

**Reason, Belief, and Ultimate Truth:**  
**An Examination of Knowledge in Kant and Merleau-Ponty**

By Max Johnson

## Immanuel Kant

- Lived 1724–1804
- Born in Königsberg, modern day Russia
  - Was East Prussia at the time
  - Kant spoke German
- *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*
  - Originally published in 1793



“The sole, true religion contains nothing but [the moral law]. Only for the sake of a church, of which there can be different and equally good forms, can there be statutes, i.e., ordinances regarded as divine, which to our pure moral judging are chosen and contingent, Now, to regard this statutory faith as essential to the service of God in general, and to make it the supreme condition of divine pleasure taken in human beings, is a religious delusion.” – Immanuel Kant, pg. 185

- Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty
- Lived 1908-1961
- Born in Rochefort-sur-Mer, France
- The World of Perception
  - Published in 1948



“Today’s psychologists emphasize the fact that we do not start out in life immersed in our own self-consciousness but rather in the experience of other people. I never became aware of my own existence till I made contact with others... [The sense of self] develops into a free agent by way of the instrument of language and taking part in the life of the world... Humanity is not an aggregate of individuals, a community of thinkers, each of whom is guaranteed from the outset to be able to reach agreement with the other because all participate in the same thinking existence.” – Maurice Merleau-Ponty, pg. 65.

## Bibliography

Kant, Emmanuel, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, Introduction by Stephen R. Palmquist. Translated by Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2009.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The World of Perception*, Introduction by Thomas Baldwin. Translated by Oliver Davis. New York: Routledge, 2004.