faith but to save it." See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²³¹. "In establishing these limits on metaphysical knowledge, Kant's intentions are not merely destructive." See Williams, op. cit.

²³². "Kant sees that the past failures of metaphysics to establish *secure ground*—as to what we can know." See *ibid.*

²³³. "The main topic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the possibility of metaphysics." See Rohlf, op. cit.

²³⁴. Bird, op. cit.

²³⁵. McCormick, op. cit.

²³⁶. Pomerleau, op. cit.

²³⁷. Kant held that "our commitment to morality does not so simply depend on our affirmation of the postulates, but in our free act of faith," and it is in faith that the "[m]orality, thus 'inevitably leads to religion'." For example, Kant argues that "our faith in God and immortality ... are necessary conditions for the realization

The metaphysical ideas are initially excluded out of the domain of theoretical knowledge,²³⁸ and they are now included as a domain of faith, in which practical reason may be exercised for the purpose of giving moral directions.²³⁹ He thereby identifies the “ideas of metaphysics (including theology) as matters of rational faith”,²⁴⁰ which “have great ‘regulative’ value”²⁴¹ in *praxis*. Here the attention is to be made to his mode of justification; an object of faith is now to be justified in *praxis*, and it is no longer justified in *theoria* as he had done through his analysis of the mind. It may therefore be said that this shift in the mode of justification is what had allowed faith to be rationally justifiable.²⁴² This shift enables him to “defend faith against theoretical reason”²⁴³ on a basis of rational justification by “determin[ing] the limits of knowledge”.²⁴⁴ Kant famously states that “I must, therefore, abolish knowledge, to make room for belief,”²⁴⁵ But Kant here is in no way advocating blind faith or attempting to diminish knowledge for the sake of occupying, as it were, the remaining space with irrational or sentimentally grounded objects of faith.

To be precise, Kant introduces a tripartite *theory of truth* – not to be confused with the aforementioned tripartite *theory of knowledge*. Instead of setting a borderline corresponding to the two uses of reason, he asserts “three fundamental modes of (legitimate) ‘holding-to-be-true’”.²⁴⁶ Kant identifies these three as “knowledge, faith and opinion”.²⁴⁷ He also refers to faith as *rational faith* so as to distinguish it from unjustified blind faith.^{248 249} Here, the particular attention is to be made to the issue of justification again. Both knowledge and faith pertain to the

of [Highest Good],” and that “the Highest Good is an object of faith for us.” For Kant, then, knowledge – or even its postulate – can establish neither morality nor religion; only faith in the metaphysical ideas can. See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²³⁸. For him, “metaphysical ideas are unknowable” and “knowledge of the soul, of the cosmos, and of God is impossible, in principle.” See Pomerleau, op. cit.

²³⁹. Kant considered that the objects of faith “serve the heuristic purpose of regulating our thought and action” in the domain of *praxis*, and therefore it may still be considered “reasonable for us to postulate them as matters of rational faith. [emphasis mine].” See *ibid*.

²⁴⁰. *ibid*.

²⁴¹. He argues for the belief in “[t]hree such regulative ideas ... ‘God, freedom, and immortality’.” See *ibid*.

²⁴². Kant therefore “remains a champion of religious faith as rationally justifiable.” See *ibid*.

²⁴³. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²⁴⁴. McCormick, op. cit.

²⁴⁵. Kant, “Pure Reason,” op. cit.

²⁴⁶. Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

²⁴⁷. “Knowledge, faith and opinion together make up the three grades of holding a judgement.” See Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2000), p. 273.

²⁴⁸. Kant describes rational faith as follows: “in reference to the intelligibility of an object given us by the moral law (the summum bonum), and consequently of a requirement for practical purposes, it may be called faith, that is to say a pure rational faith.” See Immanuel Kant, “The Critique of Practical Reason,” trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, *Project Gutenberg*, 21 Nov. 2014, <<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5683/pg5683.html>>.

²⁴⁹. It is called rational faith, “as a rationally justifiable postulate of practical reason.” See Pomerleau, op. cit.

holding of truth,²⁵⁰ and both are justifiable.²⁵¹ Faith indeed seems to satisfy the three criteria of justified-true-belief as much as knowledge does, since the tripartite *theory of knowledge* – not to be confused with the tripartite *theory of truth* – defines knowledge to be a form of *justified belief* that happened to be *true*, and rational faith also meets the three criteria of *justified true belief*. Yet, for Kant, faith still does not constitute knowledge proper.²⁵² The attention to be made here is the change in his mode of justification, on the basis of which Kant builds his philosophy of religion.²⁵³ For Kant, faith is considered to be “subjectively, but not objectively, justifiable”.²⁵⁴ The missing factor that is absent in faith but present in knowledge is this objectivity in the process of justification.²⁵⁵ Kant’s version of the tripartite theory of knowledge, then, distinguishes between objective justification and subjective one, and that a formation of knowledge properly requires an objective justification and not merely a subjective one.²⁵⁶

Perhaps the Buddhist theory of knowledge may not exactly correspond to the Western theory of justified-true-belief, but it may possibly have a theory of its own. The aforementioned Abhaya Sutta, for instance, describes the three criteria – which actually come down to the two criteria – under which the Buddha decides to speak. In the Buddhism, even if an object of faith – say, the doctrine of rebirth – satisfies both truthfulness and usefulness, the state of having belief in that doctrine is not considered as the state of actually *knowing* it. In contrast to the Kantian philosophy, an object of faith is verifiable, and it may be verified later through the attainment of “direct personal knowledge”, in case of which it is no longer identified as faith but is properly

²⁵⁰. Kant acknowledges that “[b]elieving and knowing both involve holding something to be true,” but “[b]y belief (or faith) ... Kant means something different from knowledge.” See Lara Denis, “Kant and Hume on Morality,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-hume-morality/>>.

²⁵¹. In short, “Kant came to limit knowledge to objects of possible experience and to regard ideas of metaphysics (including theology) as matters of rational faith.” See Pomerleau, *op. cit.*

²⁵². Kant still “distinguishes between theoretical knowledge and morally justified belief,” even though the latter is held to be justified and true. See Rohlf, *op. cit.*

²⁵³. Kant held that, “in the case of knowledge and opinion, these grounds are either experiential or theoretical proofs, while in the case of faith, its grounds are in the ‘needs of practical reason’.” Furthermore, “[f]aith is, for Kant, a mode of justified assent, though the nature of its justification is quite different from opinion and knowledge.” See Pasternack and Rossi, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁴. Faith is situated in “a middle ground between certain knowledge, which is objectively, as well as subjectively, justified, and mere arbitrary opinion, which is not even subjectively justified.” See Pomerleau, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁵. “According to Kant, when one knows something, one holds it to be true on grounds that are ‘subjectively and objectively’ sufficient, whereas when one believes something, one holds it to be true on grounds that are subjectively but not objectively sufficient.” See Denis, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁶. For further discussion on the objectivity and subjectivity in epistemology, see Dwayne H. Mulder, “Objectivity,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/objectiv/>>. Also see Edward Craig ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Descartes to Gender and Science Vol. 3*, (Routledge, June 1998), p. 367.

identified as knowledge.²⁵⁷ Moreover, the Buddhist epistemology does not consider supersensory perception to be merely a subjective, personal experience, but it is considered to be an objective one.²⁵⁸ – despite it being called “direct personal knowledge”, it is not considered as a subjective experience. For example, the Buddhism holds that the seeing of “things as they are” – *yathābhūtam*, –which constitutes the highest level of knowledge, is properly recognized as the objective knowledge of reality.²⁵⁹ Jayatilleke asserts “[w]hat is taught by the Buddha is claimed to be objectively valid” by referring to the Canonical statement: “Whether the Tathāgata preaches the dhamma to his disciples or does not preach it, the dhamma remains the same”.²⁶⁰

Similar to the case of Kant, Buddhism had occasionally been mistakenly viewed as being hostile to belief in general, probably for the reason, among others, that it belongs to the *nāstika* branch of religion which denies faith in the Vedic doctrines.²⁶¹ Another reason for this may be attributed to the popular reading of the *Kālāma Sutta*, which appears, *prima facie*, to question the practice of faith altogether, in the way it promotes “[t]he ability to question and test one's beliefs in an appropriate way” and recommends that “any view or belief must be tested by the results it yields when put into practice”.²⁶² The article on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* also observes how “[s]ome have interpreted the Buddha’s advice to the *Kālāma* people as an iconoclast rejection of tradition and faith”, albeit such an extreme interpretation “does little justice to the *Pāli Nikāyas*”.²⁶³ Thanissaro Bhikkhu also makes a similar observation: “Although this discourse is often cited as the Buddha's *carte blanche* for following one's own sense of right and wrong, it actually says something much more rigorous than that”.²⁶⁴ He observes how “[s]ome people go so far as to say that faith has no place in the Buddhist tradition, that the proper Buddhist attitude is one of skepticism”, albeit the fact that “the Buddha ... also makes a conditional request about faith”.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁷ Jayatilleke explains that “faith or belief with which he started is replaced by direct personal knowledge.” See Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

²⁵⁸ In the Buddhism mode of justification, “objectivity ... should be achieved in introspection after attaining the fourth *jhāna*.” See *ibid.*, p.430.

²⁵⁹ “Knowing things as they are” constitute the “highest knowledge,” and the *Pāli Canon* “is clear that truth and therefore knowledge is objective ... as telling us the nature of ‘things as they are’.” See *ibid.*, p. 428.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 428.

²⁶¹ “The *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, 109, 34 denounces Buddha as an atheist. The *Purāṇas* display a similar attitude of hostility and disdain for Buddhism.” See Lal Mani Joshi, *Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India During the Seventh and Eighth Centuries A.D.*, (Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), p. 245.

²⁶² Thanissaro, “*Kalama*,” *op. cit.*

²⁶³ Velez, *op. cit.*

²⁶⁴ Thanissaro, “*Kalama*,” *op. cit.*

²⁶⁵ Thanissaro, “*Faith*,” *op. cit.*

Curiously, Jayatilleke mentions that, even “in his own time according to the evidence of the Nikāyas, we find his own contemporaries accusing him of being a Materialist”.²⁶⁶ However, he shows how the affirmative attitude towards *saddhā* – sometimes translated as “conviction” – in the Early Buddhism is evident from the passages in the Pāli Canon.²⁶⁷ There are Canonical references to the “lists of virtues or requirements for salvation”, in which *saddhā* occurs frequently and “always mentioned as the first member”.^{268 269} It also teaches that “doubting the teacher, the doctrine, the order, the training ... are considered ‘five obstacles or hindrances (to moral and spiritual progress) of the mind’”.²⁷⁰ He remarks that “this doubt is apparently to be removed not by blind belief but by the *conviction* that dawns from a critical study and evaluation [emphasis mine]”.²⁷¹ In the context of epistemology, then, faith may be said to partially constitute the proper means of knowledge.²⁷²

He also identifies the presence of the term *ākāravatī saddhā* or *rational faith* in the Pāli Canon,²⁷³ which amplifies the resemblance to the Kantian notion of faith. The difference between the Kantian and the Buddhist notion of faith however is that, in the case of the latter, the faith is to be replaced by knowledge through verification.²⁷⁴ Jayatilleke shows how faith is “being used for different stages” in a practitioner’s spiritual progress, and that these stages reflect the depths or “types of acceptance of a proposition or doctrine”.²⁷⁵ The first stage is “of accepting for the purpose of testing”, and the second is “faith in a person after realizing that he was honest, unbiased and intelligent”, and the last stage is when “there was a partial and personal verification of the doctrine”.²⁷⁶ Jayatilleke’s observation that the Buddhist epistemology has the “process of verification” in that “we may provisionally accept a proposition for the purposes of

²⁶⁶ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 375.

²⁶⁷ “Faith in the Buddha, his teachings, and his disciples, is highly regarded in the Pāli Nikāyas: it is the first of the five factors of striving ... , and a necessary condition to practice the spiritual path” See Velez, op. cit.

²⁶⁸ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 396.

²⁶⁹ For example, the Kasi Bharadvaja Sutta states that “[c]onviction is my seed,” indicating faith as the first on the list of the factors to be cultivated. See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Kasi Bharadvaja Sutta: To the Plowing Bharadvaja” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014
<<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn07/sn07.011.than.html>>.

²⁷⁰ Further, “one should ‘clear the mind of this doubt, becoming certain of moral values’.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 393.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 393.

²⁷² “Buddhist faith, however, is not unconditional or an end in and of itself but rather a means towards direct knowledge that must be based on critical examination, supported by reasons, and eventually verified or rooted in vision.” See Velez, op. cit.

²⁷³ “the faith (*saddhā*) of him, which is thus fixed, rooted and established on these reasons, grounds and features is said to be a *rational faith* (*ākāravatī saddhā*), rooted in insight, firm and irremovable” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 393.

²⁷⁴ In Buddhism, “the assertions of a tradition or revelation can be verified by other means of knowledge available to us.” See *ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 393-394.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 394.

verifying its truth",²⁷⁷ is similar to Thanissaro Bhikkhu's observation that, "in the Buddhist context, faith and empiricism are inseparable" and "[t]o act on this faith is to test it".²⁷⁸ Even though the Buddhist and Kantian notions of faith are epistemologically similar in the way that both are the product of critical examination and are against the baseless blind faith,²⁷⁹ they indeed differ in the way that the former teaches it to be verifiable²⁸⁰ whereas the latter denies that possibility. It may partly be for this reason that the two do not necessarily share the particular objects of faith but they sometimes differ significantly – the Buddha clearly rejects the Kant's belief in God and eternal soul. In short, their epistemological difference may be stated as follows: In Kantianism, faith is justified in the practical reason; in Buddhism, faith is only *provisionally* justified in the use of reason, but it *ultimately* finds its justification in the jhānic process of verification.²⁸¹

Section v: Stereological Connotation

The prior sections so far demonstrate that there are aspects in the Buddhist notion of knowledge which are absent in the Kantian epistemology. One of the significant aspects of the Indian epistemology is its intimate tie to the religious experience of salvation. In reference to the aforementioned three epistemological schools of pre-Buddhist India,²⁸² Jayatilleke observes that "[e]ach of these forms of knowledge was believed to result in salvation".²⁸³ In other words, practically every thinker who had made an epistemological claim had held a particular soteriological stance as well,²⁸⁴ – so much so that even the skeptics had soteriological interests.^{285 286} On the other hand, the Western philosophical tradition since the days of classical

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 391.

²⁷⁸ Thanissaro, "Faith," *op. cit.*

²⁷⁹ The rational faith "is a product of critical examination and partial verification is apparently contrasted with the 'baseless faith'." See Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

²⁸⁰ The Buddha says that the cultivation "lead[s] to the realization by direct knowledge of the various doctrinal statements," and that "I claim to teach Dhamma about these (doctrinal statements) in such a way that a person who acts accordingly will know the real as being real and the unreal as being unreal." See Nyanaponika Thera, "Anguttara Nikaya: The Discourse Collection in Numerical Order," *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nyanaponika/wheel238.html>>.

²⁸¹ In the Buddhism, "verifiability in the light of experience, sensory and extrasensory, is considered a characteristic of truth." See Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

²⁸² They are: "normal perception," "scriptural or traditional authority," "reason," and "extrasensory perception," of which the first one may be neglected for the reason that it is shared by all three schools of thought. See Jayatilleke, *op. cit.* p. 62.

²⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁸⁴ For example, Jayatilleke suggests that when the Buddha "says that there is no salvation through metaphysical beliefs, revelations or intuitional knowledge," it is exactly in reference to these three main schools of thought, and that it is also in this context that the Buddha declares his Path to be the only means of knowledge that is truly conducive to the ultimate salvation. See *ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁸⁵ Some skeptics were "not purely intellectual Sceptics but seem to have adopted scepticism on the ground that knowledge was not only impossible but was a danger to moral development and salvation." See *ibid.*, p. 124

Greece had placed heavier emphasis on the pursuit of theoretical knowledge for its own sake, independent of religiosity.

Since the time when the European scholars first encountered Buddhism in the mid nineteenth century,²⁸⁷ its teaching had often been taken in the context of the Western philosophical horizon. The Buddhist Publication Society publishes a book *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, in which it examines the oft-asked question, “The Dhamma: Is it a Philosophy?” with an observation: “Philosophy deals mainly with knowledge and is not concerned with practice; whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization”,²⁸⁸ and it gives the following conclusion:

Buddhism, therefore, cannot strictly be called a mere philosophy because it is not merely the ‘love of, inducing the search after, wisdom.’ Buddhism may approximate a philosophy, but it is very much more comprehensive.²⁸⁹

The BPS also has an article *Radical Buddhism* which points out a common mistake in confounding Buddhism as just another form of philosophy:

Western Buddhists should be wary of tendencies to turn Buddhism into an instrument of secular reform, or a philosophical playground, or an esoteric hobby. Before all else, there is suffering and the path to the end of suffering. There is no safety in faddishness, complacency, or the compulsive intellectualism that hungers for truth but eats the menu instead of the dinner.²⁹⁰

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has an entry on “Buddha”, which brings awareness to the potential problem that invites “concerning whether Gautama may legitimately be represented as a philosopher”.²⁹¹ The Buddha’s emphasis on religious *praxis* over *theoria* is

²⁸⁶ He backs up his observation with the reference to Sutrakṛtāṅga – a Jain canonical text – which records that “the Sceptics ... along with the other three main philosophical schools ... ‘teach final beatitude and final deliverance’.” See *ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁸⁷ “Around the middle of the nineteenth century, a few Buddhist texts were translated into European languages. Thus Buddhist teaching came to be known to the European scholars.” See “Buddhism in the West,” *Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/to-west.htm>>.

²⁸⁸ Narada Mahathera, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, (Buddhist Publication Society, 1982).

²⁸⁹ Narada, *op. cit.*

²⁹⁰ Leonard Price, “Radical Buddhism,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/price/bl092.html>>.

²⁹¹ For instance, the controversy involves a problem of whether or not the Buddha had actually taught “something that cannot be grasped through the exercise of philosophical rationality.” The entry in the encyclopedia therefore acknowledges that it is restricting its attention to “just those aspects of the thought of the historical individual Gautama that bear on the development of the Buddhist philosophical tradition.” See Mark Siderits, “Buddha,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/buddha/>>.

demonstrated in the simile of the arrow. The Cula-Malunkya Sutta describes how the Buddha does not teach those that “are not connected with the goal, are not fundamental to the holy life” but instead teaches only those that “are connected with the goal, are fundamental to the holy life”.²⁹² The Abhaya Sutta teaches that the Buddha “would not assert a statement which he knows to be true, factual, useless ...”,²⁹³ thereby limiting the domain of knowledge by the presence of soteriological usefulness. In a way, this teaching resembles how Kant had delimited the scope of knowledge, which, in his case, was “to make room for belief”²⁹⁴ – perhaps the Buddha might have said instead that “I had to deny knowledge for its own sake, in order to establish a straight path towards salvation”. Nevertheless, Kant had continued the Western philosophical tradition, characterized with the pursuit of “knowledge for its own sake”²⁹⁵; he reserved the notion of knowledge only to the theoretical concerns and to be independent of soteriological concerns or religious *praxis*.

Section vi: Hermeneutical Connotation

There are numerous Pāli terms which are generally rendered as *knowledge*; conversely, there are variable ways of rendering the word *knowledge* into Pāli language. For example, Jayatilleke suggests *viññāna* as one of the Pāli terms which indicate *knowledge*.²⁹⁶ In the English translations of the Pāli Canon, one may also observe various ways the word *knowledge* is combined with other related terms. Such variations in expression indicate that the Buddhist notion of knowledge may actually have other semantic connotations, all of which cannot effectively be captured under the word *knowledge* alone.

In the Buddhist literatures, the word *knowledge* is quite often used in association with other words. For example, the notion of knowledge, especially in the context of the higher attainment, is often accompanied with the word *understanding*.^{297 298 299} The word *penetrating* is

²⁹² Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Cula-Malunkya Sutta: The Shorter Instructions to Malunkya,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.063.than.html>>.

²⁹³ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 352.

²⁹⁴ Kant’s quote: “I must ... abolish knowledge, to make room for belief.” See Kant, “Pure Reason,” op. cit.

²⁹⁵ Guthrie, op. cit., p. 397.

²⁹⁶ He refers to the Pāli Canon in which “it is said that ‘one discriminates (by means of it), therefore is it [*sic*] called knowledge’,” therefore the “sense of ‘knowledge’ for *viññāna*- is quite clear.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 434-435

²⁹⁷ “Wisdom or right understanding, also called direct knowledge resulting from meditation... .” See Nyanasatta Thera, “The Foundations of Mindfulness: Satipatthana Sutta,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nyanasatta/wheel019.html>>.

²⁹⁸ “That liberating knowledge (=Right Understanding)” See Sumana Samanera, “Going Forth: A Call to Buddhist Monkhood,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/sumana/wheel027.html>>.

sometimes used instead,³⁰⁰ which is almost synonymous to the word *understanding*.³⁰¹ Jayatilleke observes that “[p]aññā, a term which means ‘understanding’ ... is placed on par with viññāna-”.³⁰² He cites a Canonical statement that explains the relationship between the two: “the states of paññā and viññāna are intermingled; it is not possible to analyse and specify the difference – what one understands, one knows and what one knows, one understands’”.³⁰³ On the one hand, he observes that “vijānāti is used synonymously with pajānāti”.³⁰⁴ On the other hand, he also refers to a passage in the Canon which describes the presence of a subtle difference between the two: “paññā- is to be cultivated and viññāna- comprehended; this is the difference’”.³⁰⁵ He also suggests another way of differentiating the two: “viññāna - seems to be the general term for ‘cognition’, while paññā is more or less restricted in connotation to the cognition of spiritual truths’”.³⁰⁶ In other words, these statements indicate that paññā and viññāna are sometimes meant to be independently conceptualized while other times they are to be semantically synthesized. It may perhaps be said that, in the synthesis of paññā and viññāna, *knowledge* possess both a passive aspect of comprehension³⁰⁷ – acquired through the process of cognition, – as well as an active aspect of understanding – acquired through *praxis*. The unity of the two aspects also signifies the synthesis of the aforementioned two kinds of knowledge: knowledge-that and knowledge-how.

The previous section shows that Buddhism expects an eventual transition from faith to knowledge through the process of verification.³⁰⁸ If knowledge is being placed “on par with” understanding, then this transition may also be logically inferred as the process of faith being replaced by true understanding. Jayatilleke also supports the view that what initially was a naïve, sentimental belief in the doctrines would eventually be replaced by an authentic understanding of

²⁹⁹ “‘Suffering, as a noble truth, is this.’ Such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding” See Ñanamoli Thera, “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting Rolling the Wheel of Truth,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html>>.

³⁰⁰ For example, an English translation of a Sutta renders as “understood & penetrated.” See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “Anubuddha Sutta: Understanding,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an04/an04.001.than.html>>.

³⁰¹ The word *penetrate* is defined as: “To grasp the inner significance of; understand.” See “penetrate,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009) as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/penetrate>>.

³⁰² Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 435.

³⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 435.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 435.

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 435.

³⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 435.

³⁰⁷ A dictionary defines *comprehension* as “the act or capacity of understanding.” See “comprehension,” *Collins English Dictionary*, (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/comprehension>>.

³⁰⁸ Jayatilleke explains that “faith or belief with which he started is replaced by direct personal knowledge.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 399.

them.³⁰⁹ He also adds that “faith based on understanding” is in fact “similar to ‘rational faith’”.³¹⁰ In summary, what these statements indicate is that the Buddhist notion of knowledge has particularly strong connotation to the notion of understanding. This connotation is strong to a degree that it sometimes places understanding on par with knowledge – especially when the object of knowledge is the matter of spirituality and religious experience arising from *praxis*.

A question now arises as to how Western philosophy in general – and Kantianism in particular – had dealt with the intimate relationship between knowledge and understanding. It is already discussed that knowledge has long been the primary focus of study under the branch of epistemology. In the West, philosophical issues surrounding the notion of understanding have partially been treated under that branch. The real question then is whether or not the branch of epistemology alone is capable of engaging a full study of it. It so happened that the full engagement in the study of understanding had indeed been attempted in recent philosophical history, which in fact had led to a break-off from epistemology and an inauguration of a new branch of philosophy.

That branch is called *hermeneutics*³¹¹ which, in its original form, designates a study of the “art and ... theory of understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions”,³¹² including scriptural exegesis. It had however taken a new shape after Martin Heidegger in the twentieth century who had inaugurated a new philosophical endeavor, after which “hermeneutics is not only about symbolic communication. Its area is even more fundamental: that of human life and existence as such”.³¹³ The modern version of hermeneutics is now described as a branch of philosophy “about the most fundamental conditions of man's being in the world”.³¹⁴ A dictionary also describes hermeneutics as the “(in existentialist thought) discussion of the purpose of life”.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ He explains that “while *saddhā* or belief was a preliminary requirement, it finally led to understanding (*paññā*).” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 397.

³¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 386.

³¹¹ “Hermeneutics strives for nothing other than *to understand understanding*.” See Donatella Di Cesare, *Gadamer: A Philosophical Portrait*, trans. Niall Keane, (Indiana University Press, February 20, 2013), pp. 37-38.

³¹² Bjørn Ramberg and Kristin Gjesdal, “Hermeneutics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>>.

³¹³ Bjørn Ramberg and Kristin Gjesdal, “Hermeneutics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>>.

³¹⁴ Ramberg and Gjesdal, op. cit.

³¹⁵ “Hermeneutics,” *Collins English Dictionary*, (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hermeneutics>>.

In reading these descriptions, one may observe a significant commonality between hermeneutics and Buddhism. After all, the First Noble Truth, the foundational Buddhist doctrine,³¹⁶ is also about the understanding of “the most fundamental conditions of man's being in the world”. It consists of understanding the “fundamental reality of human existence”³¹⁷ and to “understand things as they are”.³¹⁸ Another fundamental Buddhist doctrine is *tilakkhaṇa*, which deals with the understanding of the “three basic facts of all existence”, as it teaches to “understand as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and without self or soul”.³¹⁹ Before embarking on his soteriological journey, the young Prince Siddhattha is said to have “encountered the four ‘divine messengers’ that were to change his destiny”, which was a “confrontation with the stark truths about human existence”.³²⁰

There seems to be a commonality then between hermeneutics and Buddhism in their treatment of the notion of understanding. Perhaps such commonality indicates an actual similarity in their modes of inquiry at their philosophical points of departure. Some philosophers even go so far as to describe the branch of hermeneutics as the “philosophy after epistemology”, that “stands opposed to epistemology-based philosophy”, particularly in its very attempt to “engage with the deepest conditions of human existence”, instead of merely “gathering a collection of neutral facts by which we may reach a set of universal propositions”.³²¹ The attempt of gathering facts and propositions is a characteristic of Western epistemology but not of the Buddhism, as it has already been shown that such mode of inquiry constitutes the very attitude criticized by the Buddha. The Buddhist mode of inquiry, then, seems to be closer to that of hermeneutics than that of epistemology. When engaging in a comparative study within the context of epistemology, it therefore needs to be reminded of the fact that Western epistemology alone may not be able to capture the Buddhist notion of knowledge in its totality, for the reason that the latter has a strong hermeneutical connotation.

³¹⁶ I.e. the First Noble Truth as is described by the Buddha: “‘Suffering, as a noble truth, is this.’ Such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding” See Ñanamoli, “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta,” op. cit.

³¹⁷ Douglas M. Burns, “Buddhist Meditation and Depth Psychology,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/burns/wheel088.html>>.

³¹⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Dhamma and Non-duality,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/aps-essay_27.html>.

³¹⁹ Nyanaponika Thera, “The Three Basic Facts of Existence: I. Impermanence (Anicca),” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html>>.

³²⁰ What he had seen beyond the four palace walls had “taught him the shocking truths of old age, illness, and death.” See Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Meeting the Divine Messengers,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/aps-essay_32.html>.

³²¹ Ramberg and Gjesdal, op. cit.

The question now arises as to how Kant had treated the topic of understanding and its relationship to knowledge. Just prior to the time of Kant, the notion of understanding in the West was situated as follows:

... like both Leibniz and Locke, the Wolffians saw understanding as the 'capacity to represent possible things' ... that is, as a power of representation which included sensibility and imagination, and which operated through concepts, judgments and inferences.^{322 323}

It is also said that this Wolffian view of understanding persisted in Kant.³²⁴ Under the Kantian analysis of the mind, understanding is taken as the condition by which the production of knowledge is possible.³²⁵ In the epistemological context, Kant takes understanding as “the capacity to employ concepts”,³²⁶ and it is taken to mean “the faculty of using concepts” or “the faculty of making judgments by means of concepts”.³²⁷ It may perhaps be stated that, in contrast to how the Buddhist notion of understanding is to be placed *on par with* that of knowledge and is sometimes to be unified with the latter, Kant’s notion of understanding needs to be separated from that of knowledge.

To be fair, hermeneutical connotation is not altogether neglected in Kant’s philosophical system. In a sense, Kant does make a hermeneutical inquiry into the fundamental question of human experience when he seeks after “the necessary a priori conditions of experience”.³²⁸ But again this particular inquiry is made in his attempt to establish the epistemological foundation in the first *Critique*. The next section shows that, in his second *Critique* and subsequent works, Kant engages into the topics of human salvation and of moral perfection in the light of the imperfect human condition which he recognizes.^{329 330} But, again, his discussions of these topics cannot be identified as knowledge proper; they are also identified as the philosophy of religion or morals rather than as a philosophy of hermeneutics.

³²² Caygill, op. cit., p. 406.

³²³ The power of representation here indicates that understanding is made to serve for the production of the propositional kind of knowledge, or *knowledge-that*.

³²⁴ “Traces of the Wolffian view of the understanding as the general power of representation persist in Kant.” See Caygill, op. cit., p. 406.

³²⁵ Here, the faculty of understanding works in concert with “the concepts of the understanding, without which human knowledge is impossible.” See Pomerleau, op. cit.

³²⁶ Hartnack, op. cit., p. 32.

³²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 33.

³²⁸ Pomerleau, op. cit.

³²⁹ Kant investigates “the Highest Good in relation to the needs of our human condition” and “what is essential to our salvation.” See Pasternack and Rossi, op. cit.

³³⁰ For example, Kant observes that “there is no real possibility of moral perfection in this life and indeed few of us fully deserve the happiness” to the “imperfectly rational creatures such as ourselves.” See Robert Johnson, “Kant’s Moral Philosophy,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/index.html>>.

Section vii: Other Connotations

The Buddhist notion of knowledge has other connotations. What the Buddha refers to as *higher knowledge* is often translated into English as *wisdom*.³³¹ Sometimes the word *paññā* is also translated as *wisdom*.³³² In fact, the Buddhist literatures often accompany the word *knowledge* with the words *insight* or *wisdom*, such as in the phrases “knowledge and insight”³³³ or “knowledge and wisdom”.³³⁴ ³³⁵ ³³⁶ Wisdom here is not in a sense of “accumulated knowledge”,³³⁷ but in the sense of “[t]he ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight”.³³⁸ The Buddhist notion of knowledge is obviously established under the presence of soteriological usefulness, so it is natural to expect that its notion of knowledge should have a strong connotation to wisdom, in the way the latter signifies the capacity for discernment over right and wrong. In Buddhism, it is the continuing practice of *sīla* and *samādhi* that, in turn, leads to *paññā*. Jayatilleke discusses how “a causal relationship is established between *sīla* and *paññā* (wisdom)” in reference to the Pāli Canon: “wisdom becomes brighter with conduct,” and “where there is virtue there is wisdom and where there is wisdom there is virtue”.³³⁹ In other words, the limitation the Buddha had set to knowledge is not to be considered as a mere reduction of knowledge – as it were a mere diminishing of the amount of facts and propositions allowed to accumulate. Instead, it is the very limitation that actually enables to increase knowledge of higher order; it is meant to deepen the level of understanding while raising the level of knowledge. Here again, the branch of epistemology alone may not fully be capable of capturing these intimate inter-relationships present between the practice of ethics and knowledge

³³¹ Jayatilleke explains that “the word *paññā* (wisdom) is often used to denote this ‘knowledge and insight’ which results from concentration in so far as it pertains to salvation.” See Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 423

³³² *ibid.*, p. 423.

³³³ John D. Ireland, “Samyutta Nikaya: An Anthology,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/ireland/wheel107.html>>.

³³⁴ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p.429.

³³⁵ Mahasi Sayadaw, “Thoughts on the Dhamma,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/mahasi/wheel298.html>>.

³³⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, “The Living Message of the Dhammapada,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bl129.html>>.

³³⁷ “Wisdom,” *Collins English Dictionary*, (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/wisdom>>.

³³⁸ “Wisdom,” *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/wisdom>>.

³³⁹ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 424

– although the topics of *moral epistemology*³⁴⁰ and *virtue epistemology*³⁴¹ may perhaps be able to capture some aspect of the relationship.

In the case of Kant, he seems to have gone through a significant transition in his conception of wisdom during his philosophical career.³⁴² One may observe that, initially, “Kant regarded wisdom as primarily theoretical”, focusing mainly on the “cosmological and metaphysical issues”.³⁴³ But later in his career, Kant “turned his attention towards the human condition”, and he “came to regard moral questions as having primacy over theoretical ones”, thereby coming to “reconceived wisdom as primarily moral and practical”.³⁴⁴ In his mature philosophy, the exercise of practical reason takes the precedence in importance over – albeit establishes posterior to – the exercise of theoretical reason.^{345 346 347} In short, he had come to value the exercise of practical reason higher than that of theoretical reason and the matters of faith heavier than those of knowledge. The way Kant assigns primacy to wisdom somewhat resembles the way wisdom constitutes higher knowledge in Buddhism. But the difference is that, for Kant, such wisdom can no longer be said to constitute knowledge proper – not to mention being identified as higher knowledge. Buddhism, in contrast, holds that wisdom properly constitutes higher knowledge.

In the English translations of Buddhist literatures, knowledge is sometimes paired with the word *vision* or *seeing*, such as in the phrase “knowledge and vision”.³⁴⁸ Jayatilleke also

³⁴⁰ For further discussion on this topic, see Peter Tramel, “Moral Epistemology,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/mor-epis/>>. Also see Richmond Campbell, “Moral Epistemology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-epistemology/>>.

³⁴¹ For further discussion on this topic, see Jason S. Baehr, “Virtue Epistemology,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/virtueep/>>. Also see John Greco, “Virtue Epistemology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-virtue/>>.

³⁴² In his philosophical career, Kant’s “conception of wisdom underwent a fundamental transformation.” See Gregory R. Johnson ed. *Kant on Swedenborg: Dreams of a Spirit-Seer and Other Writings*, (Swedenborg Foundation Publishers, 2002), p. xix

³⁴³ “In the 1760’s” that is, which is a period prior to when he worked on *Critique*. See Johnson, “Swedenborg,” op. cit., p. xix

³⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. xix

³⁴⁵ “Thus, when pure speculative and pure practical reason are combined in one cognition, the latter has the primacy.” See Kant, “Critique,” op. cit.

³⁴⁶ “Pure practical reason has primacy over speculative reason” See Rohlf, op. cit.

³⁴⁷ “Kant has argued that ... practical reason has primacy over theoretical reason.” See Williams, op. cit.

³⁴⁸ For instance, the pair is used in the following English translations of the suttas. See Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Upanisa Sutta: Discourse on Supporting Conditions,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.023.bodh.html>>. Also see Ñanamoli Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Maha-sihanada Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lion's Roar,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.012.ntbb.html>>. Also see Peter Harvey, “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: The Discourse on the Setting in Motion of the Wheel (of Vision) of the Basic Pattern: the Four True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled Ones,” *Access to Insight*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.harv.html>>.

observes how the word *viññāna*, which normally is translated as knowledge, may in other context be rendered as *perception*.³⁴⁹ Again, it must be reminded here that the Buddhist notion of perception “is both sensory as well as extrasensory”,³⁵⁰ and consequently, *vision* and *seeing* could indicate either sensory or extrasensory experience.³⁵¹ The definitions for *perception* often indicate directness or immediacy. For instance, a dictionary describes it as follows: “To become aware of directly through any of the senses”; “[t]o achieve understanding of; apprehend”.³⁵² In other words, it refers to an awareness or apprehension of an immediate givenness in one’s conscious experience. Such awareness or apprehension obviously occurs prior to the subsequent process of verbalization or linguistic expression – i.e. prior to the formation of knowledge-that. Pojman would most likely identify this kind of knowledge as “knowledge by acquaintance”. According to the aforementioned lists of three types of knowledge, Pojman identifies this kind of knowledge as “personal and direct experience with the objects in the world, our thoughts, and sensations”, which includes “[p]erceptual knowledge”.³⁵³

The word *abhiññā*³⁵⁴ is often used to designate the aforementioned “six-fold higher knowledge”³⁵⁵ that the Buddha had attained in his Awakening.³⁵⁶ The word may also be rendered as “psychic powers”,³⁵⁷ “paranormal cognition”³⁵⁸ – indicating its supersensory nature. It is also rendered as “direct knowledge”³⁵⁹ or “extrasensory perception or higher intuition”³⁶⁰ – indicating again its direct, perceptual nature. Aside from this perceptual connotation, the word *abhiññā* is normally translated as “special knowledge”³⁶¹ or “higher knowledge”.^{362 363} It indicates that the attainment of higher knowledge does not necessarily refer to the acquisition of

³⁴⁹ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 434.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 428.

³⁵¹ The word “see’ may denote normal or paranormal (extrasensory) perception.” See *ibid.*, p. 432.

³⁵² “Perceive,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014
<<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/perceive>>.

³⁵³ Pojman, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁵⁴ The word *abhiññā* is also defined as “miraculous power obtained especially through meditation and wisdom.” See “Abhijna,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, 21 Nov. 2014
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1255/abhijna>>.

³⁵⁵ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 466.

³⁵⁶ Originally the word “has an ‘older wider meaning of special supernormal power of apperception and knowledge to be acquired by long training in life and thought’” but, “[l]ater, it exclusively means one of the six powers” within the Buddhism context, all of which “have been attained by the Buddha.” See *ibid.*, p. 438.

³⁵⁷ Davids and Stede, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁵⁸ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 495.

³⁵⁹ It is described as “higher or direct knowledge (*abhiññā*).” See Velez, op. cit.

³⁶⁰ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 99.

³⁶¹ Davids and Stede, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁶² Jayatilleke, op. cit., p. 417.

³⁶³ “Contemplative experiences are of two main types: meditative absorptions or abstractions (*jhāna*), and higher or direct knowledge (*abhiññā*).” See Velez, op. cit.

knowledge-that, but it refers to the apprehension of the raw form of direct, perceptive occurrence in one's awareness. In other words, what is directly given to one's awareness prior to the formation of knowledge-that may stand by itself as knowledge proper; furthermore such givenness is said to be higher in level than the subsequent formation of knowledge-that built on its basis. Jayatilleke elsewhere renders *abhiññā* as "higher insight",³⁶⁴ indicating that it is also related to the notion of *insight*. The word *insight* is defined almost synonymously with the words *penetration* and *understanding*, but with an added sense of depth or immediacy.³⁶⁵ The word also connotes *perception*³⁶⁶ – or *sight*, as indicated by its etymological origin: *in-sight*.³⁶⁷

Perhaps this perceptual aspect of the Buddhist notion of knowledge may roughly correspond to the Kantian notion of *impression* or *intuition* as he refers to in his analysis of the mind. *Impression* refers to the "receptivity of sensibility, where it serves as the bottom line of perception",³⁶⁸ and *intuition* similarly refers to a direct, immediate, and unmediated occurrence in the mind.³⁶⁹ Both occur in the mind prior to the formation of knowledge and are necessary conditions to the production of knowledge.^{370 371} For Kant, their status as the necessary conditions of knowledge does not allow them to be identified as knowledge in themselves, but they remain as the parts or ingredients that make up knowledge. In contrast to the Buddhist epistemology, they are placed neither on par with knowledge nor are they designated as a higher level of knowledge. In short, the Buddhist notions of *understanding*, *wisdom*, and *direct perception* significantly differ from the Kantian notions, in the way they are intimately connoted to the notion of knowledge and they by themselves stand as higher knowledge.

³⁶⁴ Jayatilleke, op. cit., p 192.

³⁶⁵ A dictionary describes it as "a penetrating and often sudden understanding ... " See "insight," *Collins English Dictionary*, (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/insight>>.

³⁶⁶ A dictionary describes it as "the ability to perceive clearly or deeply." See "insight," *Collins English Dictionary*, (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), as cited in *TheFreeDictionary*, (Farlex, Inc.), 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/insight>>.

³⁶⁷ Its etymological origin has the meaning of "'sight with the eyes of the mind,' mental vision, understanding,'" and "penetrating understanding into character or hidden nature." See Douglas Harper, "insight (n)," *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 21 Nov. 2014 <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=insight>>.

³⁶⁸ Caygill, op. cit., p. 252.

³⁶⁹ "He remained consistent with the Aristotelian tradition in respect of the direct, unmediated character of intuition." See *ibid.*, p. 264.

³⁷⁰ For Kant, impression designates "the receptivity of the mind through which objects are given to us." See *ibid.*, p. 252.

³⁷¹ For Kant, intuitions are "conditions for the objects of our senses." or "conditions 'under which something can be an object of our senses'," and they "provide the conditions for something to affect our sensibility." See *ibid.*, p. 265.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This study compares the epistemology of Kantian philosophy with that of Buddhism. It begins by observing some of the curious resemblances between the two systems of thoughts, despite the remotely different cultural and historical contexts from which they emerge. Since the nature of epistemological study is interpreted somewhat differently between the two cultures, it first examines the differences in the very notion of knowledge according to the two philosophical traditions. The comparison of the two systems of thought is made under the recognition of the two very different contextual backgrounds each with different mode of inquiry and justification. The comparative analysis is made to the nature of knowledge, the means of knowledge, the relationship between knowledge and faith, and the connotations the notion of knowledge possibly has with other concepts. The study reveals substantial differences between the two epistemologies. Perhaps this epistemological difference is what explains the presence of doctrinal conflicts between the two systems of thought despite their resemblances – especially in regard to the topics of God and eternal soul.

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