

The Modern “Turn to the Subject”: An Ongoing Study

C. Scott Fowler, D.Min

This article represents a personal, ongoing study that will be updated from time to time. It is admittedly incomplete as I continue to be informed. I welcome any input, feedback, or suggested sources or directions for further study (publisher@issacharimprints.com).

The primary thesis of this paper is that Western culture continues to reflect significantly the influence of Enlightenment era thinking and philosophy, that underlying Western cultural thought from the pre-Reformation period to present day is what some scholars have referred to as “the modern turn to the subject.”¹

Enlightenment Still?¹

Western culture is still in the Enlightenment period (though many subsequent and intervening eras have been spawned in response). While, indeed, Western culture may have been in a postmodern trance for a time in response to the Enlightenment era and the subsequent eras it spawned, postmodernism failed to convincingly “occupy a standpoint (‘the view from nowhere’) from which it [might] survey all possible standpoints and find them all ‘relative,’ while at the same time [claiming] that there is no such standpoint.”^[1] That is to say that, in spite of all the reactions it spawned, modern Western culture continues to wrestle with the same questions of authority and revelation, and continues its “buy-in” to Kant’s call for a “release from...self-incurred tutelage”^[2]—only the rejection has been extended to any authority outside of one’s own self. Seen in its proper light then, postmodernism can be considered to be modernism inched ever closer to its nihilistic extremes.

James K. A. Smith declared the Enlightenment project to be “alive and well” and continuing on in the West in the form of secularism.^[3] In fact, Smith refers to postmodernism as “an intensification of modernity.”^[4] He refers to Christian Smith who documents what he considers to be “a secular revolution” spawned by, among other forces, the Enlightenment.^[5] All of this is to say that, while we are postmodern when it is convenient, at heart of Western culture, the Enlightenment project continues.

The “Turn to the Subject”

The modern “turn to the subject” has shaped and continues to shape Western culture more than any other philosophical concept. It lurks in the decades just prior to the Reformation and behind the Reformation itself. It breathes in Descartes *cogito ergo sum* and is codified and canonized in Kant’s Copernican Revolution. Its offspring includes the so-called “social” gospel, liberation theology, and today’s American political and social correctness. It is the culprit

¹ Livingston, Fiorenza, Coakley, and Evans, Jr., *Modern Christian Thought: Twentieth Century*, Second Edition, Vol. 2, (Fortress Press, 2006), 2.

in Charles Taylor's (via Weber's) disenchantment and in Taylor's "great dis-embedding."^[6] It lies at the heart of postmodernism and beyond to what Alan Kirby refers to as pseudo-modernism. Indeed, using postmodern literature as an example, Kirby wrote,

"Postmodernism . . . fetishized . . . the author . . . but the culture we have now fetishizes the recipient of the text to the degree that they become a partial or whole author of it."^[7]

It is the self that has emerged as the one constant since the Reformation. Any discussion of post-modernism or pseudo-modernism proceeds only in reference to the continuing questions of authority, revelation, and metaphysics that propelled the Enlightenment.

Livingston and Fiorenza define the concept best, writing:

It was, however, the modern "turn to the subject" that proved decisive. Kant's call for "autonomy," for the individual's "release from a self-incurred tutelage" to such heteronomous [external] authorities as the Bible and the Church, embodied the spirit of the Enlightenment. Increasingly, individual reason and conscience became the arbiters of religious truth. Although the Romantics rejected the appeal to autonomous "reason alone," they nevertheless shifted the source of spiritual authority to the "religious self-consciousness," that is, to religious experience. The entire nineteenth century can be viewed as an effort to resolve the increasingly problematic issue of authority (emphasis mine).^[8]

However, as claimed above, the turn to the subject had its beginning long before Kant and it did not stop with the Romantics.

Definition

Practically speaking, the turn to the subject is a re-evaluating of truth from the perspective of the self rather than the authoritative structures of the state and the church. Kant describes it in terms of the subject and the object where the meaning of the object is provided by the subject. However, and back to Fiorenza's reference to Kant, if throwing off the shackles of the Bible and the Church (the list according to Kant can be expanded to the officer and the tax-collector, whom Kant refers to as "guardians"^[9]) is the first step on the road to autonomy and a liberated self, then mustn't we say that those steps began to be taken just prior to the Reformation? Thus the turn to the subject begins long before Kant comes on the scene.

Any discussion of the turn to the subject can seem to evaporate when one recognizes that self-ishness, subjectivism, and humanism have all been constants in human nature since the fall. However, the modern turn to the subject is unique in its import since it constitutes a canonization, if you will, of subjectivism as a rule and as the proper approach to the foundational philosophical questions of human flourishing.

Pre-Reformation Roots

I suggest that the maturation of the turn to the subject as a proper area of focus happened gradually, and in fact, may yet have gone unnoticed for what it was and for its continuing impact on Western culture at large. Nevertheless, its development gets under way in earnest in the pre-Reformation tensions between church and state and the rise of an articulated quest for human rights. In keeping with this flow of thought, or conjecture as it may turn out to be, is it also possible that a re-examination of the Reformation is warranted at the very least for the purposes of inspecting it for elements that arose in sympathy with the struggle for human rights? Is not the Reformation a reflection, at least to some degree, of the rejection of institutional authority in favor of individual human spiritual and religious freedom and fulfillment? If this is found to be the case then we must take more seriously James K. A. Smith's posture as a "catholic Christian":

I write unapologetically as a catholic Christian—situated in the historic faith of Augustine and Aquinas, Erasmus and Luther, Jonathan Edwards and Pope Benedict XVI but with a distinct Reformed accent.^[10]

This should not be seen as a call to return to the abuses of the Catholic Church (indulgences), the gross misinterpretations of Scripture (the actual blood and actual body of Jesus in the Eucharist and infant baptism), or the horrific additions to Scripture (the cult of Mary, praying to the saints, purgatory). Nor do I personally choose to accept what I consider to be the spurious claims of Calvinism and some of Reformed theology. But it is perhaps a call to reopen the wound as it were, return to the moments in time where the Catholic Church and the Protestant church veered from truth and wisdom, and revision one holy Catholic Church. Certainly a radical idea! This would bring the church to a place of existence in the world that it has perhaps not seen since the first century.

A Vocabulary of Individualism

Steve Ozment, describing the milieu that existed on the eve of the Reformation, enlists several phrases and words that demonstrate a focus that was turning away from papal authority toward a national, regional, local, and, finally, an individual autonomy. He frequently employs the words autonomy, independent, self-interest, themselves, rights, individual, experience, self-esteem, humanism, personal, subjective, subjective feelings, subjective needs, and vernacular. He further invokes such concepts as centralization and decentralization, control, championing rights, checking papal power, egalitarianism, protest, and reform. He describes the felt need for the church to provide "a theology and spirituality that could satisfy and discipline religious hearts and minds."^[11] He discusses the scramble for power between rising nations and the Catholic Church with its power centered in the Pope and between the nations, nation-states, and strong cities themselves. It was a time of backlash against the abuses of the church to be sure, but it was also a time of growing education among the common person and a growing

desire to be treated fairly and to claim one's own right to autonomy and one's rights in general. Taylor in turn speaks of the "rage for order" which was "a drive [in Latin Christendom] to make over the whole society to higher standards."[12]

It is obvious from the above list of words and concepts that what has in our times evolved into a completed focus on the rights of the subjective, autonomous individual, began in earnest in the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, erupting in the Reformation before maturing into "providential deism" and aging into what Taylor calls "exclusive humanism."[13] The complexities of a growing global population, a young urban population, increased connection and communication due to the printing press, the abuses of the Catholic Church, brought about a focus on abuses in terms of human rights. There began to be a desire for deeper personal devotion...a pondering of human potential. The Reformation solidified these inclinations.

The Move Towards an Exclusive Humanism

Taylor speaks of the reversal of the "field of fear."[14] The Catholic Church levied fear on the laity through indulgences and the threat of judgment and damnation. Taylor writes, "This cranking up of fear may have helped to prepare people to respond to Luther's reversal of the field."[15] But then, Taylor suggests an even further way in which the process may have led to exclusive humanism: "Some Protestant preaching repeats the pattern" of cranking up the fear. Taylor asks, "Did this prepare the desertion of a goodly part of their flock to humanism?" Taylor thinks so.[16]

So, Taylor sites three "axes" on which there were "strong urges for renewal": 1) a desire and turn toward deeper personal devotion (echoing Ozment above), 2) uneasiness with what Taylor calls "church-controlled magic" and "sacramental," and 3) the rescuing of the laity from a cranked-up fear through the new idea of salvation by faith.[17]

The Renaissance and early Enlightenment bring about development in the area of scientific inquiry and revolutionary new ways of seeing the universe. On the philosophical level, Descartes gives expression to the turn to the subject when, after doubting everything, he arrives at the one thing he can be sure of: cogito ergo sum, "I think, therefore, I am." The philosophes of Descartes age did not reject God but the seeds of unbelief were nascent in an increasingly mechanistic view of the universe and humanistic view of people. As they continued to struggle with the concept of Divine Self-revelation, no place was found for God. Blaise Pascal could not forgive Descartes for the small place he was able to find for God in his philosophy. He wrote,

"In all his philosophy he would have been quite willing to dispense with God. But he had to make Him give a fillip [18] to set the world in motion; beyond this, he has no further need of God."[19]

An increasingly deistic view of God prevailed until with Kant any impulse to believe in God disappears as he codifies and canonizes the turn to the subject, positing that we cannot know the "thing in itself", or, the object. Whatever is perceived to be true concerning an object is provided by the subject. This opens the way for the postmodern relativism and the fragile self we are familiar with in Western culture today.

In his book, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, Alister McGrath brings to light what I consider to be tantamount to the beginnings of a turn to the subject. In the process of explicating what his book jacket refers to as "the Protestant Revolution," McGrath paints a picture of a growing milieu of unrest and dissatisfaction with the Church and "growing pressure for reform."^[20] He makes it clear that it was not the Protestant revolution that was responsible for this new "longing for social progress and reform," for it was already in progress at the time of the Reformation. In describing the transitioning ethos of the late middle ages into the Renaissance, McGrath points to two developments without which the Reformation would not have occurred. The first was the printing press. The second was the rise of humanism.^[21] One mustn't equate this humanism with what we refer to today as "secular humanism" or with Taylor's "exclusive humanism." The humanism McGrath refers to did not exclude religion or God. In fact, it took as its impetus for social progress and change the idea that, in the same way that those outside the church could reference to Rome and Greece of the past in a primitivist effort to restore the glory of human society, so could intelligent men recapture its primitivist source: the Bible.^[22]

A second impetus came from the concept that God had created humanity with the capacity for progress and perfection without limits.^[23] Nowhere was this more prominently articulated than in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's "Oration on the Dignity of Humanity," or as it is also known, "The Manifesto of the Renaissance."^[24] For Mirandola, God had decreed for humanity at its inception, "Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature."^[25]

Disenchanted Providential Deism

Charles Taylor does a masterful job of tracing for his readers the evolution, if you will, of Western culture as it moved from a world where it was the norm to believe in God and to see the universe in terms of the geocentric model where man is at the center of a universe deigned by God to a secular age in which believing in God is optional and problematic. It is important to note that the shift from this enchanted society to what Taylor calls "exclusive humanism" was not a rejection of God at the start.^[26] Gradually, man left behind his enchantment as he rose to the challenge to fulfill all that God had created him to be. He observed nature as God's handiwork as he began to make his way to a view of the autonomy of nature and a "mechanistic" picture of the world. According to Taylor, this development was not "a step outside of a religious outlook" though it did "serve as grist to the mill of exclusive humanism."^[27] God was not immediately left behind but, as in Mirandola's oration, man is designed to live up to his potential. To do this, man would have to strive to bring about the inherent goodness or

purpose in the things God has created. Enchantment gave way to instrumental reason where humanity had to “abandon the attempt to read the cosmos as the locus of signs, [and] reject [such] as illusion, in order to adopt the instrumental stance effectively.”[28] Humanity was moving from an enchanted world to and through an increasingly detached Deism on its way to exclusive humanism—“a notion of human flourishing [that] makes no reference to something higher which humans should reverence or love or acknowledge.”[29]

Cogito Ergo Sum

Fast forwarding more than a hundred years beyond the Reformation, we find Descartes with the philosophical approach of “doubt”:

One was to proceed in the search for a metaphysical absolute by challenging every belief, however widely accepted and plausible it might be, in order to see whether it in fact met the test of certainty...Descartes’ doubt was methodological: He undertook simply to suspend his beliefs until he could prove them conclusively. . . Indeed, the fact that in his quest for absolute certainty Descartes was led to the self, the fact that the existence of the self became the premise of his whole philosophy, was at once a symptom of the enormous change that had already occurred and a foreshadowing of the subsequent course of philosophic thought.[30]

It is quite telling that the bedrock foundational truth that he “discovers” and for which he is famous is *cogito ergo sum*, “I think therefore I am”—sublime for its brevity and its ability to capture and express the linchpin of Western individualism to the present time—should arise from such pure human subjectivity. Can this mantra be seen in a positive light? Is it possible to see this as a healthy approach to understanding truth and revelation, perhaps suggesting that the proper place for the reception of divine revelation is the human heart?[31] Possibly, although Paschal would enjoin that such a view of Descartes was too generous. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this project, it merely further documents the subjective saturation of the times and the ominous impact of the turn to the subject.

Objects Conforming to Our Cognition

By the time we reach Immanuel Kant over a hundred years later, he has arrived at a perspective that will solidify the turn to the subject into philosophical dogma that has yet to be overturned. In fact, according to Emile Brehier, the French historian of philosophy, “From the end of the eighteenth century up to the present [1947], there has been hardly any philosophical thought which did not start – directly or indirectly – from a meditation on Kant’s doctrine.”[32]

In his preface to the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant wrote,

It has hitherto been assumed that our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to ascertain anything about these objects a priori, by means of conceptions, and thus to extend the range of our knowledge, have been rendered abortive by this assumption. Let us then make the experiment whether we may not be more successful in metaphysics, if we assume that the objects must conform to our cognition.[33]

Ultimately, it would seem that Kant's point is that humans cannot know anything more than what they can perceive from their own faculties in themselves and can never know an object as a "thing in itself." If this is a fair description of any part of Kant's message, then we see right away that the concept of divine self-revelation is, of course, not taken into account and we immediately experience a breach between biblical Christianity and enlightenment thinking. The danger in this thinking is that it allows for us to know nothing except what we can prove through empirical investigation (positivism), and opens the way for postmodern relativism. It would seem that Kant is trying to say that we cannot know God in Himself, but rather that our understanding of God must conform to our subjective cognition of Him.

If the intuition must conform to the nature of the objects, I do not see how we can know anything of them a priori. If, on the other hand, the object conforms to the nature of our faculty of intuition, I can then easily conceive the possibility of such an a priori knowledge.[34]

The ramifications of the turn to the subject for metaphysics are, of course, far-reaching. If we cannot know a thing in itself but only "as it appears to us in sense perception," [35] we are left far short of being able to make any certain statements about the "thing." If that "thing" is God and I cannot speak authoritatively about Him, then I am discouraged from knowing Him at all or left with a construct in which the definition of God can be as varied and numerous as the number of sentient beings.

Ramifications

From these few thoughts, it can be clearly seen and hardly denied that a distinct turn to the subject began to emerge in the late medieval period. This new view of things from the standpoint of the individual human had certain merits. With its desire for a deeper, more meaningful personal devotion to God, its push for and achievement of greater individual literacy, and its drive to live up to the God-given potential inherent in God's creations, [36] the turn to the subject had positive goals and outcomes. But as it evolves, into Descartes but particularly into Kant, it begins to shut out the need for revelation, indeed even the possibility of it, and has bequeathed to present, particularly American culture, a dangerous focus on self and the "selves" of others to the degree that not only has God's divine Self-revelation continued to be discounted, but any intrusion into the personal psyche from forces outside itself that bring discomfort or disapproval is becoming criminal.

Three Concepts

There are two concepts that keep Western culture anchored to the Enlightenment project. The first is its *preoccupation with self*, begun in the pre-reformation, given authority in Descartes’ cogito ergo sum, and codified in Kant’s “Copernican” turn to the subject.

The second is a continued and warranted *preoccupation with the possibility of God* and the reality of His divine Self-revelation. The tenets of atheism, however widely spread (or not) they may be, and the claims of evolution of necessity are anchored to empirical or pseudo-empirical inquiries. For this reason, I contend that our society is largely not post-modern in the sense of the relativity of truth, but in fact depends on some version of it.

A third concept keeps our post-modern (pseudo-modern) hyper-modern society from returning to a pre-Kantian consideration of the question of God—*Darwin’s theory of evolution*. The first two are, and at least in their pre-critical forms, have always been, constant. The information age, which begins in earnest with Gutenberg and the printing press, has only sharpened our abilities to examine ourselves further and sharpen our articulation through ever-increasing interpersonal communication.

Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self*, paints an interesting picture that may help to explain the evolution of self-consciousness that so pervades Western culture. Referring to the importance that modernism places on avoiding suffering, Taylor writes:

“We don’t see the point in ritually undoing [a] terrible crime in an equally terrible punishment. The whole notion of a cosmic moral order, which gave this restoral its sense, has faded for us. The stress on relieving suffering has grown with the decline of this kind of belief. It is what is left over . . . after we no longer see human beings as playing a role in a larger cosmic order or divine history.”[37]

Perhaps what can be said is that this evolution away from the sense of a cosmic moral order and toward ever greater reliance on one’s own inner light paves the way for the crippling political/social correctness seen, for example, in America today. Taylor observes that all of this is part of the larger discussion of the central importance of personal, individual autonomy, and this as part of our pursuit of respect which is nascent in the “Lockean trinity of natural rights” (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness). Autonomy and thus respect is part of the inalienable human right to liberty and the “demand that we give people the freedom to develop their personality in their own way.”[38]

If we equate the horrible punishments Taylor refers to with today’s modern American culture war of tolerance and intolerance and what seems to be an increasing distaste for any expression of disagreement with another’s moral or immoral beliefs and behaviors, and if we locate those ancient punishments in a conviction of a cosmic moral order, then in the absence of such an order today, any attempt to claim a moral high ground would be seen as an affront to the individual human freedom to “develop one’s personality” however one sees fit. Put another

er way, if there is no cosmic moral authority then on what grounds do we proffer any sort of moral vision or demand? Put yet another way, if there is no God, then the only sensibility that need be catered to is, ultimately, one's own which will lead, by way of Judeo-Christian reasoning, to a nihilistic moral emptiness. If the Apostle Paul's assessment that the throats of humans are open graves and that their tongues practice deceit (Romans 3:13), then whether they know it or not, non-believing (or wrong believing) humans who rely on the self, will be utterly disappointed and discover that there is nothing to live for. Even the pursuit of human flourishing and the presumed utopia of John Lennon's Imagine will ultimately prove to be illusory.

The Collapse of Confidence

Another perspective on the symptoms of the turn to the subject can be found in what W. T. Jones refers to as the "collapse of confidence."^[39] Science and technology having failed to bring "unlimited improvement of material conditions" brought about a collapse of confidence in rationality and sense of human helplessness in the face of a mechanistic universe.

Far from being rational creatures [in this sense I think rational more refers to man's inherent ability to think and respond appropriately rather than the purity of reason vis a vis empiricism] able to control their destinies, men seemed driven by their hates and fears—moved less by enlightened self-interest or by cool benevolence than by irrational and destructive aggressions against one another and even against themselves. . . The man of the nineteenth century was uneasy, anxious, alienated, and introspective. He was increasingly unsure of himself—doubtful of the validity of his values, of his ability to communicate in a meaningful way with others, and of his ability even to know himself.^[40]

Taking this perspective into account, not only do we begin to see the failure of the enlightenment that arose from the turn to the subject but also that the turn to the subject had a negative side. The focus on the self does not merely manifest in the pursuit of pleasure or in a prideful confidence, but also in the recognition of human weakness and hopelessness. Unfortunately, by the time confidence collapses, even deism has dropped out of fashion and men like Kant are finding a "science of metaphysics, of a realm of being that transcends the spatiotemporal, is clearly impossible."^[41]

Frameworks

Perhaps it all comes down to what Charles Taylor refers to as "frameworks." "Frameworks provide the background, explicit or implicit, for our moral judgements, intuitions, or reactions in any of the three dimensions [respect for others, deciding what is the good life, and dignity]. To articulate a framework is to explicate what makes sense of our moral responses."^[42] Taylor refutes the idea proffered by naturalists and utilitarians alike that frameworks are non-existent or, where they do exist, they are part of the previously enchanted, embedded world which modernism wants to leave behind. Frameworks are articulated by one's moral

ontology. At issue is the naturalist's dismissal of all moral ontologies as "irrelevant stories." Taylor looks to retrieve the value of moral ontologies and defend the validity of frameworks.^[43]

Taylor has a way of making the chasm that exists between modernists who dismiss God and those with a traditional moral ontology (who hearken back at least to some degree to a time when people still believed in God) seem smaller or at least less permanent; less threatening. Perhaps. The danger, at least as seen by the typical evangelical Pentecostal, is that while philosophies and frameworks come and go, they leave in their wake those who bought into them and made them part of their own personal frameworks. So, while generations come and go, living through various eras in which the Western world evolves from enchantment to disenchantment, from a belief in God to a deistic belief in God and then to a Kantian rejection of God (or at least any dependable metaphysical theory to undergird God), to a generation or two (or several) who pass through a time when God is said to be dead (or simply irrelevant), to a time when all gods or no gods are acceptable—souls are lost; shipwrecked; misled.

There is a danger inherent in the academy and that is a loss of connection with all things locally relevant to the church and the culture. The academy can take comfort that times change and ideas evolve and are either vindicated or corrected. But if, as the typical evangelical Pentecostal believes, there is a heaven and a hell, and if it is true that one soul lost is more valuable than a whole world gained (Matthew 16:26), then we discover that there is something more important than marking the philosophical times and cataloguing culture trends.

The modern turn to the subject, in my estimation, has had tragic results. A quick look at Western narcissism proves that. Against Taylor, I am not optimistic that the trend can be overturned, at least not short of fresh divine revelation. Unfortunately, modernism ruled out that possibility.

Bibliography

Baird, Forrest E. and Walter Kaufmann. *Medieval Philosophy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Jones, W. T. A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969.
Kant and the Nineteenth Century. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975.
- Kant, Immanuel. Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment? New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1959.
Preface to the Second Edition, translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn.
- Kirby, Alan. "The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond," Philosophy Now, November/December 2006.
- Livingston, Fiorenza, Coakley, and Evans, Jr. Modern Christian Thought: Twentieth Century, Second Edition. Vol. 2. Fortress Press, 2006.
- McClendon, Jr., James Wm. Witness. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.
- McGrath, Alister. Christianity's Dangerous Idea. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.
- Ozment, Steven. The Age of Reform 1250-1550, Chapter Five "On The Eve of the Reformation." New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1980.
- Smith, Christian, ed. The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Smith, James K. A. Discipleship in the Present Tense. Grand Rapids, MI: The Calvin College Press, 2013.

Introducing Radical Orthodoxy, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 31.
- Stern, Alfred. "Kant and our Time," in the Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. 16, No. 4. Jun., 1956.
- Taylor, Charles. A Secular Age. Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Weldon, T. D. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, Second Edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Endnotes

- [1] James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Witness*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 300.
- [2] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?*, (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1959), 85.
- [3] James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 31.
- [4] James K. A. Smith, 32. See footnote 5 of Smith's work where he compares "modern skepticism, coupled with the Enlightenment emphasis on the autonomy of the self" with postmodern relativism.
- [5] Christian Smith, ed., *the Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), viii-1.
- [6] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 2007).
- [7] Alan Kirby, "The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond," *Philosophy Now*, November/December 2006, page 35.
- [8] Livingston, Fiorenza, Coakley, and Evans, Jr., *Modern Christian Thought: Twentieth Century*, Second Edition, Vol. 2, (Fortress Press, 2006), 2.
- [9] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?*, (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1959), 86-87.
- [10] James K. A. Smith, *Discipleship in the Present Tense*, (Grand Rapids, MI: The Calvin College Press, 2013), 2.
- [11] This and the preceding list of words and concepts is drawn from Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550*, Chapter Five "On The Eve of the Reformation," (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1980), 182-222.
- [12] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 2007), 63.
- [13] *Ibid*, 63, 221, ff.
- [14] *Ibid.*, 73.
- [15] *Ibid.*, 75.
- [16] *Ibid.*
- [17] *Ibid.*, 75-76.
- [18] A "flip" is essentially the action of the thumb and pointer finger in the flipping of a coin.
- [19] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 77, taken from the Everyman's Library edition trans. by W. F. Trotter and republished in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Mortimer J. Adler, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 186.
- [20] Alister McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 21-22.
- [21] *Ibid.*, 25, 33.
- [22] *Ibid.*, 30-31.
- [23] *Ibid.*, 28-34.
- [24] *Ibid.*, 34.
- [25] Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufmann, *Medieval Philosophy*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 200), 525.
- [26] Taylor, 63, 90-99.
- [27] 93-95.
- [28] *Ibid.*, 98.
- [29] *Ibid.*, 245.

[30] W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969), 162, 164.

[31] This is not my thought. Dr. Tim Lim, professor at Regent university, shared his positive view of Descartes statement in a lecture. However, I am completely hesitant to attribute my poor thoughts to him.

[32] Quoted in Alfred Stern, "Kant and our Time," in the *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Jun., 1956), pp. 531.

[33] Kant, *Preface to the Second Edition*, translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] T. D. Weldon, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, Second Edition*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 80.

[36] McGrath, 24-25; Taylor 247; Osment 201.

[37] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 13.

[38] *Ibid.*, 11-12.

[39] W. T. Jones, *Kant and the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975), 9-13.

[40] *Ibid.*, 9-10.

[41] *Ibid.*, 58.

[42] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 26.

[43] *Ibid.*, 7-12.

2

2