The Limits of Modernity

Phil Enns

*Hence, naming God, before being an act of which I am
capable, is what the texts of my predilection do when
they escape from their authors, their redactional
setting, and their first audience, when they deploy
their world, when they poetically manifest and
thereby reveal a world we might inhabit.[1]*

If one wanted to compile a list of the characteristics of modernity, certainly
rejection of the possibility of a poetically manifested religious world would be
an obvious choice. This is not to deny that there are still ways of being religious
within modernity, but to acknowledge that modernity rules out the possibility
of dwelling within a religious world. This distinction between participating in
particular religious activities and dwelling within a religious world is crucial
for modernity. While the latter presupposes the extension of religious meaning
beyond particular religious activities, the former can function in relative
isolation. In modernity, the religious is understood as a private affair that
concerns only the individual herself. The public sphere, therefore, not only
rejects the introduction of religious reasoning into its discourse but also requires
its participants to inhabit a world that is fundamentally non-religious. While the
individual might have religious motivations for public actions, these public actions
must be understood — that is, justified — according to non-religious criteria.

  This rejection of religion as having no public significance has not come
without a cost. What was lost to modernity with this rejection was the ability
to provide understanding with regard to the relationship between knowledge
and the world. In particular, two questions, 'What is the world?' and 'What
should we do in the world?', have traditionally prompted religious responses
and therefore remain problematic within modern discourse. Of course, there
never was a time[2] when these questions had answers that satisfied everyone,
but what is unique about modernity is that the very possibility of answering
such questions is in doubt. Even the questions themselves can produce

Phil Enns is a Ph.D. student at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto.

objections of being 'too metaphysical', 'incoherent' or 'useless'. In light of this, it seems fair to wonder whether religion provides something essential for human understanding.

Ockham and Hume: The Roots of Modernity

The roots of modernity can be found in, first, the nominalism of Ockham and, second, the empiricism of Hume. With Ockham the concept of a thing is merely a sign of that thing.

> [E]very universal is an intention of the mind which, on the most probable account, is identical with the act of understanding. Thus, it is said that the act of understanding by which I grasp men is a natural sign of men in the same way that weeping is a natural sign of grief. It is a natural sign such that it can stand for men in mental propositions in the same way that a spoken word can stand for things in spoken propositions.[3]

That a concept is merely a sign of something else represents a significant shift from classical thought in which the idea, through analogy or reflection, participated in the essence of the thing. Through participation, the thing was immediately present to the mind and thereby allowed for knowledge. While Ockham does not entirely do away with the idea of participation, that the concept is to be understood now as only a sign of the thing represents a distancing of the understanding from the thing to be understood. This has significant implications for religion, where the thing to be understood has no immediate physical presence.

> . . . the proposition 'God is three and one' is not known per se to a wayfarer [i.e., a person on earth on their way to heaven] and is not deducible from propositions that *are* known per se to a wayfarer. Nevertheless, one who is happy in heaven and sees God can infer the proposition that *we* formulate from a second proposition that *he* formulates, a proposition that is known per se to him . . .[4]

In heaven, the believer could immediately arrive at the concept of the Trinity because the Trinity would be an object to her. However, for the believer on earth, the Trinity is not an object of perception, nor can it be arrived at through reason. This leaves only revelation, which is always removed from the thing being revealed. Therefore, religious knowledge must be distinguished from

other sorts of knowledge.

If Ockham introduced an epistemological distance between the knower and the thing to be known, Hume turned this distance into a chasm. According to Hume, all that we can know about a thing is what our senses provide us.

> Every idea is copied from some preceding impression or sentiment; and where we cannot find any impression, we may be certain that there is no idea. . . . But when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event; we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connexion.[5]

Unlike Ockham, who posited a natural relation between the signs in the mind and things outside it, Hume roots all ideas in sense impression. All that the mind has for raw material are sense impressions, and it is from them that ideas are produced. Furthermore, these sense impressions do not come with ready-made associations but are given associations by the mind. For example, sense impressions of snow and coldness are associated with each other in the mind by virtue of repeatedly following each other. Therefore, the object presents itself only as an occasion for the sense impression but does not provide any content for the sign that the mind will hold for that object. If the mind perceives a pattern within the sense impressions provided to it, a habit will be formed which will be taken to represent a kind of understanding.

When Hume takes up the matter of religion, he indicates that the limits of our experience will not allow for religious knowledge. "Our experience, so imperfect in itself and so limited both in extent and duration, can afford us no probable conjecture concerning the whole of things."[6] If our experience is composed solely of sense impressions, any talk of things that lie beyond sense impressions is entirely speculative and cannot count as knowledge.

> But supposing, which is the real case with regard to man, that this creature is not antecedently convinced of a supreme intelligence, benevolent, and powerful, but is left to gather such a belief from the appearances of things; this entirely alters the case, nor will he ever find any reason for such a conclusion. He may be fully convinced of the narrow limits of his understanding, but this will not help him in forming an inference concerning the goodness of superior powers, since he must form that inference from what he knows, not from what he is ignorant of.[7]

Hume's argument boils down to the claim that because experience cannot provide evidence of God, we are not justified in believing that there is a God. While there had been previous criticisms of arguments for the existence of God, what distinguishes this one is how it limits the discussion by making clear the limits of understanding. Since all knowledge is derived from the senses, and God is not an object for the senses, there can be no knowledge of God. The criterion for what is to constitute knowledge, and in particular religious knowledge, becomes the evidence provided by the senses.

The combination of Ockham's nominalism and Hume's empiricism set the stage for modernity. With nominalism, the metaphysical world of classical thought was discarded in favor of a world where knowledge was composed of signs. With empiricism, knowledge is limited by what is perceived through the senses. It was Kant, however, who integrated nominalism and empiricism into a system, and who thereby marks the beginning of modernity.

Kant: The Limits of Knowledge
Kant famously describes how Hume awoke him from his dogmatic sleep by challenging the possibility of conceptual knowledge. What he saw in Hume was a challenge to the scientific project which was just beginning to produce spectacular results. If all we can know about the world are the associations the mind makes of sense impressions, then how can we be certain about the fundamental laws, such as causality, which underlie the scientific project? For example, if the belief that the one billiard ball caused the other ball to move is only a product of an habitual association of the mind, then I can have no certainty that the next time I play billiards, I will experience the same results. After all, the law of causality is a habit of my mind and not a law of nature. It was this skepticism concerning how our understanding relates to the world that Kant aimed to overcome.

Kant begins from the same starting point as Hume: all knowledge relies on sense perceptions. While the senses take in all kinds of data, what Kant calls "the manifold," we never perceive this manifold but rather we perceive images. These images are the results of the productive imagination which organizes the manifold according to concepts. So, when I look at a pen, I do not perceive a jumble of shapes and colors, but an organized picture. Furthermore, this organization is not just the sense data ordered, like a photograph, but also includes recognition and understanding. I do not perceive

merely orderly sense data but a pen. My recognition of the pen is therefore the combination of sense data and the concept of the pen, so that the data is ordered under the concept 'pen' through the imagination.

Up to this point, Kant largely follows Hume. He differs from Hume by noting that while the recognition of objects is the result of imagination, this recognition takes place within a unity of perception which makes understanding possible. Understanding is not just recognizing discrete objects, like a pen here and paper there, but rather putting these images together so that we understand the pen as something used to write on the paper. This understanding, that is the quality of a unity of perception, is not an accidental association but necessary or objective. Understanding requires not only the products of imagination but also their relationship to each other.

> But now if this unity of association did not also have an objective ground, so that it would be impossible for appearances to be apprehended by the imagination otherwise than under the conditions of a possible synthetic unity of this apprehension, then it would also be entirely contingent whether appearances fit into a connection of human cognitions. . . . There must therefore be an objective ground, i.e. one that can be understood *a priori* to all empirical laws of the imagination, on which rests the possibility, indeed even the necessity of a law extending through all appearances, a law, namely for regarding them throughout as data of sense that are associable in themselves and subject to universal laws of a thoroughgoing connection in reproduction.[8]

Here, Kant attempts to overcome Hume's skepticism and to provide a secure foundation for knowledge. For understanding on the part of the individual, there must be a necessary connection between the appearances within consciousness. Without this connection, consciousness would be a chaotic jumble of images. However, the pen remains on my desk and continues to be available for me to write with on the paper. Billiard balls react to each other in predictable ways. Since there is this necessary unity within consciousness, there must be an objective source for it. This objective source cannot be solely the subject itself, since the images are based on sense perception. Therefore, this source must also lie outside of the individual. In this manner, Kant can both assert the importance of the empirical and justify conceptual

knowledge. Knowledge is based on sense perceptions but is ordered according to structures that exist objectively.[9]

When it comes to matters of religion, like the existence of God, Kant draws much the same conclusion as Hume, that experience does not provide us with any evidence. Kant allows that the concept of God has a place in understanding, but only if this concept is taken *as if* God existed.

> Thus whatever and however much our concept of an object may contain, we have to go out beyond it in order to provide it with existence. With objects of sense this happens through the connection with some perception of mine in accordance with empirical laws; but for objects of pure thinking [e.g., God] there is no means whatever for cognizing their existence, because it would have to be cognized entirely *a priori*, but our consciousness of all existence (whether immediately through perception or through inferences connecting something with perception) belongs entirely and without exception to the unity of experience, and though an existence outside this field cannot be declared absolutely impossible, it is a presupposition that we cannot justify through anything.[10]

Here we have the combination of nominalism and empiricism. Since a concept is a sign of a thing and the criterion for the existence of a thing is its empirical content, objects of pure thinking, of which Kant takes God as an example, cannot be understood as existing. This does not mean that we cannot still hold the concept of God in our thinking, but that it cannot function as a sign which points to something. For Kant, ideas like God act as regulatory principles, helping to organize our thinking but not providing any cognitive content. Why does God play such an important role in Kant's thought, given that it is a concept devoid of cognitive content? Why does Kant bother with God at all?

God and the World
As we saw above, Kant stresses the unity of perception. We do not perceive the world as a jumble of discrete objects but rather as a coherent unity that has an objective ground. This objective ground is crucial because it allows Kant to connect human understanding with the world. He suggests that we think of this ground along the lines of a highest reality or an original being.

> Now if we pursue this idea of ours so far as to hypostatize it, then we will be able to determine the original being through the mere concept of the highest reality as a being that is singular, simple, all-sufficient, eternal, etc., in a word, we will be able to determine it in its unconditioned completeness through all predications. The concept of such a being is that of **God** thought of in a transcendental sense . . .[11]

The concept of God therefore fits what we would expect of the highest reality if we were to imagine it having an image. Kant immediately emphasizes that the concept of God, here, is to be understood as a fiction whose only role is to help us imagine how there could be a unity of perception. The concept 'God' is to be taken as a regulatory principle.

> The ideal of the highest being is, according to these considerations, nothing other than a regulative principle of reason, to regard all combination in the world as if it arose from an all-sufficient necessary cause, so as to ground on that cause the rule of a unity that is systematic and necessary according to universal laws; but it is not an assertion of an existence that is necessary in itself.[12]

God is, then, an imagined construct that is useful for explaining how the world works but is not itself real. God has the character of an *'as if'*, that is, an analogical model.

Yet, if God is a fictional construct used only to explain how the world might have a unified ground, is God therefore also a contingent concept? For example, given Kant's description of the world, one might think of it as if it were a machine. This image is helpful for making sense of Kant's account, but it is not necessary. One could just as easily not bother with any image, though understanding might be more difficult. Yet, for Kant, the concept of God *must* be included in understanding the world.

> But in this way [i.e., the original ground of the world is to be considered only in regards to its use and not what it is in itself] can we nevertheless assume a unique wise and all-powerful world author? Without any doubt; and not only that, but we must presuppose such a being.[13]

Such a being is posited only through analogy and not in substance, so that there has to be something which is as if it were God. But why *must* such a being be presupposed? Unlike the image of the world as machine, the concept of 'God' is necessary for reason to make sense of how we can know the world. If Kant's account of the world requires the conceptual structure inherent to the idea of 'God', then we cannot be satisfied with his dismissal of the concept of 'God' as fiction and merely a regulative principle. Kant provides an answer to the question 'What is the world?' that both fictionalizes God and requires God as a structural component. This odd predicament is the result of Kant's requiring, on the one hand, a unity of experience while, on the other, being unable to ascribe any particular description of this unity with cognitive content.

God and Morality

Given Kant's account of knowledge governed by the criterion of sense experience, morality would seem to pose a problem, because morality is not guided by sense experience but requires general laws or rules to govern the will. This means that neither happiness nor pleasure can serve as a guide for morality.

> But practical precepts [i.e., rules meant to govern the will] based on [subjective experiences] can never be universal because the determining ground of the faculty of desire is based on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which can never be assumed to be universally directed to the same objects.[14]

If morality depends on laws that apply universally, then these laws cannot be derived from subjective experiences like pleasure or happiness. Instead, practical principles can only be produced by removing anything that is related to the senses, leaving only the form of lawgiving.

But how does one apply the form of lawgiving? Here Kant turns again to the imagination. With regard to objects of nature, the imagination places sense data under a concept. With the moral law, there is no sense data, but the imagination can take the form of lawgiving, put it under an idea of reason, and produce a law that can be applied in concrete situations. The moral rule, having only the form of lawgiving, is therefore formulated by Kant as follows:

> Ask yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by a law of the nature of which you were yourself a part, you could indeed regard it as possible through your will.[15]

According to Kant, this rule is nothing more than what people do all the time when they wonder what the world would be like if everyone acted in a particular manner. What if everyone lied? or cheated? or killed? The moral key to this exercise is not the particular action but the exercise of formalizing it.

That morality has only the form of lawgiving brings with it two benefits. First, it allows for universal application. Second, and most significant for my argument, because morality is not constrained by material conditions, a will governed by morality can alone be considered a free will. Kant does not first posit freedom and then the moral will (i.e., because we are free, we can be moral) but posits first the moral will and then freedom (i.e., because we are moral, we are free). Freedom is a pure idea, lacking any determination from the senses, and therefore cannot be the condition for morality. But, for Kant, morality is pressed on to us by reason.

> We can become aware of pure practical laws just as we are aware of pure theoretical principles, by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us and to the setting aside of all empirical conditions to which reason directs us.[16]

We therefore talk about the moral law which, through reason, commands individuals to act as if they were acting under a duty. Furthermore, this moral law sets aside the necessity found under empirical conditions. Just as there is an empirical necessity which requires objects in the world to act accordingly, so also the moral law requires human beings to act morally.

Yet, how the moral law acts on human beings must be distinguished from the necessity at work in the world. How can we be assured that acting according to the moral law will have a positive outcome in the world? Kant makes it clear that we cannot identify morality with happiness in the world, yet happiness has to be taken as an outcome of following the moral law. Here we recall the problem he faced with regard to the connection between the unity of perception and the world. That is, how can we reconcile human activity and the world? Here, the question is, how can obedience to the moral law take concrete shape in a world which is itself determined by a different set of laws?

If there is no necessary connection between morality and happiness in the world, we must necessarily postulate such a connection.

> Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from
> nature, which contains the ground of this connection, namely of
> the exact correspondence of happiness with morality, is also
> *postulated*. However, this supreme cause is to contain the ground
> of the correspondence of nature not merely with a law of the will
> of rational beings but with the representation of this *law*, so far as
> they make it the *supreme determining ground of the will*, and
> consequently not merely with morals in their form but also with
> their morality as their determining ground, that is, with their moral
> disposition. . . . Therefore the supreme cause of nature, insofar
> as it must be presupposed for the highest good, is a being that is
> the cause of nature by *understanding* and *will* (hence its author),
> that is, *God*.[17]

In order to maintain a connection between moral activity and the world, there must be a cause that grounds both nature and the moral law. This supreme cause must also represent the moral law and so must also possess intelligence and will. It is God, therefore, who fits the bill as the supreme lawgiver.

While Kant contends that in referring to God he is talking about a rational belief, there are good reasons for questioning this usage. Kant must assume that there is a correspondence between our moral activity and the world, and that this correspondence is guaranteed by God, yet he is unable to ascribe to this description any cognitive content. In other words, we have to believe in something that looks like God but we can't take this belief to be true.

Modernity and God
It did not take long for philosophers to take the next step in this development of modernity and reject God even as a postulate. After all, if we are concerned with the pursuit of truth, we can't hold onto religious claims that lack cognitive content. For modernity, the nails in the coffin containing the belief in God were hammered into place by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. This rejection of God, however, merely exacerbated the problem Kant recognized: If, as moderns, we are going to be nominalists and empiricists, how can we be assured that what we think we know is in fact the case?

While this problem has been addressed in numerous ways, ranging from the Logical Positivists' quest for certainty to the deconstruction of the

problem by late moderns like Richard Rorty, I will mention two contemporary thinkers who recognize the problem Kant saw in modernity and provide curiously similar responses.

Marcel Gauchet describes what he calls the 'residue of religion'.[18] For him, religion's primary residue is the partitioning of reality into the particular and the unified.

> Reality as it appears to us, as an inexhaustible multiplicity of sensible qualities, an infinite network of distinct objects and concrete differences, involves another reality: the one that suddenly appears before the mind when we go beyond the visible to examine its nondifferentiated unity and continuity.[19]

In itself, this apprehension of a reality split between particulars and unity does not require any religious commitment but is constitutive of religion. Science is a good example of this split in that it pursues, to ever greater depths, what particular things are made of while largely dismissing any attempt to explain what unifies them. Yet, science is fundamentally committed to the idea that there is a unity to nature which allows for universal laws.

> If on the one hand science expels the invisible from the visible (occult causal agencies), on the other hand it accommodates the invisible in the visible in a profoundly original manner, by installing an invisible certainty about its order at the very heart of the world, more certain than the world's appearances. We are dealing here with a displacement and application of the formative division to the physical reality of things, where the categories of the non-differentiated (reduction to unity, continuity of being, the essential shared nature of phenomena, etc.) play the role of regulative ideas, in the Kantian sense, at once unattainable, structuring and motivating.[20]

There is an internal contradiction working within science when it presupposes a unified ground for the world yet rejects any attempt to describe this ground. Like Kant, Gauchet acknowledges the important role the religious plays for our understanding the unity of the world but rejects the possibility that the religious might be true. Religion was an historical phenomenon that allowed human beings to develop without having to face directly life's troubling existential questions. As moderns, however, we have reached the point where

religion is no longer needed. Yet, having reached this level of maturity, we have no obvious answers to basic questions such as how everything can fit together. Gauchet is left in the awkward position of acknowledging the key role the religious had and does play in our understanding of the world, while simultaneously arguing that we need to leave it behind.

James Edwards tells us that religion has finally been revealed for what it really is, namely a particular set of values dressed up in authoritative metaphysical language. Like Gauchet, Edwards recommends the rejection of religion for personal responsibility, yet wants to keep something of the religious. He sees two dangers to the loss of religion: the loss of a sense of limits to what human beings should or can do; and the loss of a sense of *Pathos* (i.e., depth, profundity) to human life. Religion was able

> to combine, on the one hand, a sense that human will — the will to the will's own splendor — is limited by something greater, by something to which it must finally answer, with, on the other hand, a call away from the ordinary pieties of "the world" toward a life that is deeper and truer and richer.[21]

Edwards proposes that the poetic can, in the absence of religion, accomplish the same task, giving the example of Thoreau. Writers like Thoreau compose their work under the duty and responsibility of truthfulness so that it must "come with the force of a revelation."[22] So, while rejecting religion, Edwards wants to insist that the work of poets is still religious. But why?

According to Edwards, three structural features of the religious are found in the poetic. First, there is a duality within the universe described variously as eternal/temporal, true/illusion, etc. Second, this duality is not one of equals but hierarchical, so that one half of the dualism is to be privileged. Third, this hierarchical relationship has been disrupted so that "the proper order of things must continually be reacknowledged and restored in practice."[23] Edwards summarizes these features as the demand for truthfulness in our lives, and claims that this demand can be found in the poetic. The poetic functions as a kind of religious practice without being burdened by the metaphysical errors of religion.

Here we find the same predicament that we found in Kant. Edwards recognizes that the religious provides a powerful means of living in the world, but he wants to reject the possibility that the religious can give an account of

the world. He, therefore, attempts to reject religion as the 'imaginative' aspect of the religious, replacing it with something else, the poetic. But the problem remains. Edwards wants the poet to be under the imperative 'Be truthful' without being committed to a specific idea of truthfulness. This leaves Edwards in a bind: According to what criterion can he discern that poets like Thoreau are 'getting it right'? Certainly poets like Thoreau may want to express themselves truthfully, and people like Edwards might be impressed with this expression, but as Edwards himself notes, "the point is not one's various satisfactions, which may or may not come; the point is to *get it right*."[24] Edwards is stuck in the same dilemma as Kant, recognizing that God had served to assure the proper ordering of things in the world, while at the same time unable to hold a belief in God.

Responding to Modernity

Religion, and specifically God, has played a crucial role in thinking about the world, but modernity has cut itself off from this possibility. With the confluence of nominalism and empiricism, as determined by Kant, modernity was robbed of the possibility of thinking about the totality of knowledge and understanding. In this sense, the reduction of God to a trope is symptomatic of a fundamental problem within modernity.

At its most basic level, this problem arises within modernity through its positing empirical data as the ground for knowledge while holding that knowledge names things in the world. This is problematic insofar as what the empirical provides is sense data, while the ideas constituting our knowledge arise from the organization of sense data. There will always be, then, an asymmetrical relationship between how we know and what we know. Kant tried to resolve this dilemma by resorting to a mechanism, the productive imagination, which organized sense data and ideas. However, the problem cannot be solved by referring to a mechanism, because the problem then attaches itself to the mechanism, so that the question now becomes how this mechanism is able to get it right. Since this can go on ad infinitum, Kant stops it by referring to God, and specifically the medieval God, who is uncaused and therefore the ultimate cause. Those who followed Kant have for the most part rejected this turn to God and either, like Gauchet, taken the problem to be insoluble or, like Edwards, attempted to find a more palatable substitute for God.

In giving an historical account of the problem of knowledge in modernity, I have tried to raise the possibility that we are not fated to live with this problem. By focusing on God and religion, I have also tried to suggest there is a genuine alternative. I am not arguing that religion itself is the solution, though it might be, but rather that in religion we find a set of practices and beliefs which has traditionally provided answers to the kinds of questions that modernity has found problematic. Kant, Gauchet, and Edwards say as much when they acknowledge that religion possesses beliefs and practices which address their own concerns. The difficulty lies in these thinkers being unable to consider these beliefs and practices as possible.

There is, however, something paradoxical about a situation where one has an answer to a question, yet rejects it because one holds that in principle there cannot be an answer. It isn't that the questions themselves are poorly formed, but that whatever possible answers one can produce cannot be taken as true. Nor is it that the answers do not follow from the questions, since Kant, Gauchet, and Edwards acknowledge that religion has been a sufficient response. The problem seems to lie in modernity's requiring an answer that can never be satisfactory. Put differently, the combination of nominalism and empiricism, as specifically articulated by Kant, leads inevitably to skepticism.

It would be naive to think that by simply articulating the dilemma of modernity we can escape its grasp. Modernity has made us moderns — that is, those of us who identify with the West — what we are today: a people deeply committed to the ideals of liberal democracy and the inevitable progress of science. Yet, as I have shown above, these ideals cannot be coherently thought within the limits of modernity itself. Furthermore, religion, which remains fundamentally alien to modern sensibilities, continues to offer us, in Ricoeur's words, 'a world we might inhabit.' By entering into this religious world, we need not necessarily reject modernity. The religious world is implicitly assumed by modernity, as I have sought to show. Instead, to inhabit that world is to reject modernity's self-imposed limits on knowledge and to accept that there are ways of living in the world which address our deepest questions about the world. Living a religious life is, then, ultimately an acknowledgement that there are answers and that these answers matter in the world.

Notes

[1] Paul Ricoeur, "Naming God," in *Figuring the Sacred*, ed. Mark Wallace, trans. David Pellauer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 223.

[2] A difficulty in discussing modernity lies in how one ought to understand it. While it is clearly an historical phenomenon, there are large parts of the world today which have not come under the sway of modernity. I treat modernity as an epoch which is both historically and culturally specific.

[3] William Ockham, *Ockham's Theory of Terms, Part I of the Summa Logicae*, trans. Michael Loux (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 81.

[4] William Ockham, *Quodlibetal Questions*, transl. Alfred Freddoso and Francis Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 2nd Quodlibet, Q.3.

[5] David Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," in *Classics of Western Philosophy*, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1977), 738.

[6] David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and the Posthumous Essays*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980), 45.

[7] *Ibid.*, 68.

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), A121-22.

[9] It is important to note Kant's distinction between the productive and the reproductive imagination. What I have been discussing here is the productive imagination, which is a necessary condition for understanding and has an objective ground. The reproductive imagination, on the other hand, associates various experiences and therefore has no objective ground. With the productive imagination, we have the experience of a horse. Through the reproductive imagination, we can have the image of a unicorn.

[10] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A601/B629.

[11] *Ibid.*, A580/B608.

[12] *Ibid.*, A619/B647.

[13] *Ibid.*, A697/B725.

[14] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 23.

[15] *Ibid.*, 60.

[16] *Ibid.*, 27.

[17] *Ibid.*, 104.

[18] Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 201.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*, 202.

[21] James C. Edwards, *The Plain Sense of Things: The Fate of Religion in an Age of Normal Nihilism* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1997), 197.

[22] *Ibid.*, 233.

[23] *Ibid.*, 9.

[24] *Ibid.*, 236.