

FILOSOFIA

# Religion and Forms of Secularization in Charles Taylor

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# **Religion and Forms of Secularization in Charles Taylor**

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Porto, 20 de janeiro 2025

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## **Dedicatória/Agradecimento**

Este trabalho foi um esforço bastante intenso da minha parte. Mas estou plenamente ciente que nunca ninguém caminha sozinho/a em busca do conhecimento de verdade e sobretudo de sabedoria.

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## **Abstract**

Secularization in Charles Taylor is a complex cultural change in space and time, which implicates essentially religion. He retells secularity in terms of historical construal and paradigm shift, refuting the common subtraction theory which describes it in terms of loss of religious influence in public spheres and the loss of religious belief and practice. In phenomenological terms, Taylor defines secularity as the change in the condition of belief, and in epistemological terms, he defines it as the change in understanding of fullness our moral-spiritual aspiration. Taylor's theory of modernity, or secularity, portrays the picture of modern West societies in the North Atlantic world, as in evolution and crisis. Christian Reformation prompted the progress in science which brought about the anthropocentric shift, questioning everything, inclusively orthodox belief and morality, from which emerged an exclusive humanism. Consequently, everything is explained in natural and mechanistic terms. There is also something deeper beneath the ground of phenomenology of the human process, a constant search for meaning and fullness. This thesis contemplates Taylor's narrative of secularization, which contain his arguments against the subtraction theories of modern secularity.

The keywords: secularity, religion, Christian Reformation, subtraction theory, fullness, science, anthropocentric shift, exclusive humanism, modern West, Charles Taylor.

## Resumo

Secularização em Charles Taylor é uma complexa mudança cultural no tempo e espaço que implica essencialmente a religião. Ele reconta a secularidade em termos de construção histórica e mudança de paradigma, refutando a teoria de subtração que a descreve em termos de perda de influência religiosa nas esferas públicas e perda de fé e prática religiosa. Em termos fenomenológicos, Taylor define secularidade como uma mudança em condição de fé; e em termos epistemológicos, ele a descreve como uma mudança de compreensão da plenitude, a nossa aspiração moral-espiritual. A sua teoria de modernidade, ou secularidade, apresenta o retrato das sociedades de ocidente moderno, no mundo de Atlântico Norte, como em evolução e crise. A Reforma Cristã incitou o progresso em ciência que provocou a mudança antropocêntrica, questionando tudo inclusivamente a ortodoxia de fé e moralidade, da qual emergiu o humanismo exclusivo. Com efeito, tudo é explicado em termos naturais e mecanísticos. Também existe algo mais profundo no solo de fenomenologia do processo humano, isto é, uma busca constante do sentido e da plenitude. Esta tese contempla a narrativa de secularização do Taylor, na qual constam os seus argumentos contra as teorias de subtração de secularidade moderna.

Palavras-chave: secularidade, religião, Reforma Cristã, teoria de subtração, plenitude, ciência, mudança antropocêntrica, humanismo exclusivo, ocidente moderno, Charles Taylor.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Summary of Taylor's Thinking

Charles Taylor is one of the most influential philosophers in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and a prominent contemporary philosopher, whose concern has made significant contributions to the debates on a wider spectrum of philosophical areas.<sup>1</sup> His remarkable work *A Secular Age* (2007) is the most important source for the development of a better understanding of modern secularity.<sup>2</sup> It ranges over all areas of studies, in which Taylor elaborates in depth and thoroughly secularity/secularization. His innovative treatments of long-standing philosophical problems, especially those deriving from application of Enlightenment epistemology to theories of language and human agency, the self, identity, and politics, show a thorough combination of “analytic” and “continental” philosophical concerns and approaches.<sup>3</sup> The human conditions in Canada over three decades, ranging from 1930s to 1960s, had marked his philosophical thinking and outlooks.<sup>4</sup> Taylor's political perspective has been shaped by his experience with the minority ethnical group of Quebec people who had struggled for the recognition of their distinctive cultural identity within Canada. He has been committed to promote debates on emigration and multiculturalism in Canadian society under the influence of his French-speaking mother and English-speaking father.<sup>5</sup> In his critique of liberalism, Taylor emphasizes the importance of the self and community.

In his writing, *The Politics of Recognition*, Taylor emphasizes the link between recognition and identity, designating the self-understanding of people, of their fundamental defining characteristics as human beings. He argues that our identity is

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<sup>1</sup> ABBEY, Ruth (2004), “Taylor is a Prominent Philosopher”, University of Kent, in *Contemporary Philosophy In Focus*, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> CALHOUN, Craig (2008) “Book review: A Secular Age: Charles Taylor”, in *European Journal of Sociology*, 49, 03, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> Idem (1999) *Charles Taylor on Identity and the Social Imaginary*, unpublished article/working paper, New York University and Social Science Research Council, available LSE Research online: January 2000. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk> According to Calhoun Craig, Taylor's approach brings philosophy into the full range of human sciences and brings the more empirical humanities and social science into philosophy and is likely to suggest that it must be so if the study of philosophy is truly to pursue wisdom.

<sup>4</sup> Idem (2016), *This Philosopher has Reimagined Identity and Morality for a Secular Age*, New York Public Library, December 1. It was delivered on the occasion of the annual Awarding of Berggruen Prize to thinker, Charles Taylor. Published in WorldPost.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

partly shaped by recognition. A person, or a group of people, will suffer real damage, distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible image of themselves.<sup>6</sup> He highlights that the consequence of nonrecognition/misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression and reduced mode of being.<sup>7</sup> *Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need.*<sup>8</sup> Taylor distinguishes two changes that have made the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition inevitable: First, the collapse of social hierarchies, which used to be the basis for honor in the ancient regime; Second, against the notion of honor there emerged modern notion of dignity (dignity of human beings or of citizens) which is shared by everyone.<sup>9</sup> Taylor assumes that the concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society. *Democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for equal status of cultures and of genders.*<sup>10</sup> He underlines the change in politic of recognition which has been modified and intensified by the new understanding of individual identity that emerged at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as an individualized identity.<sup>11</sup> In his analysis, the notion of authenticity develops out of a displacement of the moral ascent in the idea that human beings are endowed with a moral sense, an intuitive feeling, for what is right and wrong.<sup>12</sup>

In *A Secular Age*, Taylor tries to answer the question: *why our age is a secular? What does it mean to say that we live in a secular age?* In other words, it contains his curiosity in historical learning to advance understanding of what it means to live in a modern world. It has rightly transformed discussions in fields from sociology to history, anthropology, and religious studies, with a strong ethical commitment; it is closely connected to the *Sources of The Self* (1989), which portrays Taylor's view of modernity. Alasdair MacIntyre describes the work as an especially important book in which Taylor intends: *to give a historical account of the secularization of Western cultural and social orders, and to identify what it is to be secular and to inhabit a secularized society.*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1992): *The Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: pp. 26-27.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.: p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.: p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, author of *After Virtue*, in the cover of Taylor's book "A Secular Age" (2007).

Robert Bellah expresses his admiration for Taylor, who recasts all debates on secularism, by highlighting his focus of attention on *the conditions of experience and search for the spiritual that make it possible to speak of ours as a 'secular age'*.<sup>14</sup> In his remarks on the book, David Martin points out Taylor's emphasis on the emergence of secularity and the sense of individual self in relation to community and the importance of its interdisciplinary range and he challenges the theologians to read it, even the biologists, geneticists, and all others to do so.<sup>15</sup> The *work* contains Taylor's attempt to retell the story of secularity and reimagine identity and morality for a secular age.

Ruth Abbey notes that Taylor's timely thinking and untimely mode raises the question concerning the system in his thought. On one hand, a thinker with something to say on a diverse range of philosophical questions might be expected to display a rigid and even predictable consistency in response to different issues; and on the other, one who directly engages the debates on the current questions might understandably more sporadic and targeting in his contributions.<sup>16</sup> However, she notices that in Taylor's case we find neither tendency, instead he displays a consistency across philosophical areas that is not rigidly systematic. Taylor is flexible and responsive not to cleave to the dictates of any philosophical system in approaching specific issues.<sup>17</sup> Abbey describes Taylor's attack on the narrowness and rigidity of much modern moral theory, his critique of the atomism and proceduralism of right thinking, his delineation of the new moral possibilities that have emerged with modernity, his analysis of the politics of recognition, and his insistence on the need for the social sciences to take self-interpenetrations into account in the explanation of behavior; according to Abbey, all these appear in response to the lacunae or distortions in the way these issues have been contextualized.<sup>18</sup> David Storey points out Taylor ambitious revision and retelling the

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<sup>14</sup> Robert N. Bellah, in the cover of Taylor's book "A Secular Age".

<sup>15</sup> David Martin is one of the theorists of secularization, who expresses his idea in his book *On Secularism*, and he is among others who admires Taylor most as expressed in the cover of the book.

<sup>16</sup> ABBEY, Ruth (ed.): "Charles Taylor" in *Contemporary Philosophy in Focus*, Cambridge University press, 2004. Taylor is a Canadian contemporary philosopher, who has directly engaged with the formulation of the questions of the times, that makes the readers of his writing find themselves plunge into the midst of any current debate. His immediacy and vitality in writing set him apart from the more formal and detached tone of many other contemporary philosophers.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.: pp. 2-3.

story of secularization as an attempt aiming to show the inadequacy of the mainstream of subtraction story which generally holds that:

*in the modern period, beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and increasingly in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the place of religion in the public sphere declined and religious belief and practice substantially decreased; these changes are resulted from the industrialization, urbanization, differentiation of value spheres, and the progress of natural sciences; that these declined and decreased should be seen in linear progression.*<sup>19</sup>

In his remarks on *A Secular Age*, David Storey summarizes Taylor's narrative of secularization in three claims: first, the exclusive humanism and modern moral order, the anthropocentric shift that reject any transcendent entity and refuse to acknowledge any good beyond natural human flourishing, arouse mainly as a result of dissatisfactions within Latin Christendom;<sup>20</sup> second, it was the new ethical options opened up by exclusive humanism that led larger segments of the populations to drift towards the unbelief;<sup>21</sup> thirdly, the secular age bears a constitutive reference to belief in God as something that has been overcome.<sup>22</sup> Taylor thinks that our present predicament must be seen not simply in terms of war between belief and unbelief, science against religion, intelligent design against evolution, but rather as a *three-cornered-affair* involving those who acknowledge some good beyond life, secular humanists, and neo-Nietzschean. He shows not only how schizophrenic the secular age really is, but also to suggest that it opens new possibilities for belief and unbelief alike. Secularization should be seen as fundamentally ambivalent with regard to religion.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> STOREY, David (2009), "Breaking the Spell of Immanent Frame: Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*," p.1. [https://www.academia.edu/1816674/\\_Breaking\\_the\\_Spell\\_of\\_the\\_Immanent\\_Frame\\_Charles\\_Taylor's\\_A\\_Secular\\_Age\\_published\\_in\\_Rethinking\\_Secularization\\_Philosophy\\_and\\_the\\_Prophecy\\_of\\_a\\_Secular\\_Age\\_](https://www.academia.edu/1816674/_Breaking_the_Spell_of_the_Immanent_Frame_Charles_Taylor's_A_Secular_Age_published_in_Rethinking_Secularization_Philosophy_and_the_Prophecy_of_a_Secular_Age_) (accessed on December 18, 2024), edited by Herbert De Vriese and Gary Gabor in *Rethinking Secularization: Philosophy and Prophecy of a Secular Age*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Chapter Eight, pp. 179-208.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. The pressure towards reform collapses the complementarity between the higher vocation of the clergy and the laxer practices of the laity, a social hierarchy anchored in a cosmic great chain of being.

<sup>21</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 267. Taylor's conviction is crystalized in "How could the immense force of religion in human life, in the pre-modern times, be countered, except by using the modality of the most powerful ethical ideas which this religion itself had helped to entrenched?"

<sup>22</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): pp. 267-269.

<sup>23</sup> STOREY (2009).

### 1.1.1. Modern Secularity

In the conceptual analysis, secularity has been derived from the concept of *saeculum*, chronological time in which causes and effects occur. The debates on the process of secularization flow under the frameworks of time and space. Living in this time-space constitutes an ontological category, which implies existence and contingency. Our sense of being in the world connects us to the sense of time in which everything is evolving. However, we are also challenged to think about the higher category of time when we realize the limit of our physical existence in front of the death. Our limit in this flowing time helps us to go beyond to the higher time, the eternity, God's time.<sup>24</sup> Modern people are living intensely in this running time, worldly affairs, stressing on human flourishing by doing everything to save this earthly life, not the life to come though many are convinced of its existence.

Taylor's theory of secularity is connected to his theory of modernity, as expressed in the *Sources of The Self*, in which he distinguishes between the fact of modernity and unconditional human rights and the affirmation of life, universal justice, benevolence, freedom, and the ethic of authenticity. Taylor designates the ensemble of largely unarticulated understanding of what it is to be a human agent such as the senses of inwardness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature, which are at home in the modern West.<sup>25</sup> He highlights selfhood and the good, or selfhood and morality, as two intertwined themes. However, he does not deny the dark features of modernity such as a drive towards instrumental reason and control.<sup>26</sup>

William M. Shea points out Taylor's description of the fact of modernity as cultural change that has been taking place over the past few centuries; whereas the theories of modernity offer explanation of myth about the shift, they are conceptual elaboration.<sup>27</sup> Taylor elaborates his own theory of modernity that remarkably differs from the Enlightenment package which becomes standard among philosophers and

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<sup>24</sup> This is the basis for Taylor's claim that living in a secular age does not mean we are disconnected from God and the higher time, or eternity.

<sup>25</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1989): *Sources of the Self: the Making of Modern Identity*, p. ix.

<sup>26</sup> Idem (1999): *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, ed. by James L. Heft, S. M., New York, Oxford University Press, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> William M. Shea, "A Vote of Thanks to Voltaire", in Charles Taylor (1999): *A Catholic Modernity?*, *Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, ed. By James L. Heft, S. M., New York, Oxford University Press, p. 42.

western elite. In his theory of modernity, Taylor disagrees with what he calls *accultural theory* and proposes a *cultural theory*, according to which modernity does not mean the revolutionary occurrence of a set of value-neutral facts and consequent replacement of one set of beliefs, traditional and mythic, with another one, modern and scientific, as the *accultural theory* affirms.<sup>28</sup> Modernity rather originated in a shift in our horizon of understanding of humanity, the cosmos, society, and God, and constituted an unarticulated background against which changes, as well as continuities, of practice and beliefs stand out and must be understood.<sup>29</sup> It is in this context that Taylor develops his theory of secularization, a process which takes place in the rise of modernity, although it is rooted deeply in the old regime. He uses mostly the term *secularity* rather than *secularization* in describing his theory.

He sees natural science as background for the anthropocentric shift that marked modern identity. His method and range of knowledge support his arguments in his critique against modern theories of secularization, which he calls the subtraction theory. He has started his analysis on the state of being secular (*secularity*) with the level of imaginary, not theory, which means dealing with how people imagine the world, in terms of normative pattern for personal life and society. The epistemic change begins with this cosmic imaginary that shapes the identity of the self, and from this imaginary our consciousness evolves. New worldviews, which are moved by science, open to a vast infinite space of the universe and alter our ways of relating to nature, to ourselves as free individual subjects and to society.

The studies of natural sciences are evolving infinitely, not only unfolding the knowledge of truths about the process of beings in the natural world, but also manifesting the process of our becoming. Change in time dimension depends on the epistemic change in which history evolves from a primitive mode towards modernity and post-modernity. Modernity has been marked by the demythologization/disenchantment of the ancient worldview and it has become an age of development in hermeneutics, which helps us to grasp the significance entailed in the religious belief. Demythologization is one aspect of rationalizing religious belief, implying modes of living and new forms of existence with its higher variants as things

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Taylor (2007): pp. 42-43.



are manifesting themselves gradually to human subjects. Nevertheless, the questions arise when we think about post-modernity where the role of human subjects is reducing in the production and the making of new inventions. I call this a *subjectless civilization*, or post-humanism, which raises some ethical-moral issues, hence spiritual. In the logics of Taylor's thinking, this emerging human condition can bring us back to the traditional religious belief although in different forms of spirituality, resulted from what he calls *malaise of modernity*. Here, everything remains open towards transcendence.

Secularization is a religious process; therefore, its definition depends on how we understand religion. Taylor's effort to define religion will be tackled in chapter two. Taylor presents three ideal types of religion which have been diversified in the process of secularization, corresponding to the respective social imaginaries. *First*, the *Ancient Regime*<sup>30</sup> stressed on the community forms of religion, which expressed in the collective rituals. In this popular type of religion, the pre-axial and post-axial religious elements co-existed.<sup>31</sup> These community forms of religion were disrupted by the Reformation, *the process of elite-endangered destruction and popular recreation happened again and again in the following centuries*.<sup>32</sup> *Second*, the age of mobilization, an age where *people are persuaded, pushed, dragooned, or bullied, into new forms of society, church and association*.<sup>33</sup> People are induced by the state and the Church elite to adopt new structures, to alter their social imaginaries.<sup>34</sup> These new forms of religious life had been developed to fit the spiritual needs of the recruited and mobilized people who were forced to come together. These forms of faith wove together spirituality, discipline, political identity, and civilizational order. *Third*, the age of authenticity, which was marked by the imaginary of expressive individualism in the cultural revolution, destabilized the earlier forms of religion.<sup>35</sup> In this age, the focus is now on the individual, or personal, spiritual path and insights. The old forms of finding a place in the broader church like in the age of mobilization is no longer relevant.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> TAYLOR (2007): pp. 450-454.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.: p. 436.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.: p. 441.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.: p. 445.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.: p. 326.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.: p. 526.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.: p. 586.

In the context of modernity, Taylor sees secularity not simply in terms of disenchantment rather in terms of cultural change and paradigm shift within the respective time and space framework. He invokes science as the major force that made religious belief increasingly problematic, the axis of this paradigmatic change being Darwin's theory of evolution. Progress in science led to the mechanistic explanation of the world from which emerged the idea of the universe. Scientific revolution widened the worldview, prompting *the extension of space into the macrocosmic world and the unexplored microcosmic terrain and reality in all directions plunges its roots into the unknown and unmappable*.<sup>37</sup> Here Taylor explicitly shows the shift from the limited cosmos to deep universe and unfolds the limit of science which cannot explain the genesis and the deepest questions of both macroscopic and microscopic constitutions of things in the universe with all events it contains. It is a move from a narrow cosmic imaginary to the vast universe with its deep and immense space.

Taylor illustrates secularity in his own narrative by tracing from a naïve belief to a reflective stance, which challenged the Church to reform. His narrative of secularization begins with how people have imagined the world, first as enchanted cosmos with its boundaries, then gradually turning towards the disenchanted universe with limitless frontier. Scientific development paved the way to the epistemic change in prompting the anthropocentric shift from which arose Deism and Atheism with the doctrine of exclusive humanism, which in turn led to the eclipse of transcendence. The description implicates the shift from porous self to buffered self, which forms the identity of a new individuation with science-driven moral perception according to the patterns of the ethic of authenticity.

Secularity in Taylor's understanding is historical construal in which cultural changes take place. In terms of condition of belief, there was a shift from the monastic center spirituality to the anthropocentric spirituality, an attempt to bring Christ to the people, or the real individuals, in lay world, which had previously been unfocused.<sup>38</sup> The emphasis here is on the development of spirituality with a new vision of nature as expressed in the Franciscan trend, which sees God in the animate and inanimate things surrounding us and the focus on the ordinary people in their individuality. One of the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: p. 326.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: p. 94.

important facets of this spirituality was the intense focus on the person of Jesus Christ. He cites Louis Dupré that this new devotion ends up opening *a new perspective on the unique particularity of the person*.<sup>39</sup> The old construal disappeared and gave way to the new construal in the modern condition of belief.

### 1.1.2. Taylor on Human Person

The discussion on secularity and its process fundamentally concerns the human subjects who are agents of changes. It is important to understand Taylor's notion of human agents. In *The Sources of The Self*, Taylor traces various strands of the modern notion of what it means to be a human agent, a person, or the self. These terms have closely related meanings in Taylor's thought. According to him, there are three major facets in the development of human agency into the modern secular age, such as:

*modern inwardness, the sense of ourselves as being with inner depths, and the connected notion that we are selves; the affirmation of ordinary life which develops from the early modern period; and the expressivist notion of nature as an inner moral source.*<sup>40</sup>

Taylor sees human beings as in the process of becoming, evolving, an expressive unity as conscious beings. He portrays the human person as embodied in an external medium, like language, cultural practices and institutions, within which identity is formed. For Taylor, we are beings who learn to use language from others of our own kind, while living in complex systems of social relationships. In this context, human agents are in a constant dialogue, which means that they need a community as condition *sine qua non* in their identity formation. In his critique against contemporary moral philosophy, Taylor highlights the importance of moral ontology which articulates our moral-spiritual intuitions.<sup>41</sup> He refutes this moral philosophy which tends to focus on what is right to do rather than what is good to be, on defining the content of obligation rather than the nature of the good life. Community as *larger self, external medium*,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

becomes a category of space for the identity formation and in which culture is to be sustained, nourished, and handed down.<sup>42</sup>

Matt Perryman distinguishes Taylor's thinking from Descartes's *Meditations*, which marks the Western thinking, according to which the self as a consciousness stands at a distance from the world of material things. Whereas Taylor thinks that human beings are not just living beings with bodies, rather conscious awareness of their being located in a space, as Parryman quoted below:

*We move, we learn that we are located in a particular location in space, that some things are close to us and other things are far away, that we can stand upright, that there are distinctions between up and down, bright and dim, tasty and disgusting.*<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the Cartesian tradition emphasizing on the individual as the site of meaning in a closed world determined by *cogito*, Taylor's notion of human agency is dialogical from which meaning is perceived. He holds that meaning is something which occurs in the spaces of understanding between two or more people who understand one another. Cartesian consciousness is more likely a stage in human development, something that individual acquires when he reaches certain level of maturity. However, Taylor does not say that we are not conscious beings with inner experiences. Many of his papers have a great deal about the crucial importance of our feelings and desires, how these disclose a reality of values to us which is not accessible as essentially private qualities, whether the better account ought to begin with our bodily expressive and social or dialogical form of activity.<sup>44</sup> Taylor develops the modern idea of the self, related to a sense of inwardness tracing from Plato's self-mastery, Descartes's disengaged reason which emphasizes on the radical reflexivity, to Locke's punctual self which rejects innateness of human nature in relation to knowledge and morality.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Idem (1979), *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge University Press, Chapter one.

<sup>43</sup> PERRYMAN, Matt (2018), "What are the main ideas of Philosopher Charles Taylor?", Edited by Olivia Johnson, publishing copy – editor/proofreader, University of Auckland, April 27, 2018, taken from the Collection of Taylor's writings: *Human Agency and Language*. <https://philosophy1.quora.com/https-www-quora-com-What-are-the-main-ideas-of-philosopher-Charles-Taylor-answer-Matt-Perryman-1> (accessed on December 18, 2024).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> TAYLOR (1989): The whole explanation in pp. 111-207. Plato's self-mastery influenced Christian theology through Augustine's *in interiore homine*. Locke rejects the idea that we are rational beings constitutionally disposed the rational order of things, that we have innate ideas or an innate tendency to

Further examination on Taylor's philosophical anthropology shows that hermeneutics is central to his epistemology, because of his view of human knowledge as the product of engaged, embodied agency.<sup>46</sup> Taylor insists that knowledge is, in the first instance, the outcome of embodied existence and experience. Here he is concerned with fundamentals of knowledge, that is, with knowledge in its most ontological primitive condition without any sophisticated tools which enable us to know things. From an epistemological perspective, consciousness is the ground for the process of knowledge, an inward movement toward truth, and it is dynamic for epistemic change. Taylor's approach to epistemology makes embodied agency fundamental, so his account of language makes the human capacity for expression primary.<sup>47</sup> Humans as embodied knowers are also engaged agents who learn about the environment initially through practical experience rather than detached contemplation. In his epistemological view, Taylor holds that these interpretations might typically *form part of the taken-for-granted background of knowledge*. He repeatedly emphasizes that the background itself cannot be turned into an object of reflection; in this way the existence of an unexamined background is the condition for the reflective knowing. This means that for something to be studied and examined, others must remain in place. Taylor hermeneutics tradition of philosophy derives from his anthropology, his conviction that human beings are self-interpreting creatures.<sup>48</sup>

Taylor emphasizes considerably Herder's idea that human nature is not a determining force but a range of possibilities and capacities demanding expression. He uses Herder's *expressivism* in his protest against the Enlightenment view of *man as both subject and object of an objectifying scientific analysis*.<sup>49</sup> In the Romantic context, language is a crucial medium for humans as expressive beings, along with art, religion, action, and ethical relationships. From this, he concludes that the Enlightenment and

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unfold out thought towards the truth. Locke claims that knowledge is an inward and active energy of the mind itself (cf. p. 165.)

<sup>46</sup> ABBEY, Ruth (2004): p. 3. The way we encounter the world cognitively is shaped and constrained by the fact we are bodies

<sup>47</sup> Nicholas Smith on Taylor, in *Contemporary Philosophy in Focus*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004: p. 4. This highlights the semantic dimension in human relationship.

<sup>48</sup> ABBEY, Ruth (2004): in *Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>49</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1979): p. vii.

Romanticism have shaped the modern identity, like the pursuit of both self-knowledge and self-mastery and distinctive self-expression and authenticity.<sup>50</sup>

Craig Calhoun shows the importance and relevance of Taylor's definition of human person in an era of great transformation because of the challenges arising from the technological innovations, like artificial intelligence and gene editing. He also emphasizes the importance of figuring out what ethics and policies should guide those new technologies, in the progressive forms like the transformation of gender and sexual identities and claims to equal rights. From the idea of self and the need of community flows Taylor's political thinking on identity, which reflects our human need for recognition.<sup>51</sup> Taylor's politics of identity and recognition are reinforced by a central theme in modern culture, that is, the ethic of authenticity. Recognizing that everyone has their own way of being human facilitates respect for individuals, but also for different cultures. Calhoun sites what Taylor wrote in 1994 concerning identity:

*We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. Even after we outgrow some of these others, our parents, for instance, and they disappear from our lives, the conversation with them continues within us as long as we live.*<sup>52</sup>

Taylor refutes the reductive materialism of scientific view of human behavior, which holds that human behavior cannot be accounted for in terms of goals or purposes but be explained on mechanistic principles.<sup>53</sup> In his critique against behaviorists, Taylor argues that human behavior is purposive, which means that it is to be accounted for by a teleological form of explanation. He argues that in order to properly understand human beings we must grasp that they are embodied, minded creatures with purposes, plans and goals, something entirely lacking in reductionist scientific explanation of human behavior.

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<sup>50</sup> Rousseau's moral psychology has certain influence here, especially his claim that man is good by nature and he should be educated according to the ideal of this nature.

<sup>51</sup> CALHOUN (2008): p. 455. Calhoun grasps the essence of Taylor's communitarian thinking in consonance with the human nature who needs community as a medium for self-expression and development.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> TAYLOR (1964): *The Explanation of Behaviour*, Routledge Classics, London & New York, 2021, p. 4.

## 1.2. Methodology and Contextualization

I have conducted the research about Taylor's thinking on secularity through bibliographical analysis of his narrative concerning modern secularity in the West, and the way he has retold the story and reimagined the modern identity. Taylor's work *A Secular Age* (2007), an extensive and densely compiled work of his thoughts ranging from the *Sources of the Self* (1989), *Hegel and Modern Society* (1979), *The Ethics of Authenticity*, *A Catholic Modernity?* among other books and articles, becomes the primary sources of my research. Both *Sources of the Self* and *A Secular Age* contain Taylor's critique of theories of modernity, with its secularity, which he puts in the category of "subtraction stories", and his interest in how our sense of things, our cosmic imaginary, or our whole background of understanding and feel of the world has been transformed.<sup>54</sup> He refutes science because it fails to determine what imaginary being developed in the place of the earlier one and argues that some theoretical change may leave our imaginary unaffected. I try to compare the arguments of most writers of secularization, which are based on the decline of religious belief and practice, with Taylor's arguments which are based on the background that constitutes the historical process and didn't develop under the epistemic bases and neutral institutional but yet on the moral and spiritual basis.

The thesis aims to present Taylor's thinking on secularity as historical construal and explaining its process in terms of change in the condition of belief depending on cosmic imaginary grounded on the evolution of human consciousness which has progressively marked the modern construal of human identity as agent with buffered self, shifting away from the porous identity. With qualitative analysis this work contributes to explaining certain phenomena that constitute secularity and to unfolding certain moral issues emerging from the current human condition implicated in Taylor's thinking. It is important to underline the arguments on how the alternative to God-reference came to emerge with the development of science, rooted in the efforts of religious and social reforms in the modern West. The context of the study is Western civilization, or the North Atlantic world, as focus of Taylor's narrative, which is deeply rooted in the Christian values, from which an anthropocentric shift had been developed.

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<sup>54</sup> Idem. (2007): p. 326.

Thus, his narrative of secularization challenges me to conduct further studies on the emerging human condition in the contemporary world. New paradigms with wider horizons have created great changes and at same time raised big moral-ethical interrogations; this contemporary human condition can be illustrated in the frameworks of *construction and deconstruction*. It is unequivocal that the construction of this sophisticated world, cultural changes, resulted from the expression of human rationality which is the mark of our evolving consciousness.

Taylor attempts to construct a fuller narrative, going backward to our origin, even to the deep time of our dark genesis. This implies the migration of ideas going beyond the microcosmic world to search the infinite horizon in the immensely vast space in the universe. Through the retrieval path we come to achieve a comprehensive understanding about our secular age marked by the progress in science and technology which has become the feature of modernity. In his approach, Taylor contemplates the lived experience in which we share a common ground of cosmic imaginary and the process of becoming, occurring in space and time. The demise of religious belief and practice, the loss of religious influence in Western societies (public spheres) and the eclipse of transcendent, as the subtraction theorists claim, become target of his criticism.

One of Taylor's major contributions to the study of secularity and secularization can be seen in his approach. In terms of methodology, Taylor doesn't only rely on the analytical method but principally phenomenological and historical (genealogical).<sup>55</sup> By historical he means that as moderns, we understand ourselves as historical beings, as having transcended prior condition and undergone some process of development or maturation, which he calls as our *stadial consciousness*. He talks about belief and unbelief not as rival theories, rather his focus of attention is on the different kinds of lived experience involving in understanding one's life in one way or the other, on what it's like to live as a believer or unbeliever.<sup>56</sup> He focuses on what in phenomenology is commonly called the *lifeworld*, the pre-reflective, pre-theoretical, everyday sense of the world that most people share and yet rarely explicitly formulate.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Taylor

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<sup>55</sup> STOREY, David (2009). It's Jose Casanova who identifies these as David Storey sites in his book review.

<sup>56</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): pp. 4-5.

<sup>57</sup> STOREY, David (2009)



illustrates his narrative, not from any theoretical articulations, rather from people's imaginary.

Taylor holds that by identifying the change in lived experience we can begin to put the right questions properly and avoid both naïve belief and unbelief. The changes emerge as soon as we take account of the fact that all beliefs are held within a context, framework of the taken for granted, which usually remains tacit and *may even be yet unacknowledged by the agent*, because never been formulated. This is what philosophers who were influenced by Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Pelanyi, call background.<sup>58</sup> In his historical analysis, Taylor acknowledges that belief in God is not the same thing in sixteenth century and twenty first century: *We have moved from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others and frequently not the easiest to embrace.*<sup>59</sup>

The second reason that his account is phenomenological relies on the general notion of fullness. It's a phenomenology of moral-spiritual experience, which serves as backbone for his analysis of the conditions of people's beliefs at various points in history. His crucial premise is that whether we are believers or unbelievers, nihilists, social humanists, we have some general understanding of human flourishing. What makes a difference here is the interpretation. The monks may see fullness as the grace of God, the scientific materialists may see it as a brain-bath oxytocin. From an experiential point of view, Taylor claims that we all see our lives as having a certain moral-spiritual shape even we are materialists.<sup>60</sup> The use of the term *imaginary* in Taylor's narrative points to this common understanding of people.<sup>61</sup> It cannot be defined with analytical clarity and

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<sup>58</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 13. Taylor takes the reference from DREYFUS, Hubert (1995), *Being in the World*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991; and John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York: The Free Press, 1995.

<sup>59</sup> CALHOUN, Craig (2016), *This Philosopher Has Reimagined Identity and Morality for a Secular Age*, December 1, New York Library, 2016. A speech delivered by Craig Calhoun, President of the Berggruen Institute, in the ceremony of conceding Berggruen Prize to Charles Taylor.

<sup>60</sup> STOREY, David (2009). Fullness in Taylor's thinking can be seen as overarching goal organizing our activities and primary good for which we strive, it needs not be something we explicitly formulate; it is something that can break through in limit experiences; or simply a sense that somewhere, in some activities, or condition, where we feel life is fuller, deeper, and richer, more worthwhile, more admirable.

<sup>61</sup> It is the way the ordinary people imagine their surroundings and their social life which is not expressed in theoretical terms, rather it's carried in images, stories, legends or myths, etc.

precision but a shared understanding that underwrites and legitimizes common practices.<sup>62</sup>

It is enlightening and enriching to study Charles Taylor's phenomenological and historical approach to secularity, making textual analysis of his writings with fuller account, which stresses on the shift in conditions of beliefs. Taylor holds that: *Our sense of where we are is crucially defined in part by a story of how we got there.... to get straight to where we are, we have to go back and tell the story properly.*<sup>63</sup> His attempt to explain secularization starts with this simple question *why our age is a secular age?* To answer this question Taylor uses a method of tracing the human condition in the past ages, which pushed the pre-modern people to believe in God naively, unlike today. According to Taylor, the itinerary to arrive at this secular age should not be through a straight path, rather the process is complex and bumpy, with many curves, back and forth, ups and downs, and zigzags. This approach helps us to explore the modern world and to have a better understanding of what construal had constituted the paradigm shift, so that we can tell the story properly and avoid being misguided or misled. Once we get to know what happened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we are challenged to go even farther to the ancient regime, searching for the background picture which contributed to the formation of our present condition. With this itinerary we can try retrieve the human condition in the deep time, where we find the unknown genesis of humanity, manifested in the ruins of monuments, the rites, and symbols, even fossils. From there we come slowly to the noon daylight of reason in our current age which is more secular. These implicate all fundamental questions concerning the cosmos, the human person/self, and society.

From the historical analysis, we see that there is an eclipse of the higher time, which means a general tendency of living according to the time of flourishing, or secular time. With this methodic strategy Taylor tries to show how the understanding of our world developed and moved away from the transcendent to the immanent frame. From the exploration of lived experiences in previous times, pre-modern, he concludes that secularization has moral-spiritual grounding. There are alternative ways of living one's

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. As example of social imaginary, Taylor refers to the economy, public sphere and the sovereign people as mainsprings of what he calls the modern moral order that he insists must be seen as partly a social imaginary. It's an invention and construction and not just as a self-evident, factual, given state of affair.

<sup>63</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 28.

moral-spiritual life in the broadest sense, and the argument Taylor uses here is that in such a condition of belief one can search for fullness, his higher aspiration. He argues that in describing the dimensions of our human moral-spiritual life as identifications of fullness, modes of exile and types of the middle condition, is to allow us to better understand belief and unbelief as lived conditions, not just as theories.<sup>64</sup>

In his account of secularization, Taylor shows a broad framework picture of how history unfolds. He considers the post-modern dismissal of the genealogical aspect as self-deceptive and disingenuous (dishonest). His genealogy is different from others that it's not meant to debunk, however, it is simply to show that the subtraction stories of secularization tend to treat pre-modern people as naïve and benighted, blind to real motives for their belief in the transcendent. He adverts that only genealogists can tell them what was going on behind the back of their consciousness, such as economic forces, biological drives, political ideologies.<sup>65</sup> Taylor's approach to secularization is historical in a sense that we are studying not just factual changes in the shape of Western societies (secularity 1 and 2) but we are also participants in a conflict of interpretations.<sup>66</sup>

Taylor's affirmation of secularity, the state of being secular, as a historical construal, is based on his wider experience and richest knowledge. In *A Secular Age*, he tries to answer the big question: *why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?*<sup>67</sup> According to him, the key difference between these two marker dates is a shift in the understanding of "fullness", that is a move from a condition in which our highest spiritual and moral aspirations make no sense without God to one in which these aspirations can be related to a host of different sources. He points out three aspects that marked the condition of people in those centuries, pre-modern age. First, the natural world they lived in, the cosmos they imagined, testified the divine purpose and action; second, God was implicated in the very existence of society; third, people

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> STOREY, David (2009).

<sup>66</sup> Analysis and narrative must reflect each other, otherwise we fail to do justice to the varieties and connections between the narrative composing our past and guiding our present, consequently we will continue to misinterpret our own position where we are.

<sup>67</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p.25.

lived in an enchanted world.<sup>68</sup> From these, he attempts to illustrate a more comprehensive narrative of secularization not simply in terms of the eclipse of religion and all metaphysical beliefs, but a complex historical process.

In the first chapter, I present the general introduction, a glimpse of Charles Taylor's thinking concerning secularity with its process. The second chapter contains descriptions on subtraction theory of secularization, generally shared by most of the modern theorists, especially in sociology of religion, and Taylor's arguments in his critique against them and his own narrative concerning the matter.

The third chapter illustrates the shift in the condition of beliefs, defining secularity in terms of historical construal which is Taylor's focus of attention. This involves paradigm shift central to cosmic imaginary from which spin all changes towards social imaginary, prompting the emergence of a disciplinary society. Chapter four unfolds the impact of science on the change in understanding of things, the self, and society. The impulse of science highlights the anthropocentric shift, questioning the role of transcendence, from which emerged the exclusive humanism. This humanism prompted the advent of deism and atheism. With the mechanistic explanation of the universe and the evolution of things, science helps to reinforce materialist trends. The shift emerged from reflective stance of the buffered self, questioning the biblical narrative of origin. The intrinsic values of things have been progressively changed with the emerging mechanization of the world picture and the instrumental reason. This dialectical process, either in ontological or epistemological terms, has an existential root, a continued inner conflict within the self, which means the conditions of our existence are at odds with our essential goal.

The fifth chapter deals with the moral-spiritual grounding of secularization, focusing on the notion of fullness with its alternative sources and the emphasis on anthropocentric spirituality. Chapter six tackles the drive to reform started with religious reform (Christian), a reform in terms of personal conversion that effected the institutional and societal changes. Chapter seven highlights an emerging condition of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.: pp. 25-26. The great events in this natural order, storms, droughts, floods, plagues, as well as exceptional fertility and flourishing, were seen as God's acts. A kingdom could only be conceived as grounded in something higher than mere human action in secular time. And beyond that the life of the various associations which made up society, parishes, and so on, were interwoven in ritual and worship. The enchanted world was the condition of that time comparing with our modern condition which is disenchanted (Weber's terminology).

non-anthropocentric construal, which means a non-exclusive humanism, or an inclusive humanism, opening to transcendence in both levels of reality beyond and the ontology of the self. This involves the ontological crisis, altering the inter-subject relationships, and a move towards an eco-social deconstruction. In this condition beyond modernity the role of machines is highlighted substituting the human subjects in performing activities. Finally, the last chapter is about the conclusions. Taylor unfolds the weaknesses of the reductionistic stance and the moral-spiritual groundings of secularization, including his arguments why our cosmic imaginary shapes our moral-spiritual outlooks. Taylor's thinking displays certain trend of our current moral-spiritual predicament. The thesis delivers Taylor's arguments to refute the materialistic misconstructed reality of our existential rootedness that has prompted human crisis towards an eco-sociological abyss.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF SECULARIZATION

### 2.1. Background of the Debates

The discussions on secularization imply not only institutional changes but deeply touches the ontic and epistemic grounds. In the phenomenological perspective, we immerse ourselves in imaginations about the cosmos, ourselves (self-understanding), and society. These imaginaries alter and shape the conditions of belief, from naïve belief to reflective. There is a discrepancy among the thinkers concerning secularization: one is backed by the materialistic philosophy with the impulse of mechanistic/scientific explanation of the world, and another is grounded on a broader philosophical horizon ranging from cultural changes to epistemic change in the order of things and society. The divergent point lies in the subtraction theory, which has mostly the sociologists of religion as its proponents with simpler arguments based on the scientific data which are incomplete. The discussion basically entails religion, which contains the object of our ontological search for meaning and *fullness*, our moral-spiritual aspiration.

A broad consensus in the sociology of religion claims that Emile Durkheim and Max Weber provided the theoretical and methodological foundations for the theory of secularization.<sup>69</sup> Durkheim views the modern society as an organism divided into different parts, each one has different functions, becoming highly differentiated and its members are more specialized. This results the increasing distance from God, who is considered as a projection of the collective conscience. Both Durkheim and Weber constitute the old paradigm of subtraction theory.<sup>70</sup> According to this paradigm, which is more functionalist, as society evolves religion becomes increasingly differentiated.

In “The Sacred Canopy”, Peter Berger defines secularization as *the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols*.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, in institutional level, secularization is defined as separation of Church/religion from state, and while in individual level, it results change

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<sup>69</sup> GOLDSTEIN, Warren S. (2012), “Sociological Theory of Religion”. In *Religion Compass* 6/7: 347-353, 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2012.00362.x, Center for Critical Research on Religion and Harvard University.

<sup>70</sup> TSCHANNEN, Olivier (1991): “The Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization”. In *Journal for the Scientific of Religion*, 30, pp. 395-415. Talcott Parsons, Robert Bellah, Niklas Luhmann, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, Bryan Wilson, David Martin and Richard Fenn are sociological figures belonging to this old paradigm.

<sup>71</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel, “The Rhetoric of Secularization”, in *New German Critique*, 41 ( 1), 1-31, 2014. The reference in BERGER, Peter (1967): *The Sacred Canopy*, p. 107.

in consciousness. And the new paradigm emphasizes on the rational choice of religious pluralism, likely in the American context, which leads through a process to religious revival.<sup>72</sup>

The subtraction theory defines secularization in terms of retreat of religion in public life, its demise as societies become more progressive, more modern, which means more secular, and the decline in religious belief and practices. These claims constitute the story of loss and disenchantment as in the perspective of Max Weber, Gauchet, Berger.<sup>73</sup> Secularity in this sense is understood in terms of disenchantment because of societal changes emerging from the advance in science and technology. Weber engaged himself in a class analysis of the Bible from which emerged his theory of religious rationalization as he stated in the *Ancient Judaism*. Ernst Bloch provided an explicit theory of secularization in a dialectical way as described by Goldstein who compared his theory, tracing from the Judeo-Christian development, with Weber's.<sup>74</sup> In Weber, the ancient Judaism experienced a process of religious rationalization, while in his dialectical theory of secularization, Bloch, tracing the root from Moises through the prophets to Jesus and from Feuerbach to Marx, concludes that such a process is driven by a contradiction between faith in God and faith in man.<sup>75</sup> There is a tension between the sacred and profane, the transcendence and the immanence. Taylor considers this as a simpler account which has emerged from materialism with its outlook that reduces everything to matter, nothing exists beyond matter. It is the fruit of modernity which has revolutionized the world, thanks to the development in science and technology.

Secularization has become a philosophical theme which has wider and deeper ranges. Charles Taylor explores the growing self-understanding of Western modernity in the context of cultural changes based on the evolving human consciousness. This is supported by Habermas's definition of secularization as the central task of reflexive modernity, making clear how closely the concept is tied to self-understanding of the

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<sup>72</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel (2014), in *New German Critique*. R. Stephen Warner includes the following figures who represent this new paradigm are: Theodore Caplow, Roger Finke, Andrew Greeley, Nathan Hatch, Laurence Iannacone, Mary Jo Neitz, Rodney Stark, Nancy Ammerman and Darren Sherkat. He also identified the following figures as defenders of the old paradigm: Frank Lechner, Oliver Tschannen, Wade Clark Roof, James Davison Hunter, and Mark Chaves.

<sup>73</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 426.

<sup>74</sup> GOLDSSTEIN, Warren S., "Dialectics of Religious Rationalization and Secularization: Max Weber and Ernst Bloch", in *Critical Sociology*, Volume 31, Issues 1-2, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

modernity.<sup>76</sup> In recent decades a series of efforts has become manifest to no longer conceive religion as the “other” of European modernism: no longer as an ideology or apogee of metaphysics.<sup>77</sup> What Derrida and Heidegger formulated as “onto-theology” was something open and visible only when metaphysical categories such as eternity and transcendence have been left behind. The deconstruction of Nancy concerning the Christianity means free it from anachronistic categories and dichotomies, such as the opposition between Athens and Jerusalem. Nancy also asserts that the deconstructive movement itself is in a certain sense Christian, emerging from Christian tradition, and from a Christian gesture that undermines the opposition between pagan and Jewish, divine and human, sacred and profane. This argument links directly to classical theories of secularization which understand what specifically modern terms of Christian origins is.<sup>78</sup> The societal changes are driven by how people imagine the cosmos, which alters our understanding of being and self. The philosophical themes that Taylor connects to his conception of secularity are condition of beliefs, the self, human agency, consciousness, epistemic change, and historical construal in which cultural changes occur.

Based on the results of his analysis, Taylor constitutes his theory of secularization and refutes the subtraction narrative with the following arguments:

*the subtraction story gives little place to the cultural changes wrought by the Western modernity, the way in which it has developed new understanding of the self, its place in the society, in space and in time. It fails to see how innovative we have been; its tendency is to see modernity as the liberating of a continuing core of belief and desire from an overlay of metaphysical religious illusion which distorted and inhabited it. But the new ways in which we experience our world and the human conditions: for instance, as autonomous subjects, as beings who can revel in choice, as citizens among others in a sovereign people, as potentially in control of history; all these and others are only comprehensible if we see them*

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<sup>76</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel, “The Rhetoric of Secularization”, in *New German Critique* 41 (1), 1-31, 2014; Sources in Jurgen Habermas, “Glauben und Wissen”, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001.

<sup>77</sup> WEIDENER, Daniel (2014), in *New German Critique*: 41, 1. The effort has been done by Jean Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, Gianni Vattimo, Jean-Luc Marion and before them Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Reference in Friedrich Gogarten, “Despair and Hope for Our Time” (1953), translated by Thomas Wieser, Philadelphia: Pilgrim, 1970.



*in the context of the great cultural changes, the new understanding of the self, agency, time, society, which western modernity has generated.*<sup>79</sup>

Here he highlights the essence of modernity from which all forms of secularization spin and the subtraction story excludes the deeper and fuller path of the itinerary to modernity. Every change in the modes of living in the world and society is undoubtedly understood in the cultural terms resulting from human mental activities or ideas and imaginations. In this sense, Taylor goes deeper into the ontological root of Western modernity, creating new understanding of beings. In accordance with Taylor's thinking, history should be seen in a complex way, implicating all factors, elements and paths, so that we can grasp the whole understanding of things and happenings along the process of modernization, in which changes and innovations occur.

Jurgen Habermas questions the claim that religion has decreased and that there is a close linkage between the modernization of society and the secularization of population. However, he acknowledges that there are three plausible considerations. First, progress in science and technology promotes an anthropocentric understanding of the disenchanted world because the totality of empirical states and events can be causally explained; a scientifically enlightened mind cannot be easily reconciled with theocentric and metaphysical worldviews. Second, with the functional differentiation of social subsystems, the churches and other religious organizations lose their control over law, politics, public welfare, education and science; they restrict themselves to their proper function of administering the means of salvation, religion becomes a private matter and in general lose public influence and relevance. Thirdly, the development from agrarian through industrial to post-industrial societies leads an average to higher levels of welfares and greater social security; and with the reduction of risks in life and the ensuing increase in existential security that there is a drop in the personal need for a practice that promises to cope with uncontrolled contingencies through faith in a higher or cosmic power.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 573.

<sup>80</sup> Jurgen Habermas in the Notes on a Post-Secular Society, under the title "both religious and secular mentalities must be open to a complementary learning, in which he reconsiders the sociological debate on secularization." Published in [signandsight.com/18/06/2008](http://signandsight.com/18/06/2008) (accessed on December 18, 2024).

Taylor invokes Jose Casanova persuasive arguments against the identification and privatization; indeed, a separation out and emancipation of secular spheres has undoubtedly occurred.

*But it doesn't follow at all "that the process of secularization would bring in its wake the privatization and the marginalization of religion in the modern world." On the contrary, Casanova claims that today "we are witnessing the deprivatization of religion..... Religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them."<sup>81</sup>*

Taylor gives a different account of secularization aiming to rattle Weber's *iron cage*. He intentionally remolds Weber's powerful image as a frame, rather than a cage. His main quarrel with the subtraction theories is characteristically modern tendency, set in motion most powerfully by Nietzsche, to define religion as *man's search for meaning*. Taylor unfolds three facets of secularity which are common in most theorists and sociologists. The first facet (secularity 1) consists in the separation of political institutions from the religious ones, consequently religion moved away from the public sphere to the private matter; The second facet (secularity 2) consists in the falling off religious belief and practice.<sup>82</sup> The third facet (secularity 3), which is closely connected to the second, consists of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others. According to him, the third facet offers a complete picture of secularity. Secularization is to be understood in terms of a series of the cultural changes which are indispensable from people's imaginary of the natural order of beings. Old modes of lifestyle, even understanding of life-forms in nature, have gradually turned into the background of the new ones, evolving, and multiplying progressively.

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<sup>81</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, University of Chicago Press, 1994, cited in Taylor (2007) p. 426.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

## 2.2. Subtraction Theory

Taylor calls theories of modernity the “subtraction stories” by arguing that these theories

*explain the story of modernity in general, and secularity in particular, by human beings having lost, or sloughed off, or liberated themselves from certain earlier, confining horizons, or illusions, or limitations of knowledge. What emerges from this process – modernity or secularity – is to be understood in terms of underlying features of human nature which were all along, but had been impeded by what is now set aside.*<sup>83</sup>

He classifies the subtraction theories in two, such as the common subtraction story, which attributes everything to disenchantment, arguing that because science gave us naturalistic explanation of the world, therefore, people began to look for alternatives to God; and the fuller subtraction story, which holds that not just the disenchantment but also the fading of God’s presence in all aspects of public spheres, therefore, there are possible alternative reference-points for fullness.<sup>84</sup> According to this common subtraction theory, religion simply falls away, because it’s naïve to believe in a transcendent God, and to be replaced by science and rationality (reason). The retreat of religion in public spaces is the consequence of institutional changes in the modern world. The process of functional differentiation led to a diversity of relative autonomous subsystems (economy, politics, science) that took many facets of social life out of the purview of the church institutions. Instead of an overarching framework, religion became simply another parallel subsystem.

The arguments of subtraction theories in general are based on scientific development, disenchanting the world and creating a new sense of the self, new understanding of human agency. In this perspective, the decline of religious beliefs and practice occurs because of the process of autonomization and social differentiation, a process by which functions are originally carried out together crystalize out and fall into

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

a separate sphere with their own norms, rules, and institutions.<sup>85</sup> Here religious influences are gradually out of public spheres and religion has another function in the society, which is simply as cultural defense.

Weber attempted to explain the disenchantment in the more religious societies in Western Christendom. He observed the different rhythms of secularization and underlined the placid conviction of the loss of cultural value of religious transcendence.<sup>86</sup> *The modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to give religious conscience a significance for the conduct of life, culture and rational character it had in the past.*<sup>87</sup> Weber had drawn inspiration from Schiller concerning the matter of the effect of de-deification of nature.<sup>88</sup> Pierucci unfolds Weber's perspective of the differences between knowledge and rational domination of the natural world, and the individual, inexpressible, incommunicable mystical experiences whose unspoken content stands as the last beyond still possible alongside the de-deified mechanism of the world.<sup>89</sup>

The disenchantment is an old issue, as we see in Weber's description, which had begun since the ancient Judaism propagated by the prophets, and in conjunction with the Hellenistic scientific thought had repudiated all magical means to salvation. Therefore, disenchantment of the world takes place precisely in more religious societies, and it is essentially a religious process because it is the ethical religions that provide the elimination of magic as means of salvation.<sup>90</sup> In this perspective, secularization implies abandonment, reduction of religious status, defection, a loss for religion. Pierucci's description below portrays the process:

*Secularization immerses us in cultural modernity's battle against religious power itself, defining as its empirical manifestation in the modern world the decline of religion as a force "in temporalibus", its disestablishment, its retirement from the*

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 425; Taylor's reference is Olivier Tschanenn. The Church used to provide education and health care, and these now take place in specialized institutions which are often state-financed and run. Also he explains in pp. 432-435.

<sup>86</sup> PIERUCCI, Antonio, "The Ethical Perspectives". In the *Brazilian review of Social Sciences*, Special Issue, no. 1, October 2000, p. 135. The term disenchantment is from Weber's expression.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 135. Pierucci quoted from WEBER, Max, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, English translation by Talcott Parsons, 1995 (1930), p. 205.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

*state, the reduction of its cultural value and dismissal/liberation from its function of social integration.*<sup>91</sup>

Science came to reinforce the process of disenchantment. Consequently, secularization has become most expressive in the rise of modernity with the revolution in science and technology. In Weber's notion, modernization is characterized by social differentiation, instrumental rationalization, disenchantment, fragmentation of value spheres and pluralism. Thus, it is an inevitable process in the modern age where all phenomena resulting from religious conception succumb.<sup>92</sup> In other words, all subtraction theories claim that secularization is a process of declining religious beliefs and practices as society becomes increasingly modern. These theories put science as a threat to religion and all metaphysical beliefs, and modernity itself becomes an antagonist force to religion. The protagonists of these theories argue that all kinds of superstitions and magic powers are an obstacle for scientific development and social progress, therefore these should be disenchanted. All public institutions and practices are free from enchantment and belief in God atrophies. The common notion of secularity in the contemporary world refers to the separation of religion from state and public affairs, privatizing, and marginalizing religion. Weber's term of secularization was to depict the political, social, and private decline of the religious influence because of the modernity.<sup>93</sup>

Frank Lechner describes secularization in terms of societal change, and this consists of a coherent empirical body that leans on fundamental assumptions of Weber. According to these assumptions, in certain societies, when worldviews and institutions anchored in transcendence lose social and cultural influence, this is a result of the dynamics of rationalization, because Western societies, which have been most affected by this rationalization process, have become deeply secularized.<sup>94</sup>

Talcott Parsons defines secularization as functional differentiation, that is, the process whereby religious institutions lose control of a wider variety of social functions and yield to intellectual disciplines that are institutionalized in *ways that partly replace*

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 137. Reference is taken from Weber's idea of secularization.

<sup>92</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 307.

<sup>93</sup> WEBER, Max (1947), *Essay in Sociology*, translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner and Co.

<sup>94</sup> PIERUCCI, Antonio (2000): p. 139. See also in LECHNER, Frans (1991): p. 1104.

*traditional religion*.<sup>95</sup> In Peter Berger's view, secularization results in a widespread collapse of the plausibility of traditional religious definitions of reality.<sup>96</sup> Steve Bruce has defined secularization in terms of social fragmentation, the disappearance of community, the growth of bureaucratization, and increasing rationalization.<sup>97</sup> Religion becomes polarized in its function, simply as cultural defense, and is no longer seen as an independent motivating force in the conditions of modernity. It is reduced to immanent term and not to be seen in the transcendent term, which is essential for religious belief. The emergence of various materialist accounts assumes religion as "superstructure", its forms are always to be explained by economic structures and processes<sup>98</sup>. The development of science keeps on suppressing religion by putting the faith into doubt and the emerging naturalistic explanation of the world raises the awareness of people to look for alternative sources to fullness.

According to Daniel Weidner, defining secularization as the disappearance and collapse of religion in modern world seems a plausible narrative, therefore, modernization is an age of secularization.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, he is also aware of the case in the United States, where the state is religiously neutral/secular while individually religiosity appears to have steadily increased, as opposed to Europe, where state-supported religion contends with diminishing personal piety. Correspondingly, the American debate focusses largely on setting up a model of the present role of religion, including its relationship with state, while European debate tends to treat secularization as a historical phenomenon.<sup>100</sup> The American context separates religion from state, while the European does not only mean separation but also going further by creating

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<sup>95</sup> VORSTER, Nico, "Christianity and Secularization in South Africa", in *Studies in World Christianity* 19.2 (2013): 141-161. Quoted from Talcott Parsons, "The Evolution of Societies", New York: Prentice Hall, 1977, p. 194.

<sup>96</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel (2014): in *New German Critique*. The reference is taken from Peter L. Berger, "The Sacred Canopy," "Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion", New York: Doubleday, 1967, p. 127 and p. 156.

<sup>97</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 431. This is taken from Bruce's account based on the rationalization and enlightenment.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 433. "These materialist accounts are in effect denying any independent efficacy to religious aspirations".

<sup>99</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel (2014), "The Rhetoric of Secularization", p. 1, in *New German Critique*, 121, vol. 41, no. 1, Winter.

<sup>100</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel (2000), in *New German Critique*: 2. See the reference in Secularization Thesis in Steve Bruce, *secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2011; see also in David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization*, New York: Harper and Row, 1979; and the contemporary derivatization in Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in Modern World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

the condition of strong resistance against religion, Christianity. Weidner points out the materialistic dominance in modernism which assumes religion merely as a sort of gloss composed of false consciousness.<sup>101</sup>

Robert Bellah considers Weber's paradigm as the most plausible explanation of secularity, and asserts that the central preoccupation of Weber, such as rationalism, disenchantment, fragmentation of value spheres and the interplay of value and instrumental rationality, remains valid.<sup>102</sup> Steve Bruce shows the fact that in almost every society for which data are available, economic growth and industrialization have been accompanied by a decline in commitment to traditional religion.<sup>103</sup>

### 2.3. Taylor's Critique of the Subtraction Theory

There is a continuing polemic against the "subtraction stories", referring to theories of modernity in general, and secularity in particular. They explain the process (modernity or secularity) in terms of human beings having lost, or sloughed off, or liberated themselves from certain earlier, confining horizons, or illusions, or limitations of knowledge. Against these subtraction stories Taylor argues that

*Western modernity, including its secularity, is the fruit of new inventions, newly constructed self-understandings and related practices, and can't be explained in terms of perennial features of human life.*<sup>104</sup>

Taylor sees secularity in the third sense (secularity 3) which focuses on the conditions of belief, lived experience, however, he acknowledges that articulating these conditions is harder than one might think. According to him:

*This is partly because people tend to be focused on belief itself. What people are usually interested in, what arouse a lot of anguish and conflict, is the second issue like: What do people believe and practice? How many believe in God? In which direction is the trend going? Does our secularist regime marginalize believing Christians? But in our societies the big issue about religion is usually defined in*

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<sup>101</sup> WEIDNER (2014).

<sup>102</sup> BELLAH, Robert (2010), `Confronting modernity: Maruyama Masao, Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor. p. 34.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.: p. 210. Reference in Bruce (2010): p. 210.

<sup>104</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 22.

*terms of belief. First Christianity has always defined itself in relation to credal statements.*<sup>105</sup>

Secularism in sense 2 has often been seen as the decline of Christian belief; this decline is largely powered by the rise of other beliefs, such as in science, or by the *deliverances of particular sciences*<sup>106</sup>. Taylor is not satisfied with the explanation of secularity 2 that science refutes and hence crowds out of religious belief. He doesn't see the cogency of the supposed arguments from the findings of Darwin to the alleged refutation of religion; and there is no any adequate explanation for why in fact people abandoned their faith, even when they themselves articulate what happened in such terms as "Darwin refuted the Bible" as allegedly said by a Harrow schoolboy in the 1890s.<sup>107</sup>

For Taylor, the definition of secularization in terms of disappearance of religion, old forms of religious belief and practices, is a simpler and unconvincing, because it ignores the background pictures which had shaped the horizons of our present condition. Theory of secularization turns out to be an ideological process that tends to marginalize religion. Indeed, he admits the decline of Christian faith and religious practice, like less church goers and religious indifference and even the rise of unbelievers in the West. However, according to him, secularization doesn't mean not believing in God or simply the loss of religion. He considers such a theory as misleading because of the narrow definition of religion merely in terms of credal statements and beliefs. For Taylor, subtraction theory gives little room to the cultural changes wrought by the Western modernity, arguing that

*It fails to see how innovative we have been; its tendency is to see modernity as the liberating of a continuing core of belief and desire from an overlay of metaphysical religious illusion which distorted and inhabited it. But the new ways in which we experience our world and the human conditions: for instance, as autonomous subjects, as beings who can revel in choice, as citizens among others in a sovereign people, as potentially in control of history; all these and others are only comprehensible if we see them in the context of the great cultural changes,*

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. For instance evolutionary theory or neuro-physiological explanations of mental functioning.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. See Taylor's reference to the saying of schoolboy, referred to George Macaulay Trevelyan, invoked by Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 164.



*the new understanding of the self, agency, time, society, which western modernity has generated.*<sup>108</sup>

He contests subtraction view of modernity as what arises from washing away of old horizons, the original spiritual vision which had sustained modernity in the West, and modern humanism can only have arisen through the fading of earlier forms. For Taylor, this view is quite inadequate account of modernity, and he explains that:

*what has got screened out is the possibility that Western account of modernity might be sustained by its own original spiritual vision, that is, not one generated simply by and inescapably out of the transition. But this possibility is in fact the reality.*<sup>109</sup>

Taylor adverts that being secular does not necessarily mean disconnected with God or disbelief in God, rather it means that we are facing many possibilities to achieve fullness or richness of life, either in a condition as believers or as unbelievers. As believers we can achieve a mature faith in God, not just believe in God naively rather reflectively. Taylor illustrates the modern tendency of secularity in terms of *the immanent frame* which denotes the perception of everything in the worldly perspective of natural order without reference to anything outside or beyond. Within this immanent frame, ideas about transcendence are either errors or simply unnecessary to achieving empirically verifiable knowledge.

Taylor refutes the affirmation that religion, transcendent belief, loses its social and cultural influences in the profoundly secularized societies in the West because of the dynamic of rationalization. He debunks such affirmation and argues that what they claim about the loss of religion as an inevitable product of modernity and urbanization has been historically inaccurate because in some societies, like the United States, religion still has its influence.<sup>110</sup> And the world in different tones remains remarkably religious. According to Taylor, the assumption that religion inevitably loses ground with the development of science and rationality is unconvincing and untrue.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

<sup>109</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1999): "Comment on Habermas", in *European Journal of Philosophy* 7:2, pp. 158-163, Backwell Publishers.

<sup>110</sup> This has been propagated by the social segments which he calls the Right (wing).

The major problem in the subtraction theories is in their methodology. Taylor does not deny all claims under the subtraction account, which have science as their great impulse. Rather he mainly debunks the method they use with simpler arguments that are untrue in telling the whole story. He situates secularity, the state of being secular, in a complex historical construal and basically connected to the shift in cosmic imaginary. The way people imagine the world shapes their social imaginary and moral-spiritual outlooks. They are wrong in methodology, which is misleading in their approach and reading history simply in a straight path.

According to Taylor, the rise of modernity is a complex societal changes towards multiculturalism. The loss of religious influence in public spaces doesn't do away with vast majority of people who are still believing in God and practicing their religion rigorously though just in ritual prescriptions and ceremonial presence.<sup>111</sup> Taylor's refutation has a solidly grounded argument on the fact that Christianity has become stronger in some places in the West after some years of slowing down.<sup>112</sup> So, what the subtraction theorists neglect is the path in the itinerary to modernity, which is very complex with continuity and discontinuity, not a straight path. The straight path approach to secularization simplifies the story.

*This kind of approach is against very simple attempts to write this story as one in which you move from the sacred kingship directly into the naked public sphere. This is not the way it works at all. You move through this intermediate form, and this intermediate form is not totally different from certain atheist or agnostic forms.*<sup>113</sup>

In Taylor's explanation we see secularization as a continuous process without totally breaking away from the old forms, or no total disconnection with the previous forms backgrounding the modernity. Rather there are intermediate forms of cultural changes from one phase to another. The sedimentation of the old forms has been ignored by most theorists of secularization or modernity. In other words, the current cultural forms,

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<sup>111</sup> Idem, (2007): p. 2. Taking as examples the United States of America and the United Kingdom and some Scandinavian countries.

<sup>112</sup> Taylor refers to the sexual revolution in 1960s in Europe backed by the ethics of authenticity as cause of slowing down the move.

<sup>113</sup> DE LEON, Francisco Lombo & VAN LEEUWEN, Bart van (2003), "Charles Taylor on Secularization: Introduction and Interview," in *Ethical Perspective*, p. 82.

including forms of religious belief, are just metamorphosis of the old forms, or they are emerging from the ruins of previous forms sedimented in the present world.

Against the subtraction narrative, which devalues Christian faith in the modern West, Taylor argues that *our societies in the West will forever remain historically informed by Christianity*.<sup>114</sup> Weidner reiterates the importance to reflect on these Christian origins, because in order to acknowledge the path taken allows us to perceive our own position; correspondingly, Taylor presents his monumental narrative of how we have become secular.<sup>115</sup> Our awareness of living in a disenchanted world is passing through a struggle and an achievement, and the different itineraries in different countries of the Western civilization are deeply rooted in the Christian faith. The critique of Taylor takes as reference the exceptions raised by Wallis and Bruce that Churches can find their role to slow down or inhibits secularization.<sup>116</sup>

Taylor analyses Bruce's definition of religion in which context secularization is understood.

*Religion for us consists of actions, beliefs and institutions predicated upon the assumption of the existence either supernatural entities with powers of agency, or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose, which have the capacity to set the conditions of, or to intervene in, human affairs.*<sup>117</sup>

He has some objections in this definition of religion, like the term "supernatural", which has developed in the context of Christian civilization. However, there are various forms of "spiritual" outlooks today which do not seem to invoke the "supernatural". Taylor focuses not only on beliefs and actions predicated on the existence of supernatural entities, but also on the perspective of a transformation of human beings, which takes them beyond or outside of whatever is normally understood as human flourishing.<sup>118</sup> Religion used to be an integral part of human life and culture, but in the modern era, there has been progressive disenchantment, fewer people declare themselves believers;

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<sup>114</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 514.

<sup>115</sup> WEIDNER, Daniel (2014) in New German Critique, p. 1.

<sup>116</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 432. For example, like in the cases of Ireland and Poland.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.: p. 429. Also cited in WALLIS, Roy and BRUCE, Steve, "Secularization: The Orthodox Model", in Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.: p. 430. This is the reason for Taylor to define religion in terms of the distinction transcendent/immanent as common understanding in the modern West.

religion loses most of its public role; science replaces religion as the basis for authoritative knowledge. Taylor acknowledges these changes but insists that they cannot be well understood simply in terms of subtraction, which does not entail transformation of culture in general. Peter Berger who in the later years realized that the subtraction thesis of secularization is false, states:

*My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today with some exceptions, to which I will come presently, is furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled secularization theory is essentially mistaken.*<sup>119</sup>

Berger's critique reinforces Taylor's arguments against subtraction theory pointing to the use of a wrong methodology, which has misguided us to the false affirmation of the disappearance of religion as the societies become increasingly secular.

Taylor disagrees with subtraction theories which attribute everything to disenchantment and argues by referring to the new mechanistic science of 17<sup>th</sup> century was not seen as threatening to God.<sup>120</sup> He reiterates that the whole European civilization is incorporated in Christianity. This has been undermined by the shift in the discussion about the dramatic way of declaring the death of Christendom. There are different spiritual paths, which are hindered by the attempt to hang on to the Christian ideal. He adverts that the disenchantment has grounded on Christian motives, not on science although the scientific revolution has great impulses on the process of disenchantment; indeed, religion's role changes as people reimagine what the world, human life, and society are like. How modern people understand personhood, moral obligations, or the place of material well-being in a good life, have all changed. However, religion is not simply subtracted from these nor even to be reduced. He argues that even if religion becomes in some sense harder, however, it does not vanish, and religious experience may even gain new dimensions.

According to Taylor, the great problem with mainstream of secularization theory is that it failed to appreciate the enduring tension between a transformative perspective

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<sup>119</sup> BERGER, Peter L. (1999), *The Disecularization of the World: A global interview*, p. 2. This is contrary to his early position in 1967, cited in Taylor (2007): p. 430.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

and the modest view of flourishing. He suggests that we should take seriously the drawing power of scientism which is not a neutral stance towards the world but rests itself on a moral framework with a certain ethic of belief: one ought not to believe what one has insufficient evidence for.<sup>121</sup> The other explanation of secularization suffers from the same problem, namely that the spiritual and moral forces of secularization are not considered. Taylor contests modern approach to religion, because it is watering down religion into a general search for meaning. He argues that even for the secular humanists who deny the existence of God and an afterlife, there is something they aspire to, which is beyond this life.

Most modern thinkers, following materialistic outlook, assume that science can create norms for society, which means that moral authority resides within human subjects, as rational agents, and these norms are rational because being produced by human reason. This means that the norms we receive are just from our own scientific investigation, the authority coming from our own reason, not from God. Taylor agrees that we claim ourselves as legislators of meaning, but beyond this we can be struck by the sense that we stand before a normative abyss. He argues that the fact of being legislators of meaning does not mean we decide for ourselves what is right: we cannot decide what is right but only will follow it. He acknowledges that our moral impulses are natural, just like other impulses, but moral demands claim to be higher, overriding, to be those we really ought to listen to, even when other desires clamor to ignore them.<sup>122</sup>

Taylor criticizes the naturalist view because it has ignored the ontological accounts of morality, considering these as irrelevant. His inescapable frameworks in various facets of modern identity are based on the notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self; this can only make sense with further understanding of how our pictures of the good have evolved.<sup>123</sup> In his critique on theories of modernity, Taylor argues that we cannot grasp the richness and complexity of the modernity, which is a unique combination of greatness and danger, unless we see how the modern understanding of the self developed out of earlier pictures of human identity.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Idem. (1989): p. 403-404.

<sup>122</sup> Idem. (2007): p. 581.

<sup>123</sup> Idem. (1989): pp. 3-5.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.: p. x.

## 2.4. Taylor's Theory of Secularization

Taylor's theory of secularization, or secularity, is moved by his disagreement with the current ideas which are dominant in the contemporary world, or at least with the way in which problems are formulated. He describes secularity as a story of construal/construction, not as a story of loss, or human beings having lost, held by subtraction stories. The story Taylor is retelling is in the context where cultural changes take place, therefore, a story construction. The context he refers to is the condition of lived experience, in which our understanding of the world has been shaped. Taylor gives more importance to the shift in background from which we moved towards building up of our self-understanding from porous to buffered self. He explains his narrative of secularization, which begins with a shift in the background, by shedding light on the state of faith in the 1500s, which is different from that of the 2000s. The difference emerges as soon as we take account of the fact that all beliefs are held within the context or framework of the taken-for-granted. For Taylor, the shift in the background comes to light when we focus on certain distinctions we make today, such as between immanent and transcendent, natural and supernatural. Everyone understands this distinction, at least in the West. Those who affirm the second term of the pair are believers and those who deny this second term of pair are unbelievers. Then he explains of how did we move from a condition where, in Christianity, people lived naively within a theistic construal to one in which we all shunt between two stances (theistic and atheistic). It is this shift in background, in the whole context in which we experience and search for fullness, that Taylor calls the coming to a secular age.<sup>125</sup> Taylor reiterates that secularity in the sense of the condition of belief is a matter of the whole context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place.<sup>126</sup>

Taylor emphasizes the importance of cosmic imaginary in the process of secularization. All shifts in understanding of things, beings, ourselves, and society depend on how we imagine the world. He attempts to figure out the picture of the world we live in by going back to explore the background from which this picture has

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<sup>125</sup> Idem. (2007): p. 14.

<sup>126</sup> The context of understanding here means both matters that will have been explicitly formulated by almost everyone, such as plurality of options, and some matters which form the implicit, largely unfocused background of this experience and search (pre-ontology of Heidegger).

emerged. Secularity, according to Taylor, has been developed within the Western Christendom, stemming from the increasingly anthropocentric versions of religion that arose from the Reformation. His theory of secularity (3), as against secularity 1 and 2, *consists of new conditions of belief, in a new shape of experience, which prompts to and is defined by belief, and in a new context in which all search and interrogation on moral and spiritual issues must proceed.*<sup>127</sup> In his perspective, the modern age is not an age without religion rather a change from the old paradigm to the new one, old patterns suppressed giving way to the new ones. The condition of beliefs changed as people reimagined the world and changed their understanding of fullness.

Taylor's account basically begins with the dynamic view of beings in the nature, cosmic imaginary, from which emerges social imaginary with its normative patterns. Every change arises from how we imagine the world, nature, and the self; and this cosmic imaginary becomes normative pattern for people to build a society in accordance with the natural order of things. In the ethical perspective, Taylor holds that the cultural changes develop a package encompassing democracy and human rights, which can be understood as a new notion of a moral order replacing the hierarchical one based on its precedent *ontic logos*.

All forms of secularization are about religion, or religious beliefs as we see in secularity 1, 2 and 3. Taylor finds hard to define religion because the religious phenomena are so tremendously varied in human life. For him, it is unnecessary to forge a definition that covers everything which is religious in all human societies at all ages. He offers a definition for the purposes of his analysis, stipulating a working definition in terms of *the distinction transcendent/immanent*.<sup>128</sup> He calls this *taylor-made* definition of religion, narrowing the scope to a particular civilization, Western Christendom (North Atlantic world); his focus is in exploring to understand a set of forms and changes arising in this modern West. Taylor articulates the change in this civilization concerning the status of religion: *we have moved from a world in which the place of fullness was understood unproblematically outside of or beyond human life, to a conflicted age in which this construal is challenged by others which place it (in a wide range of different*

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<sup>127</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 20.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.: p. 15.

ways) *within human life*.<sup>129</sup> He tries to describe religion not just in institutional terms but also in personal terms, which means involving all personal search for fullness. The modern secularization stresses on such a personal search for plenitude, which becomes the moral-spiritual aspiration for any human beings, believers and unbelievers alike.

In Taylor's outlook, secularization implicates complex cultural changes with multi-facets, not simply the decline of faith and religious practices, and it's not the demise of religion. The misconception of secularity depends on how we define religion. Taylor argues that if we define religion in terms of great historical faiths, or even identical with explicit belief in supernatural beings, then it seems to have declined. However, we should define it in a wider range, including all spiritual movements searching for meanings and fullness, and in this sense, religion does not decline.<sup>130</sup> In this sense, religion is understood in terms of *seekers*, which he refers to the large number of people who claim themselves as religious or spiritual but do not belong to any organized religion, believing but not belonging. Religion in a wider sense consists of all movements of spirituality which help people to seek fullness, deepest feelings of happiness, searching for the meanings of life. He argues that the seekers feel urgent to achieve it in many ways without necessarily incorporating to any formal religion, and it is something ethically liberating and often creative. This implicates our attempts to seek identification with existing communities and cultures not just to develop our identity, but also fundamentally to meet our deepest feelings of happiness or fullness.<sup>131</sup> According to Taylor, religion is not simply a matter of holding different abstract of intellectual commitments from others, believing in the factuality of different propositions, rather it is a participation in different way of imagining the world.

In the perspective of paradigm shift, Taylor identifies the early patterns, which emerged from the natural law theories of Grotius and Locke, and unfolds these features:

a) *the order holds between human beings taken as individuals that is disembedded from any larger hierarchical order; b) it takes these individuals as fundamentally equal (this in a sense follows from the (a)); c) each strives on his*

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.: p. 427.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. pp. 505-593. Taylor's notion of "fullness" refers to the condition in which we experience the sense of meaning and perfection, feeling of abundance and richness. The description about religion is seen in Ibid.: pp. 505-593.



*own, that is, in freedom, to maintain himself, using the resources which the world puts at his disposal; and d) the relation normatively prescribed between these individuals is one of mutual benefit, that is, everyone, as long as his own preservation is not in competition, ought to strive to preserve mankind.*<sup>132</sup>

In the Lockean paradigm, the norm is founded on the Divine Providence, which is designed by God. According to Taylor, this fundamental notion of order has been transposed into other theological or metaphysical frameworks, beginning with the Enlightenment idea of a harmonious order of nature, in which each reaches his best happiness in working harmoniously towards the happiness of others.<sup>133</sup> Such is mutual benefit that shapes modern moral order.

Taylor situates secularity in the whole context of understanding our moral-spiritual experience which entails the search for meanings and fullness. The context here means the explicit forms of plurality of options and the implicit form of unfocused background of this experience and search.<sup>134</sup> This implicates the identity formation of human agency towards self-understanding. For Taylor, the evolving human self-understanding has been accomplished through three major facets of Deism: the anthropocentric shift, which sees nature as primarily for people; God relates to us through an impersonal order that he established; religion is to be understood from nature by reason alone. He considers Deism as the intermediate step between the previous age of belief in God and the modern secular age.

Taylor acknowledges the significant data in the Northern Hemisphere, which indicates the decline of religion, but it does not really fit in with modernity. There is a tremendous difference in the way religious beliefs and practices were among various countries of this part of the world, which were all modern and had progressive characteristics. The impact of secularization on the religious life was very differentiated. Taylor tries to amplify that there were other aspects and facets of life which can be seen in terms of secularization, likely in the evolution of a form of society in which it is conceivable as normal the separation of state from any specific religion. Secularization

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<sup>132</sup> TAYLOR (2000): "Comment on Jurgen Habermas from Kant to Hegel and Back Again", in *European Journal of Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 159-160.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.: p. 159-160.

<sup>134</sup> Idem. (2007): p. 3.

has been an attempt to have a society in which the metaphysical and religious options might be free and equal, and there might have freedom of expression.

Taylor's description of the rise of modernity focuses on the context of paradigm shift expressed in certain frameworks, which differ from previous forms of belief in the background picture. He begins retelling the story by departing from pre-modern condition of belief, which constituted porous identity, where people imagined the world as sacred/sacral, human beings naively took their norms, their goods, their standards of ultimate value from an authority outside of themselves, from God, or any divine authorities. Then this condition changed to one where most people tend to imagine the world not as sacred but as objectifying scientific research or as instrumental reason. They came to realize that they must establish their norms, their goods, and their values for themselves on their own authority, not from outside. Modernity, indeed, has changed the forms of the old paradigms and altered our understanding of beings, or things in nature. New forms of understanding fullness, of thinking and doing things, of living or lifestyle, characterized the modern world. The search for fullness and meaning (of life) as our higher moral-spiritual aspirations remains the preoccupation of all peoples at any time and space in the world. However, the perception that God is the only and inescapable source of these higher aspirations had changed to the new understanding that there are alternatives to God.<sup>135</sup>

In the critical perspective, Taylor argues that secularization is not the process towards the disappearance of the ancient world, including religion/metaphysical beliefs, rather a change in understanding of meanings and fullness (of life, or of beings). In this perspective, he raises some guiding questions which are important to better understand secularity. *What constitutes a fulfilled life? What makes life really worth living? What would we most admire for?*<sup>136</sup> It is not easy to illustrate them, even in the modern world, because many are codified in philosophical theories, moral codes and in religious practices and devotions. Interpretations (hermeneutics) are needed to decipher and unfold the messages these codes portray and to interpret the empirical text, lived experiences or the book of life. The conditions of beliefs have changed over time and there is a new understanding of beings. In the pre-modern world, people were afraid of

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.: p. 16.

questioning their faith because of the naïve imaginary, which shaped their identity. In this context, Taylor admits that this world disappears and is substituted by the disenchanted one which unfolded the buffered identity, free from fear of the spirits, or gods. However, he reiterates that secularity does not mean the loss of religion, or people no longer believe in God. It is linked to the questions concerning human flourishing, which had been undermined by the pre-modern people, but emphasized by modern people.

Comparatively, the narrative of secularization in Taylor is a description in terms of the shift from a condition of *naïve* cosmos to *reflective* world, while in the subtraction narrative, it is the disappearance of all beliefs and conceptions of the ancient regime and pre-modern worldviews. Taylor makes a diagnostic on secularity showing a set of characteristics, among them are highlighted here: *first*, common institutions and practices, known as public spheres, for instance, political and economic structures and institutions, which are liberating from religion or Church influence; *second*, the decadence of the religious belief and practices, many people are turning away from God and no longer going to Churches; *third*, a shift in the conditions of belief: a move from a society where belief in God as unchallenged and unproblematic to the one where it is understood as one option among others, there are alternatives.<sup>137</sup> According to him, the first and the second are less true, not all are acceptable.

The itinerary from *naïve* world to *reflective one* (modern world) has been through a bumpy path, not a straight path traced by the subtraction narrative. Moral outcome of the subtraction story was that science establishes what is morally right in terms of utilitarianism.<sup>138</sup> From this emerged the research to shed light on what will in fact bring about happiness, which is a sense of fullness, richness or abundance, in life. Enlightenment has contributed to accelerating the process of secularization, impacting on the paradigm shift and creating new understanding fullness of life and of being.

The paradigm shift sets light on the moral development following the same storyline: from childhood to adulthood, from barbarity to civilization, then we climb to the point of being capable of self-authorization.<sup>139</sup> In this illustration, Taylor emphasizes

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.: p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.: p. 580. The right thing to do is to act in order to achieve the greatest happiness. This is the mainline of Kant's moral idea as the foundation of the modern moral order.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Ibid.

on the change in frameworks that explain the new paradigm, arising from the lived experience, common cosmic understanding of people, ranging from a limited idea of cosmos to the concept of universe, which is deep and unknown, from the notion of place to the vast and unlimited space. The shift from the old outlook, stressing the metaphysical stance of moral authority, to the new one, which emphasizes on the immanent frame, has resulted cultural changes. This has contributed to the evolution towards multiculturalism which marked the industrial and technological societies in the civilization of the modern West.

Taylor illustrates the historical fact with critical approach to science and its mechanistic explanation of the world, which prompted the materialistic outlook. His ambition is to study human life and action by using methods of human science, like anthropology, sociology, history, are modeled on the natural sciences, like physics and chemistry. For him, science does not act against religion, Christianity, rather challenges it to evolve and to be more reflective in answering to the emerging questions of modernity in the light of Gospel. Indeed, scientific revolution has pushed to a modern secularity which provides a series of changes and unlimited options. Taylor doesn't only present these outlooks but also makes his own assessment of them with critical judgment based on his academic and religious backgrounds.

His explanation about the shift in understanding of the order of beings in nature exposes the gradual and progressive movement from the old view of cosmos which had framed the vision of things in the nature as created beings towards the mechanistic variant.<sup>140</sup> Thus, the old forms of worldview become background pictures segmented in the present ones as I mentioned in previous setting. The modern European civilization has evolved from its old forms. Taylor refutes the statement of subtraction story that science gave us naturalistic explanation of the world then people began to look for alternatives to God, therefore, science by itself determines modern unbelief. He argues that things didn't work that way because the new mechanistic science of the 17<sup>th</sup> century wasn't seen as necessarily threatening to God. It was against the enchanted world and magic beliefs.<sup>141</sup> Science in helping to disenchant the world has contributed

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.: p. 98. The mechanistic view of things in the nature doesn't recognize them as *ens creatum*, created being, but as natural evolution.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

to opening the way to exclusive humanism, but the resources for this view were available in the ancient regime, especially in the non-theistic ethical outlooks of the ancient Greek.<sup>142</sup> Taylor adds that these non-theistic views also place us in a larger spiritual and cosmic order, as was the case, for instance, with Platonism and Stoicism. They had no necessary truck with magic and wood spirits but resisted disenchantment and mechanistic universe in their own ways, thus they were not exclusive humanism. The rise of modernity does not simply mean the story of loss because the exclusive humanism was undoubtedly available in Epicureanism.<sup>143</sup>

In other words, Taylor's conception of secularization is about change from the old construal to a new one with broader horizon prompted by the shift in cosmic imaginary. The modern cosmic imaginary has shaped the social order from which springs new sense of individuation. He adverts that there are alternative ways of living our spiritual and moral life in the broadest sense and Christian faith is just one option among others. In this new condition of multi-options, people chose among these alternatives which can help them to achieve fullness, richness, in their lives or in the place wherein they live their lives, as having moral/spiritual shape; the activities and place where people feel life fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be.<sup>144</sup> He adds that this fullness is perhaps a place of power we often experience as deeply moving, as inspiring, or feeling in a condition of peace and wholeness.<sup>145</sup> The modern cosmic and social imaginaries underline the immanent powers of intra-subject, like the power of reason and other natural impulses, and extra-subjects, cosmic powers. The search for meanings and fullness is existential to human agents of all times, and the distinction is that, unlike the only option of the old moral-spiritual paradigm, the new paradigm offers multi options to fullness.

The new form of religious life changes according to the development of new paradigms which constitute broader horizons of modern people. Taylor reiterates that the type of religious life in the Middle Ages would change in a radical way between Catholics and Protestants. A new form of religion flourished after the historic moment of Christian Reformation, then came new challenges and these changes become infinite.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.: pp. 26-27.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.: p. 27.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.: p. 5.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

However, lately in an interview with Bart Van Leeuwen published in the journal “Ethical Perspectives”, Taylor shows less interest in the subtraction theories of secularization, which claim the disappearances of personal faith (belief) and of the presence of God in the public space, rather he shows his interest in this question: *how do we have construals of our world that develop and become institutionalized where it becomes very difficult to think of the transcendent, to accept the transcendent, to talk about the transcendent?*<sup>146</sup> He is fully aware of the complexity concerning the transcendent because of the different media in our society, and some are more frame by these ways of understanding the world, by this construal, than others. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor traces the development of a clear *immanent/transcendent distinction* or a *natural/supernatural distinction*, not just in the intellectual level, but in the whole understanding of our world, that is, the conception of a kind of natural moral order without any reference to the cosmos or to the beyond. The focus of his research is on the question of how that understanding developed, particularly concerning the modern natural law which is issued in the sense of the importance of human rights today, and on how people have reacted differently to that.<sup>147</sup>

As part of the story, Taylor traces the increasing interest in nature which can be seen in science, like the reviving of Aristotle in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, in art, like the new realism of Giotto’s painting, and in ethics, like the discovery of ancient ethics of nature of Aristotle and the Stoics.<sup>148</sup> The process came through several stages far back, not just happened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation. It had come through 12<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance, the nominalist view of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Renaissance humanist view, and further in the great revolution in scientific outlooks which is known as the Galilean Newtonian turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. People saw things in life and around them first as in reference to God, then as *for their own sake*. These frameworks had changed. Taylor links this view of nature for *its own sake* with the New Aristotelian synthesis, developed by Aquinas, which holds that things around us have their own kinds of perfection, inherent in their natures, the forms they strive to embody, however, they are also called

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<sup>146</sup> DE LEON, Francisco and VAN LEEUWEN, Bart, “Charles Taylor on Secularization (An Interview)”, in *Ethical Perspectives*, 10, January (2003), p. 81.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 90. This process is one crucial facet of the twelfth century Renaissance.

to exhibit another kind of perfection in the dimension of grace.<sup>149</sup> Taylor calls this last as *autonomization of nature*. That view of autonomy of nature did not in any sense involve in a denial of symbolic or allegorical meaning of things portrayed in the paintings.<sup>150</sup> The shift in understanding things in nature has shaped people social imaginary.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, came the notion of the Design Intelligent with Benevolent Creator, the conception of God as the projector of a benign universe, then emerged the theory of evolution, from Darwin. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, came another crisis: the ethics of authenticity, because of the age of mobilization where societies grew towards multiculturalism with the demand for the politics of recognition. Human beings can realize themselves because of the autonomous reason endowed by God and from this came liberalism. However, according to Taylor, reason itself is narrow, blind to the demands of fullness and will run on perhaps to destruction, in human and ecological senses, if it recognizes no limits. This sounds like the Romantic critique of disengaged reason and some notable ecological ethics, that rational mind must open itself to something deeper and fuller.

Taylor describes the change-over in the level of idea, which has reshaped our understanding of the truth about space and time in which all things exist, and all events take place. He calls it the migration of ideas in the context of space and time paradigm shift, thanks to the evolution in science, that is, a migration from the cosmos idea to another one such as the universe.

Secularization is a continuous process relative to historical change, ranging to multi-facets and multi-directions. Changes in imaginary, cosmic and social, have engaged ethical outlooks, then shift in frameworks moved by science with its disenchantment and buffered identity, leaving behind the porous enchanted world. This description supports Taylor's definition of the secularity as historical construal, change in the condition of belief, in which evolves human self-consciousness/self-understanding. The modern people have deconstructed the old view through the disenchantment of the world, creating a new identity of selfhood from which emerged new notion of individuation characterized the modern individualism. Taylor explores the

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.: pp. 92-93. Giotto's paintings is referred here because of it reveals a new "realism" of nature who seems to have put the people around him, closely observed, into his painting. This new realism had genuine and powerful spiritual forces.

change from the enchanted worldviews to mind-centered views, which marked the ideal of modernity. For the mind-centered views, the meanings are in the mind, contrasting to the enchanted views which claims that the meanings are in things or in various kinds of extra-human but intra-cosmic subjects, not in the human minds.

In Taylor's arguments, secularization is not simply a process that has developed on neutral epistemic or institutional grounds, rather it has religious background.<sup>151</sup> According to Taylor, Western move toward secularity has been interwoven from the beginning with the drive to personal religion, which has itself been part of the impetus toward different facets of secularization.<sup>152</sup> The drive to personal religion powerfully contributed to the disenchantment of the world, which becomes central to the modern West that a variant of it is shared by highly secular people. It may devalue their religion because they think it is inseparable from mindless or unreflective external conformity; in other words, an inwardly commitment would have to free us from religion.<sup>153</sup>

The new self-understanding of human agency has a deep impact on the change of axis. In the religious context, the emphasis was on the individual experience and not on the corporate life. The underline inner commitment (inwardness) together with rejection of external mediation and conformity, which made the religious traditions fragile and contested, fits in a broad cultural pattern. All these constitute the ethics of authenticity.<sup>154</sup> Everyone should live according to what he is by nature, designed by God for every human being, not in conformity with what is imposed from outside, or mediated by any external authority. It caused the rise of new forms of religion and spirituality and at the same time increased the number of people who declare themselves to be atheist or agnostic.<sup>155</sup>

All these changes, according to Taylor, requires the importance of community, larger self, in shaping individual identity and fostering the evolution of self-understanding.<sup>156</sup> We can see here a new pattern which expresses the communitarian

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<sup>151</sup> Idem (2003): *Varieties of Religion Today*, Harvard University Press, pp. 4-29. It has religious background in Christian Reformation.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.: pp. 13-14.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.: p. 13. Taylor interprets the intention of William James who warned us against defining "religion" in term of "church".

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.: p. 3.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.: p. 83 & in Idem (1989), p. 158.

<sup>156</sup> Idem (1979): Taylor explains on how community becomes a self, larger than individual self, and it has crucial role in the making of individual identity.



dimension of the self, human person. Secularization happens in this circle of collective identity people share, identical external medium in which new forms have been developed. Thus, Taylor has the Hegelian thought as the context of understanding of human community as the larger self in which the human person (the self) evolves and cultural changes take place. He promotes individual growth and the communitarian dimension of human person while criticizing individualism and liberalism. From this he develops his political theory starting from the politics of recognition towards multiculturalism.

Taylor's conception of secularity covers the whole range of historical construal caused by the cultural changes. He distinguishes modern secularity from the secularity of other ages because the cultural changes have occurred over time. Even if we understand secularization in the perspective of disenchantment, it is not because of modern science but it's grounded on the religious effort to reform, which had happened since the prophetic movement in Israel.

## **CHAPTER 3. SHIFT IN THE CONDITIONS OF BELIEF**

### **3.1. Paradigm Shift**

Taylor illustrates pre-modernity as an age of enchantment, where people lived closer to the higher time, or God's time, and overlooked the secular time where human flourishing is found. Nonetheless, he states that the former world is sedimented in the modern age. Secularization is understood as a process ever since depending on the changes in the human conditions which are deeply grounded on the cosmic imaginary. Taylor focuses his analysis on the conditions of life in which human consciousness evolves, affecting identity change. This collective experience inspired the founding of a society according to an ethic based on the cosmic pattern or cosmic order they imagined that maintained equilibrium in nature and society. Thus, the context of his narrative of secularization is the ordinary lived experience from which we imagine things around us, the world, and cosmic movements and meanings. Taylor's notion of secularity 3, that is, the shift in the condition of belief is related to this common imaginary in the understanding of fullness which will be explained in chapter four.

Changes in human conditions have emerged from people's common understanding of the cosmos or the world, how things appear in the world, inclusively the meaning they portray. Taylor underlines this background picture of the world which has helped human consciousness to evolve in time and space; therefore, our knowledge continually changes. The cosmic imaginary influences political choice as expressed in policy-making and orients people's moral-spiritual convictions. Taylor sees the Enlightenment as a turning point for the eclipse of transcendence, and a move toward a vision of the world in terms of instrumental reason. He calls the Enlightenment outlook a mechanization of the world, therefore, utilitarian; It altered human attitudes toward the world, such as exploratory and exploitative. According to this view, everything should be deconstructed or objectified following scientific engineering for the benefit of human beings.

Taylor explains secularity in terms of historical construction because each moment in history has been marked by a different paradigm. The pre-modern cosmic imaginary had given way to the Romantic view and to the Enlightenment view of instrumental reason because of the development of science and technology. This gave

rise to the anthropocentric shift that led to the emergence of exclusive humanism. He describes the shift in interest in nature which had developed through several processes, beginning with the shift from the view of things in the world simply as *reference to God* to the view of *things in their own sakes*, in terms of normative patterns. He holds that the shift in the interest in nature for itself, either in scientific study or aesthetic portrayal, or ethical reflection is not always the same kind of things but can be something very different depending on the background of understanding within which these things appear to us. This perspective was excelling in 15<sup>th</sup> century, the new way of imitating nature springs from a different framework of understanding of what it is to be a thing.<sup>157</sup> He adds that the shift in understanding things in the world as created beings has moved in different directions too. Another view emerged following the Aristotelean view of nature of things in each own perfection but independent from God's will. The paradigm shift is relative not only to a vision of the world but also to an understanding of the stance of the agent in the world.<sup>158</sup> From an ethical point of view, we see here the intrinsic values of the nature.

Then came another interest in nature as an autonomous purpose, like in art, the artist has his own purposes, not just following the patterns. We, the created agents, have also to relate to these things not in terms of normative patterns, the intrinsic values or the essences they revealed but in terms of the autonomous super-purposes of God. This is what Taylor calls instrumental reason as referred to the Enlightenment approach to nature. However, the shift continued with a new understanding of nature, according to which all intrinsic purposes having been expelled, final causation drops out, and the efficient causation alone remains. Taylor calls this view of nature in terms of efficient causation as *the mechanization of the world picture*. Here the world is understood as a vast field of mutually affecting parts which has been designed to work in a certain way to produce certain results.<sup>159</sup> This new cosmic paradigm had given rise to a new moral order, from which developed its mechanistic variant, which has an exclusive vision of nature without any reference to God. Taylor calls this view providential deism. In this

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<sup>157</sup> TAYLOR, (2007): p. 96.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.: p. 97.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.: pp. 97-98. This opens the way for a view of science in which a good test of the truth of a hypothesis is what it enables you to do. He calls this the Baconian view.

context, the shift in the cosmic imaginary presents a picture in which secularity is not simply the eclipse of religion, but rather a complex cultural change with many variants.

Human conditions, in which religious beliefs have wedded, are inseparable from time and determined by it in a whole range of changes in paradigm, stressing on the immanent trend of both spirituality and morality. Taylor describes secularization in terms of paradigm shift on the level of moral development: from the autonomy of nature, which has two variants of meaning of things in themselves, to the meaning of things imposed from human reason.<sup>160</sup> Such a development, according to Taylor, had derived from Plato to the Romantic period and culminated in self-authenticity where people found that the authentic individual is typically framed as someone who developed his own sense of value, interest and belief, while resisting the external model of meaning. According to Taylor, the moral cultural revolution of the 1960s fought the right of expressive individualism, which had its origins in Romanticism, where people placed great value on creative works that reflected an authentic life. Becoming and living an authentic life was a significant motivation for people in the West. He argues that the proponents of this new way of life encouraged a shift away from a system that stifled individuality and creativity and created an ethic of authenticity.<sup>161</sup>

For Taylor, Christian Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the axis for the widespread of cultural changes in the West. It was the turning point in the Western Christendom and the radical move from a condition, where people lived naively within a theistic construal, to another condition in which everything is questioned, a multi construal founded on two fundamental stances either theistic or atheistic; this puts an end to the naïve acknowledgment of the transcendence, of goals or claims which go beyond human flourishing.<sup>162</sup> The Reformation was proportionating the impulse of scientific revolution with its method to achieve knowledge and a new approach to understanding the faith and to biblical studies. The programs of reform opened the door widely for the development in science with a new sense of individuation in the West. It does not mean that all changes just started at that time, rather that century was crucial

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<sup>160</sup> Taylor calls the former meaning implicit in things as *ad intra* and the latter meaning in things *ad extra* (imposed from outside = human will).

<sup>161</sup> They believed that things like self-expression, equality, and sensuality were inherently valuable.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*: p. 21.

because the program of reforms had a great impact on the wider range of human life, from religion to society, inclusively politics and economics.<sup>163</sup>

These religious, individual and social reforms had encouraged rapid development in science and given a major impulse to accelerate cultural changes in Western societies. The scientific revolution had gradually and progressively moved to the multidirectional and dimensional with the immensely vast horizon of the universe in an effort to unmask and unveil the secrets of things and events in nature. In other words, the scientific revolution opens wider our consciousness to space and time in which history takes place, events and movements happen, and all life forms evolve. Human subjects as intelligent and conscious beings with their potentiality are restlessly questioning everything, inclusively the origin or *arkhé*, the macrocosmic universe and the micro constitution of things in the subatomic world. The paradigm shifts spread to the epistemological domain, our growing understanding of things, which help us to judge and validate our knowledge and beliefs of the truth about the origin accounted in the Bible and in science. The Biblical creation account and the evolutionary hypotheses become a major issue in our contemporary debates. So, as science progressed, there was a shift from the cosmic paradigm to the universe paradigm, which included the dimension of space and time. Taylor describes this change in terms of a migration of ideas from microcosmic world to macrocosmic universe; a move from the view of bounded and limited biblical worldview to a vast immensity of universe unfolded by science. As agents with desire and will, or as embodied rational being, human subjects are ceaselessly looking for the existence of things unknown, hidden within the immensity of space of the universe and searching for our moral-spiritual aspirations.

Taylor underlines the dominant role of the minority of elite decisive in determining people's social imaginary. These elites also contributed to reforms at the individual and social levels, through the program of civility aiming to create a disciplinary society. The change in condition of belief helped to define modern identity, leading to a new paradigm concerning the self (human person). The search for the *really real* is an unending process, and questions about beings, existence, life-forms and genesis/origin

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<sup>163</sup> Such as religious, social, political, economic, which arose from the shift in the cosmic imaginary.

become an unfinished debate. All metaphysical claims are gradually eclipsing because of the exclusive humanism.

As a historical construal, secularity is the result of cultural changes through the process of permanent ontological tension and continuous epistemic shift. History has involved *construction and deconstruction* at the level of imagination in terms of the order of things and society with its normative patterns. This is a dialectical movement following Hegel's speculative thinking expressed in his concept of the embodiment of *Geist (Spirit)*. Taylor also follows Wittgenstein in affirming that old forms of outlook become background picture for the new ones. On the level of arguments, Taylor invokes both Hegel's and Wittgenstein's philosophies in developing his own narrative of secularization to deconstruct the subtraction stories although he admits some partial truth in their construction of arguments. His anthropological philosophy is grounded on the view of man as in a process of becoming, not just something already at work in his nature.

### **3.2. Change in Cosmic Imaginary**

Taylor illustrates the story by exploring the cosmic imaginary, which is not a theory, not even an elaborated idea, but rather people's common understanding of the world in lived experience, or how they imagine the world. He focuses on how this imaginary makes sense of the ways in which the surrounding world figures in our lives, or the way in which nature figures in our moral and aesthetic imagination.<sup>164</sup> Departing from cosmic imaginary he illustrates changes in the orders of things and society. His thoughts are rare and astonishing in a sense tracing from the philosophy of nature and recalling to our mind the prominent figures like Thales who had a higher degree to capture physical abstractions of things in nature and was able to probe the depth of nature, or Sisyphus, who had a penetrating faculty to savor and to know things, and then concluded that everything has water as its origin.

Cosmic imaginary has emerged from the experience of the real, common understanding of things in nature, and from such experience people create concepts,

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.: p. 323. This involves the ways nature figures in our religious images and practices, our cosmological doctrines; in the stories we tell about other lands and other ages; in our ways of marking the seasons and the passage of time; in our attempts to develop a scientific cosmology.

formulate and articulate ideas. This imaginary changes from time to time depending on the human conditions in which it emerges. Taylor's narrative unfolds a phenomenological paradigm, arising from our experience of the real, which enlightens us to examine the path that connects us to the origin by interpreting events within the range of time-space and natural things that show themselves up. Changes started right away from the beginning of the world, not just in the modern world, as a natural process first at the level of things and then at the level of human consciousness. In other words, changes in nature shape our imagination and help us to revalidate our understanding of things which foster epistemic change. At the epistemological level, changes in the cosmic imaginary lay bare the nature of beings to our consciousness and our knowledge evolves as conditions of life change.

Taylor's exposition on secularization in terms of the condition of beliefs departs from this guiding question: *Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?* The answer is simple: in those days everyone believed, and the alternatives seemed outlandish (bizarre, unfamiliar). This pushes him to another question further back: *How did the alternatives become thinkable?* We need to understand the way things have changed. Based on these questions, he tries to explore the picture of the world in those centuries which was in favor of belief. According to Taylor, there were many features of the world that made the presence of God seemingly undeniable. First, the natural world they lived in testified to divine purpose and action, not just the world with its order was seen as God's creation, but also because the great events in this natural order were seen as acts of God. Second, God was also implicated in the very existence of society.<sup>165</sup> Third, people lived in an *enchanted world*. Taylor uses the term *enchanted* to describe the crucial feature of the pre-modern condition.<sup>166</sup>

In Taylor's analysis, the key difference we are looking at between these two marker dates, 1500 and 2000, is the shift in the understanding what he calls fullness, our moral-spiritual aspiration. In other words, the shift from *a condition in which our highest*

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<sup>165</sup> For instance, a kingdom could only be conceived as grounded in something higher than merely human action in secular time; and beyond that the life of various associations which made up society, parishes, boroughs, guilds, among others, were interwoven with ritual and worship.

<sup>166</sup> The enchanted world here in a sense a world of spirits, demons, and the moral forces that pre-modern people lived in and this world caused them naïve therefore shaped their identity (porous self).

*spiritual and moral aspirations points us inescapably to God, or make no sense without God, to a condition where these aspirations can be related to a host of different sources and frequently are referred to sources which deny God.*<sup>167</sup> He argues that although the three modes of God's felt presence in the world eclipse today we can certainly keep on experiencing fullness as a gift from God in the disenchanted world, a secular society.<sup>168</sup> According to him, change in alternatives does not mean absolutely turn us away from God, rather there are also new forms of belief in God, or of approaching him, not with fear but with confidence, courage and strength, as children towards a Father. God's presence in the cosmos is not in a mode of frightening by means of nature's cruelty like natural disasters and cosmic powers/forces that can cause harms to us. Taylor traces the change from a limited cosmos with its enchantment to the unlimited universe with its scientific explanation. So, cosmic imaginary determines social order with its moral-spiritual paradigms. In Taylor's analysis, fullness is crucial ground for changes, either fullness of life or fullness of being in any given time and space. He appeals to a fuller account in his critique against the straight path stories aiming to achieve a richer and better knowledge of our present conditions.

People with porous identity were vulnerable towards malevolent powers which are either extra-humans and reside in the cosmos (intra-cosmic) or extra-cosmic.<sup>169</sup> Taylor describes how pre-modern people were convinced that things and agencies, which are clearly extra-human, could alter or shape our spiritual and emotional condition. However, he states that in our modern age, this paradigm has changed, and it is understood as merely psychological phenomenon, many people consider it a superstition because it has no logical explanation; and evidently, we see here a shift in the understanding of things, beings, and events, according to the disengaged reason. Thus, previous cosmic imaginary should be seen in the context enchantment that constituted the porous self where the disengaged reason was absent. Taylor asserts that this kind of self was crucial in defining humanism, which depended on external mediation. People imagined nature as a locus for the *divine manifestation* and there was

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.: p. 26. Taylor shows the change has evolved from a condition with no alternative to a condition with alternatives.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.: pp. 26-27.

<sup>169</sup> Fear is the key description characterizing the identity of the pre-modern people because they were vulnerable towards the spirits, demons, and cosmic forces. In this enchanted world, there was not clear boundary between agents and forces.



no clear boundary between agents and forces, even between the sacred and profane. This produced an enchanted worldview, according to which things and extra-human agencies could alter and shape our spiritual and emotional conditions, even affecting our physical condition. He adds that these spiritual and cosmic forces affected not only individuals but much more so as a society, and this shows that people with a porous identity are inherently social.<sup>170</sup> Such an imaginary shaped their social and ethical perspectives.

Taylor invokes Heidegger's notion of *ens creatum* (created being) implicit in the previous cosmic imaginary. In this context, things/objects are good because they serve as the locus in which God, or the sacred, manifests himself. This is the notion of meaning of things in resonance with Heidegger's ontology, as in realism about essences, a human subject, as an agent in the world, sees the right actions as following patterns (essences) that must first be described in things.<sup>171</sup> Taylor is fully aware that the interest in *nature-for-itself* was not a negation towards the transcendence, God, or any supernatural entities. Rather the autonomy of nature had genuine and powerful spiritual sources; for instance, realism in painting of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries shows both facets apart from the impact on visual art of the sense as an ordered whole, one can see also other spiritual reasons, which is the new devotion to the human Christ.<sup>172</sup>

The cosmic imaginary is implicit in people's search for meaning. Taylor connects the outlook of the medieval people to the Aristotelian-Christian synthesis.<sup>173</sup> In the perspective of this synthesis, meanings are in the objects or things, and everything should be seen perfect in each own nature, not something *ab extra*, or added by human agents from outside. The things in nature have their own natures, the forms they strive to embody, and their own kind of perfection. They are in a certain sense autonomous, independent from us, but not from God.<sup>174</sup> Taylor reiterates the argument of Thomas Aquinas that these things around us are also called to exhibit another kind of perfection in the dimension of grace, but this does not mean canceling or setting aside their

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p. 37. Taylor gives example that the Church as "good magic" its members are praying together as a community to defend themselves from calamity.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.: p. 97.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.: p. 93.

<sup>173</sup> The synthesis is based on the interest in nature for its own sake.

<sup>174</sup> This synthesis takes its most influential form in Thomas Aquinas.

inherent natural perfection. *Consequently, to detract from the creature's perfection is to detract from the perfection of the divine power.*<sup>175</sup>

The shift in understanding things not only implies the notion of meaning they portray but also the sources (or location) of meaning in another paradigm relative to human agents, which Taylor elaborates comparatively by tracing from its earlier understanding to the later development in the modern age. In the earlier understanding, meanings were located outside the human mind and relied on the extra-human agencies and powers, in contrast with the mind-center view, which assumes that meanings are in the human mind. For the pre-modern people, meanings are already in the objects, or agents, independent from our existence or mind. People at that time believed that these objects, or powers of agents, imposed meanings on them. Taylor explains how these charged objects, objects with powers, could affect us and other things in the world; *they can affect cures, safe trip, and have a causal power, which matches their incorporated meanings.*<sup>176</sup>

In Taylor's analysis, the boundary between the mental world and the physical world is *porous* as in the way that charged objects could influence us. The spiritual outcome is either evil or good influences, for instance, *demons may possess us, but the Holy Spirit enters us or quickens us from within.*<sup>177</sup> While in the modern outlook meanings are not only in the minds, but also can reside in things, or in various kinds of extra-human but intra-cosmic agents. The paradigm shift has gradually moved away from the metaphysical domain to the intra-cosmic terrain (physical). Taylor points out two categories of beings in the pre-modern world, such as higher beings and lower beings. The higher beings consist of God and demons, or beings with powers of agency, which overshadow the lower ones inclusively human beings.<sup>178</sup> Thus, the epistemic shift has started with the question of meanings and fullness, which have been gradually

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.: p. 91. "Gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit. Detrahare ergo perfectioni creaturarum est detrahare perfectioni divinae virtutis" (cited from Aquinas, *The Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers, London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1928). They offer another way of encountering God, because they are "ens creatum" or created beings. With this Taylor contests the straight view account, which puts the autonomy of nature in contrast to the God-reference; in fact, they both went together.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.: p. 35.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.: p. 36.

<sup>178</sup> That is the reason why the people then understood that all objects and animals should be blessed and redeemed from bad spirits, otherwise they would become harmful for human beings.

changed from the enchanted view towards the mind-centered and materialistic views of our contemporary world.

He also illustrates this view by using a certain framework of understanding, abstracting from two philosophical perspectives, which articulate the meaning that occurs between two lovers. For the enchanted world, the inter-human power (love) induces meaning in each lover exogenously, relative to individual, roaming beyond the human sphere. While for the mind-center view, love happens in the interspace between both lovers and yet exists within each of them. In the enchanted world the meaning in things includes another power too, like a charged object. Taylor states that there is a causal power which matches their incorporate meaning.<sup>179</sup> However, for us today, things, neither human nor expression of human beings, are outside of mind but can impinge on the mind and affect our mental condition. The meaning in Taylor is understood as a power, or force, that attracts or distracts us and that heals or possesses us, turning us for good or away from good. His conclusion is that in the enchanted view, things, agents of extra-humans, could alter or shape our spiritual and emotional condition. In other words, they help to constitute us emotionally and spiritually.

For Taylor, the shift from enchantment to disenchantment was a complex historical and cultural process. The enchanted cosmic imaginary sees things in the world as signs for God's manifestation/revelation, while the disenchanted cosmic imaginary approaches to things not only in theistic variant but also atheistic variant according to which reference to the divine atrophies. The theistic variant affects moral order that sees things in the perfection of each own nature according to the providential design. In the perspective of providential design, the autonomy of nature, which emerged from a disciplinary society, arose from the imagination of the world as designed by God, following the deistic notion, but it was rooted in the Aristotelian view of nature in its proper good, independent from God.<sup>180</sup> The notion of the autonomy of nature in the modern deistic variant has another implication in terms of total independent from God, though he remains a Creator.

Another mode of cosmic imaginary took form as mechanization of the world picture, which rewrote humanism in terms of ordering action, or redefinition of human

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.: p. 35.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.: p. 91ff.

agency in instrumental term, which was rooted in the Renaissance, independent from religious belief. This new vision took a greater place in ethics, how to reach the good life, and it came to prepare the way for the advent of the exclusive humanism.<sup>181</sup> According to Taylor, the renewed interest in nature as autonomous has two spiritual motives: *devotion to God as the Creator of an ordered cosmos and the new evangelical turning to the world, to bring Christ among the people*. He refers to Heidegger's resonance about the interest in nature for itself, arguing that the interest either in scientific study, or aesthetic portrayal or ethical reflection, is not the same thing; it is different depending on the background of understanding of how things in nature show up themselves. This is what Heidegger has raised in the meaning of beings, the unspoken, or background of understanding of what entities are, which can change from epoch to epoch.<sup>182</sup> Taylor uses hermeneutic approach with reference to the interpretation of our experience of the meaning of things for us as purposeful agents which arises from our *being-in-the-world*.<sup>183</sup> A new mode arises as we have also to relate to these things in nature not in terms of normative patterns they portray, such as perfection in themselves, but in terms of the autonomous super-purposes of our Creator, the purposes things serve as intrinsic to them at the service of the purposes of God.

Thus, the epistemic changes are likely ceaseless as we are evolving in perspectives and modes of seeing things relatively different from epoch to epoch. Taylor describes these changes according to the demands of human conditions which shape our outlooks, such as all intrinsic purposes were having been expelled, final causation drops-out and the efficient causation alone remains. He explains that though the new mode is remaining in the domain of *ens creatum*, but the order is no longer the normative patterns on which we should model ourselves; rather the world is a vast field of mutually affecting parts, it is no longer the normative patterns at work in things themselves but we can grasp these purposes if we discern what ends a mechanism of this kind is well designed to serve.<sup>184</sup> It is through these purposes that God reveals himself in the world and we must inhabit it as agents of instrumental reason, which

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.: pp. 91-95.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.: p. 95.

<sup>183</sup> Heidegger's concept in portraying the meaning of things as they appear to us. Although hermeneutics is often understood with reference to the interpretation of the meaning of texts, our experience of the world seems like a text that needs interpretation.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.: pp. 94-95.

means working the system effectively so that to bring about the purpose of God. This new mode of humanism begins to take place in ethics in the form of a new understanding of ethical development, of how to achieve a good life as implicated in the program of civility. Taylor sees the Christian Reformation as the principal turning point to the modernity which opened the way to major changes which had determined the move toward the Enlightenment period as the age of reason.

### 3.3. Towards Modern Social Imaginary

Taylor's notion of cosmic imaginary becomes normative patterns to social imaginary which consists of the general shared background understanding of society. It is "social" in two ways: it is generally shared and it is about society. In other words, it is generally shared not only about understanding society, but also generally shared about other things as well. Among these things is the ensemble of ways we imagine the world in which we live.<sup>185</sup>

Natural science has contributed to change people's political outlooks, not just widening their horizon to the vast space of the universe. The modern cosmic imaginary shapes our ways of relating to nature and to ourselves as free individual subjects who come together to form society. Taylor unfolds the modern social imaginary in the new understanding of community as associated individuals: *its members are not agents who are essentially embedded in a society that in turn reflects and connects with cosmos, rather disembedded individuals who come to associate together for mutual benefits.*<sup>186</sup> This description shows that from the modern social imaginary emerges a new moral order, in the deistic variant, according to which God's presence in cosmos is matched by the idea of his presence in the polity. The vision of moral order is central to the development of the modern society in the West, which was stated in the theories of natural law emerging in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>187</sup> Taylor links the idea of moral vision to that of Grotius who derived normative order underlying political society from the nature of its constitutive members, according to which human beings are rational by nature,

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.: p. 323.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.: p. 67.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.: p. 159. This vision was largely as response to the domestic and international disorder wrought by wars of religion. The proponents of this vision were Grotius and Locke.

sociable agents who are meant to collaborate peace to their mutual benefits. This idea has come to dominate the modern political thinking and the way we imagine our society, which offers inescapably an idea of moral order: *it tells us something about how we ought to live together in society*.<sup>188</sup> It has been reinforced by Locke's contract theory as a justification for revolution and as a basis for limited government and a continuing right to agree on taxation.<sup>189</sup>

Taylor's approach to secularity shows how people's imagination about the world, things in nature, forms their social imaginary or orients them to organize themselves as a society accordingly. Therefore, the normative patterns, moral-spiritual and legal, must be fundamentally grounded in the cosmic imaginary. The notion of sacred in the previous age was integrally understood in terms of mediated access in certain places and moments, in which supernatural powers were manifested, and in human agents whose figures were seen as representing God and whose functions were considered as a bridge connecting the community with God.<sup>190</sup> This mediated-access framework shaped the picture of society at that time. The mediated relation between community and God was the condition of belief in pre-modern societies. In such a world, human beings took their norms, their goods, and their standards of ultimate value from an authority outside of themselves.<sup>191</sup> The emphasis was on the transcendence as a basic principle for the communitarian existential foundation, which united the people with all things in the cosmos and with God or any supernatural entities. In other words, their cosmic outlook constituted their way of life and regulated their relationship in both vertical and horizontal directions. For Taylor, in our time this mediated access is comprehensibly appropriate only in the context of ritual ceremony and the teaching office of the Catholic Church.<sup>192</sup>

This mediated-access society totally depended on the external mediation, either extra cosmic agency (God/gods/spirits) or intra cosmic ones (cosmic forces). People

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<sup>188</sup> The underlying idea of moral order stresses the rights and obligations we have as individuals in regard to each other even prior to or outside of the political bond.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.: p. 160.

<sup>190</sup> Priests and kings had their role as mediator between the profane and the sacred, the ordinary time and the higher time. So, they were considered as acquiring some powers of God, or the divine powers.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.: p. 580.

<sup>192</sup> Idem. (2003): p. 65. Taylor gives some examples, certain places, like churches, and certain times, like higher feast, and certain actions, like religious ceremonies/rituals, where the power of God was more present and could be re-approached by humans

deeply engaged with such extra-human powers blindly even denying human potentiality as agents, disengaged from this world. In this context, Taylor exhibits Augustine's teaching on disengagement from the worldly affair as a higher option so to live closely to the eternity, God's time, which had dominated the medieval thoughts as people's spiritual and moral orientations. People were taught to live in the world and to use worldly things but not enjoying them, even living in the world's institutions of human flourishing but not fully in them and ready to lose them. It means that people were instructed to be in this world but not belong to it, living according to the spirit of Christian Monasticism.<sup>193</sup> This idea influenced certain elite, following the monks, to live apart from the masses of people in society although later they changed the forms of living in the city from which emerged the idea of civility. According to this imaginary, people imagine the world as temptation, in contrast with other imaginary that everything was seen in reference to God.

Therefore, the picture of the world people imagined at that time mirrored the divine purpose and they saw society as grounded by something higher.<sup>194</sup> This reflected an enchanted cosmic view, according to which the world is full of spirits and cosmic powers, either extra-cosmic agents or nature's forces as I mentioned in previous settings. People naturally believed in God who served as a bulwark of protection against bad spirits/evil one. Community was fundamental to the people who lived in this kind of world, although they were deeply moved by fear and naïve obedience towards the visible authority, which they believed as mediator between them and God. In this context, Taylor associates the pre-modern age with what Delumeau described as an *age of anxiety*<sup>195</sup>, because people who lived in an enchanted world were naïve and fear in everything that threatens their existence. Thus, it is an existential fear inherent in them naturally.

The individuation in this kind of mediated-access society is understood in terms of membership of a community with its hierarchical rankings and principle of complementarity. From the idea of hierarchical complementarity emerged the

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<sup>193</sup> The famous Monastic motto is that *refuging from the world* (running away from the world).

<sup>194</sup> The kings exercised their authority representing God; therefore, their authority was uncontested and unquestionable; and they were united to their kings naively without questioning their authority, which they believed as being founded on the divine will, who was acting as a bulwark against evil.

<sup>195</sup> Idem (2007): p. 88. Delumeau, "Le Pêché et la Peur", Paris: Seuil, 1977, *passim*.

dialectical principle of order and chaos, structure and anti-structure, code and anti-code. This principle of opposition constitutes the equilibrium in nature, in individual life and in social interactions. Taylor illustrates the condition that primitive *chaos is both enemy and source of energy; order binds primitive chaos and the binding has to capture that energy*.<sup>196</sup> Order itself can survive through a periodic renewal because years of routine crush and drain this force, which was captured from chaos. In this context, he emphasizes the idea of Victor Turner that order is important but not ultimate, and the ultimate is the community it serves. From this condition emerges a social imaginary, underlining the communitarian dimension, which Taylor considers an essential medium for all possible livings, activities and movements.<sup>197</sup> Such a social imaginary underlines the community as medium for the expressions of our human thoughts and desires, without which our communication as rational beings is impossible.

Society in the pre-modern world should be organized according to the patterns people imagined. The emergence of a normative paradigm from this cosmic imaginary was understood in terms of hierarchical complementarity.<sup>198</sup> In Taylor's description, social order had been shaped according to the patterns of cosmic order, from which formed their outlooks in conjunction with the principle of harmony between the opposing powers of chaos and order. The tension between these powers created equilibrium and order in the world, society and even individual human person.

The principle of equilibrium in Greek philosophy is understood in terms of the fight between two opposing powers from which a new form of entity and being emerges. The dialectical conflict is part of nature and of a historical process, not only natural and ontological. In accordance with Taylor's, everything is in the process of becoming, and nothing remains stagnant, for the tension is unending. Nature was seen in terms of normative patterns, in a sense that it serves as a model for individual human beings and for the whole society. All human activities should be modeled on nature, or on how they imagined things in the cosmos.

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.: p. 45.

<sup>197</sup> "Communitarianism: Taylor-Made", an Interview with Charles Taylor by Ruth Abbey, published by *Australian Institute of Policy and Science (AIPS)*, The Australian Quarterly, Vol. 68, no. 1, Autumn, 1996, pp. 1-10. Quoted in Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20634713> (accessed on December 18, 2024) Communitarianism's central concern is the bonds of community, like their creation, maintenance, and reproduction.

<sup>198</sup> Thus, the way people saw things around them as sacred formed their identity with its vulnerability towards God, spirits or cosmic forces.



In the pre-modern time, societies and churches, as well as kingdoms, were believed as standing together towards God, responsible for the orthodoxy of their members.<sup>199</sup> Taylor refers to the medieval Catholicism where equilibrium was based on the hierarchical complementarity, which served as an organizing principle for the society as a whole; this means that societies were organized in complementary functions among different orders.<sup>200</sup> It is worth to reiterate that such a principle of complementarity is also applied to the mutual necessity of opposing powers and elements, like order versus chaos, structure versus anti-structure, and individuals versus community.

Here Taylor appeals to the idea of Victor Turner that the world incorporates the mutual necessity of opposites that is complementarity of states, which are antithetical. The move from chaos to cosmos was an aesthetical phenomenon, not a moral one, and yet in analogy to social changes it is seen as a moral-spiritual phenomenon, not just socio-cultural and political. Therefore, the world was understood as an incorporate of the mutual necessity of opposites, the tension between temporal and spiritual affairs was unequivocal. Retreat and holidays were moments of great importance to ease this tension and to liberate men from codes and structures. In this sense, these great moments are considered as anti-structures or anti-codes. It is the same principle of opposition which Rawls and Dworkin have adapted for the code of political theory in the division of powers as a principle of limitation, and this implies the negative freedom of the human subjects.<sup>201</sup> Today, according to Taylor, the anti-structure is moved to the private domain, it is in the family or among friends that we can drop out or throw off coded roles, where we think and feel with our whole being and find intense forms of community.<sup>202</sup>

In the old paradigm, members of the society were agents embedded in the community to which they belonged, and the community reflected and connected them

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.: p. 42.

<sup>200</sup> Taylor gives example, the clergy pray for all, the lords defend all and the peasants labor for all.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.: p. 52. However, Taylor does not follow the main thesis of Rawls and Dworkin concerning the freedom because of its negative trend.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.: pp. 33-34. The former worldview claimed that: meanings were in things, relying on the extra human agency, impinging on the human mind from outside prior to contact, it can take us over and we can fall into its field of force. While the modern worldview, or mind-center view, opposes in the affirmation that the world does not affect us by presenting us with certain states of affairs, which we react to from out of our own nature, or by bringing about some chemical-organic condition in us, which in virtue of the way we operate, produces euphoria or depression.

to the cosmos; while in the modern paradigm, they are disembedded individuals who come together for natural benefit, and each in pursuit of his own purpose in life acts for the mutual benefit of others.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, our belonging to a society has become disconnected from various networks, specially kingship relations and particularly from those networks which involves hierarchical relations of the pre-modern feudal society.<sup>204</sup> According to Taylor, the latter shows that these individual members disconnected from social belonging at the level of nation, or the economy or the public sphere, and people have direct access to the larger whole without being mediated by those networks. The political paradigm has emerged from the change in people's imaginary, in lived experience. Taylor exposes the social imaginary of the medieval people who tended to see the society as articulated into orders, such as hierarchically ranked and complementarity in functions aiming to maintain equilibrium.<sup>205</sup>

In Taylor's perspective, the pre-modern forms of understanding things do not simply disappear rather they are just changing to new forms of understanding with higher level as in spiral mode. It is also understood in a sense that many of the old forms are resistant and sedimented in the present, but they are evolving better and perfect than their previous states. Progress in science put everything in doubt (question) and all questions must be answered rationally, involving not only the faith, but also the authority of kings and clerics that were highly exalted as representing a transcendent authority (or God). Then came a new paradigm in which the divine is not present in a king, but rather in his design, and to the extent that we build a society that clearly follows God's design, as expressed in the idea of a modern moral order explicitly stated in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America: *Men have been created equal, and have been endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.*<sup>206</sup> The text underlines the rights and obligations of individuals prior to the political bond or even outside of this political bond.

Taylor unfolds the paradigm shift which emerged from the disenchantment of the world in consonance with the perspective of post-Newtonian science, that there is

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<sup>203</sup> Idem (2003): p. 67. This was formulated by John Locke and was coming down to us through a series of variants like the radical ones of Rousseau and Marx.

<sup>204</sup> Idem (2007): p. 575.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.: p. 123. The conclusion can be understood as Taylor intends: the monks prayed, the noble fought and the peasants worked, each rank did their function for all in the needs in society.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.: p. 159.

no possibility of higher meanings being expressed in the universe around us.<sup>207</sup> The emphasis here lies on the immanent frame, and this resulted the anthropocentric shift with the doctrine of exclusive humanism and alternatives to God-reference. Taylor does not agree with this alternative exclusively in moral order, which marked the social imaginary. This vision of exclusive humanism denotes the resources for the confidence in our own powers of moral ordering; however, these resources were also available in the non-theistic ethics of the pagans in the ancient world. For Taylor, the resources available in the ancient regime were partially right because some of those views placed us in a larger spiritual or cosmic order, for instance, Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism.<sup>208</sup> He argues that they were not exclusive humanism, like Aristotle in the important role for contemplation of a larger order as something divine in us. He also notices that an exclusive humanism was undoubtedly available in Epicureanism, which held that to achieve *ataraxia* one should overcome his illusions about gods. However, he argues that the power to create moral order in our life had different form, including the active capacity to shape our natural and social world.

The change toward a modern social imaginary has taken place through the mechanism of exclusive humanism which becomes a trend in the secular age. According to Taylor, in the interventionist outlook, modern humanism has been rooted in the religious tradition; because an acceptable form of exclusive humanism had to be imagined, arguing that it came to be in a series of phases emerging out of earlier Christian forms.<sup>209</sup> He describes fully-form alternatives to our spiritual and moral sources, which arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the naturalistic view. In his description, Taylor presents two variants of exclusive humanism, such as Deism and Atheism which will be elaborated in chapter four. The shift from the pre-modern to the modern social imaginary has passed through several phases with different variants in Western Christendom, and it is a continuous process throughout history as part of cultural changes.

The drive to reconstruction in the spirit of reform not only applies to society but also to the self, a move to reconstruct the self towards a buffered identity, which is free

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<sup>207</sup> Idem (2003): p. 66. The presence of God no longer lies in the sacred because this category fades in a disenchanted world. Rather his presence in the world is matched by the idea of his presence in the polity.

<sup>208</sup> Idem (2007): p. 27.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.: pp. 27-28.

from all kinds of porousness imposed from outside, and to reconstruct our baser nature as form already within, not imposed *ab extra*. Self-refashioning is applicable to society as a whole and consequently the nascent state becomes more and more an engineer of morals and social practice.<sup>210</sup> Thus, the Reformation in Christianity affects the whole program of individual and social reconstruction, from which derives the modern civilization of the West. Calvinist reform came up with a new outlook similar to neo-Stoicism, which insisted on the active intervention of state, introducing a rationalized, disciplined, and professionalized mode of life.<sup>211</sup>

Taylor connects the change in social imaginary to the program of Reformation which was aiming to reshape *the forms already at work in our nature*, the impetus of the ancient ethical outlook, in contrast with the modern reconstructivist view, according to which such a form is imposed *ab extra* on nature by human will. This is a new notion of nature, which has emerged from humans as rational beings, who proceed by rules, laws, principles, and social beings who would have to have laws which make living together possible. Taylor presents two perspectives concerning the natural law: One is Grotius', according to which the law is binding by reason alone; the other is Pufendorf's and Locke's, according to which the law is binding because it is commanded by God.<sup>212</sup> With these two basic notions, linked to the natural law, Taylor explains that God made man rational and sociable, with an instinct for self-preservation, so laws and norms are binding. They are natural because they are products of human faculties, part of human nature.

In this context, Taylor sees reason, things, and order as part of nature. The conception of natural law grows along with the programs of reconstruction of the world, which has reshaped European societies.<sup>213</sup> He adds that these programs were the most prominent answer to the disorder of religious war in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, creating an absolute state in accordance with the natural law, aiming to establish a political order

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.: p. 114. The idea of reconstruction came from Justus Lipsius in 16th century neo-stoicism.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.: pp. 119-121. Basis of Calvinist ethic of the calling, which has an extraordinary confidence in the capacity to remodel human beings.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.: p. 126. Hugo Grotius follows Justus Lipsius thinking that the law is binding in reason alone, that the law would hold even God did not exist (see in Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace (De jure belli ac pacis)* trans. Francis W. Kelsey, Oxford, 1925, Prolegomena, paragraph 11, p. 13). While Pufendorf and later Locke see it as binding qua command of God (Taylor, 2007: 126).

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.: pp. 126-127.

as an answer to maintain peace and civility among diverse and potentially rival agents.<sup>214</sup> Again Taylor reiterates that the solution to this problem is not given by the nature of cosmos as something already at work in it, but by human reason and will, or human nature. He sees that the absolute rule sustains the earlier organic understanding of society as hierarchical complementarity: *The hierarchy serves the end of order by allocating to everyone their proper situation and role, and by putting in place the chain of command through which the impulses from the top can be carried down through the whole society.*<sup>215</sup>

Taylor points out the Grotian perspective that there is no form already at work in the constitution of a society, rather we fit together rationally, proposed by reason alone, as a binding form, imposed from outside. The will has a crucial role in imposing the form, in reshaping or refashioning our individual self and the society, liberating us from our raw nature and porous self, which paralyzes our human capacities to evolve. Christian Reformation was an axis in deconstructing the old views and it had the role in the reconstruction, or even new construal, opening the way to searching for the truth about us, the world, and the polity. It was precisely the purpose of the social contract of Grotius and Pufendorf to establish a sovereign rule of hierarchy and command, which also drew on a doctrine of providence. For Taylor, since this view of social contract was developed from the Lockean version, the natural law theory took a quite different direction towards emphasizing the power of reconstruction, which also needed a notion of normative order aiming to support it.<sup>216</sup> Taylor's effort to present these authors is meant to reinforce his arguments on secularity that we as rational agents are evolving, realizing ourselves in history, not just fixed or already at work, according to natural law.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid.: p 127. Absolute rule and fixed social hierarchy are the answer to this conflict rather than being given in nature of cosmos.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.: p. 128. This is the pre-Lockean version of natural law theory.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.: p. 129.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.: p. 126. The former ethical outlook sees the forms already at work in us like everything in natural order, while the new ethical outlook sees differently that the forms need to be realized by reason, which is natural. Grotius derives natural law as what suits a being who is both rational and sociable (in Hugo Grotius, *De jure belli ac pacis*, translation: *The Right of War and Peace*, trans. by A. C. Campbell, New York and London: Walter Dunne, 1901, Book I, Introduction, paragraph 10, p. 21). Taylor sees interprets it concisely like this: a rational being means one who proceeds by rules, laws, principles; and a rational being who is also sociable having laws that make living together possible.

A new mode of government began with the rise of civility, where the elite saw the city as the site of human life at its best and highest level due to the religious reforms, in contrast to the recent former one that had seen the forest as ideal for them. Accordingly, one must be governed by orderly fashion and under a code of law, and man reaches fullness of his nature only in the *polis*.<sup>218</sup> Thus, his illustration sets light that the religious reforms also contributed to the social reforms because the reformers attempted to discipline a population and consequently created a disciplinary society. Taylor's argument makes sense that religious and secular reforms are compatible in objective because religious conversion was to produce an ordered life. The good order of civility and the good order of piety, to some extent, merged and inflected each other, because both contributed to the social reform. He sees civilization not only as a way to reshape the culture of the people, which was dominated by the majority of savages, in the eyes of the elite who considered themselves culturally superior to them, but also as a way to reshape society toward a new civilization in the spirit of religious reform in Christianity. The ideal of civility, with its main objective in taming our raw nature, implies the stance of reconstruction towards ourselves and it takes form in programs and methods of *self-refashioning*. In explaining this Taylor holds that: *We treat our own baser nature as raw matter to be controlled, reshaped, and in certain cases eliminated, in order to impose a higher form of our lives.*<sup>219</sup>

According to Taylor, there are some affinities in the ideal of civility with the Christian and ancient ethical outlooks, for instance, the great ancient ethics of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, which called for the subordination and elimination of baser desires. The key idea was not a form which was already at work in human nature, and one must be helped in order to raise what is already in his nature, rather a pattern imposed from outside (*ab extra*).<sup>220</sup> So, the shift from symbol to mechanism also effects a new mode, deriving from normative order to affirming man as an agent of instrumental reason. Here we see Taylor's vision of man as in a process of becoming, who needs help, orientation, and education to evolve and grow.

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.: p. 99. The former idea followed the monastic conviction of refuting from the world, the city, as the place of evil. While the new mode which opts for the city follows the Aristotelian idea.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.: p. 112. Reference in GREENBLATT, Stephen (1980): *Renaissance Self-Refashioning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>220</sup> Taylor is consistent with his philosophy of man as in a process of becoming.

In his commentary on the concept of natural law of Hugo Grotius, emerged from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Taylor points out that this law was a response to the domestic and international disorder wrought by the wars of religions. Grotius derived the normative order underlying political society from the nature of its constitutive members, and it suits human beings as both rational and social agents who are meant to collaborate in peace to their mutual benefit. According to Taylor, Grotius's thought introduces certain ideas of moral order, such as how we ought to live together in society, highlighting the rights and obligations of individuals prior to the political bond or those consent to the contract. The political authority is legitimate only because of this consent otherwise there is no legitimacy at all. Legitimate regimes were ultimate, founded on some consent of this kind aiming to exercise the control over rebellion being urged by confessional zealots. In Taylor's description, it is reasonable that Grotius sought to give a firm foundation beyond confessional domain to the basic rules of war and peace.<sup>221</sup> However, for Taylor, *it is Locke who used this theory as a justification of revolution and a basis for limited government.... Consent is not just an original agreement to set up government, but a continuing right to agree to taxation.*<sup>222</sup>

Taylor observes that during these last four centuries, the idea of moral order implicit in this view of society has undergone a double expansion, such as in extension, more people live by it, and in intensity, demands are heavier and more ramified. The new idea of moral order begins to inflect and reformulate the descriptions of divine providence and the natural order God has established between humans and in the cosmos. Taylor's illustration gives us a conclusion that the images of moral order descending through a series of transformations inscribed in the natural law theories of Grotius and Locke are rather different from those embedded in the social imaginary of pre-modern age. He singles out two important types of pre-modern moral order, which have been gradually taken over, marginalized by the *Grotian-Lockean* strand during the transition to political modernity.

*One is based on the idea of the Law of people, which has governed these people since time out of mind, and which in a sense defines it as a people. This idea seems*

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.: p. 160. It is understood in the context of the 17<sup>th</sup> century because of the wars of religion.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

*to have been widespread among the Indo-European tribes who at various stages erupted into Europe. It was very powerful in seventeenth-century England, under the guise of the Ancient Constitution, and became one of the key justifying ideas of rebellion against the King.*<sup>223</sup>

This kind of order gives margin to the people, especially the subjects of the king, or any authority, their right to defend themselves and it is the consent of the people to legitimate the tribal kings.

*The other type is organized around a notion of a hierarchy in society which expresses and corresponds to a hierarchy of cosmos. These were often theorized in language drawn from the Platonic-Aristotelian concept of Form, but the underlying notion also emerges strongly in theories of correspondence.*<sup>224</sup>

This latter type of order aims to impose itself on the people through the kings or any authority, and their legitimacy is likely without consent from people.

Human beings are meant to live together in respect for life and freedom of each other and are meant to preserve themselves by industrious exploitation of the natural world surrounding them. The effort involves dedication to growth and prosperity as well as accepting the morality of mutual respect and an ethic of self-improvement. Again, with this explanation Taylor wants to show that there is nothing already at work in history rather everything in history is a process of becoming. This process, for him, is a providential goal of the reasonable effects.

Taylor reinterprets the ontological necessity of Hegel, whose claim is that things exist as a condition for the embodiment of Spirit (*Geist*) insisting on another level that they exist for a purpose designed by God, not for the sake of embodiment.<sup>225</sup> The existential rootedness of man is in his natural being and being who thinks or whose thoughts are expressed in a medium or language or culture.<sup>226</sup> This medium plays a

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.: p. 163. Taylor's reference in POCOCK, J. G. A. (1987), *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. Taylor gives as examples to understand the correspondence theory: the king is in his kingdom, as a lion among animals, the eagle among bird, etc.

<sup>225</sup> Idem. (1979): pp. 1-169 Hegel's notion.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.: p. 87. We think of a human being we do not simply mean a living organism, but a being who can think, feel, decide, be moved, respond, enter into relation with others; and all this implies a language, a related set of ways of experiencing the world, of interpreting his feelings, understanding his relation to others, to the past, the future, the absolute and so on.



crucial role for man to express himself as a conscious being. Community is a larger rational order, or a larger self, to which a man essentially belongs, and to be rational is to be connected to this larger order in having a true vision of it. Reason is the power by which we see the true structure of things and to act according to reason means to act according to this true structure equivalent to acting according to nature. Taylor presents Hobbes as protagonist to that Hegel's view, who used prudence as a calculating reason that ground political obligation in a decision to submit to a sovereign.<sup>227</sup>

Taylor's approach to secularity as historical construal is inspired by Hegel's view of history as expressed in the demise of the Greek polis, the rise of modern European States and the end of the ancient regime. In accordance with Hegel's philosophy, an attempt to combine the aspirations of Romantic generation to radical autonomy and expressive unity with nature and within society, Taylor's account shows the conflict between the expressivist Romanticism and the mainstream of Enlightenment thought and sensibility. He sees the philosophy of the Enlightenment as utilitarian in its outlook and atomistic in its social philosophy. In its outlook, nature and society had only instrumental significance, as potential means to satisfy human desire. The objective was to bring men happiness through perfect mutual adjustment by reorganizing man and society according to the principles of a scientific social engineering. In such a new ethical perspective, we see that nature, which includes man and society, and reason are united. According to this utilitarian ethic, different ways of living together are assessed not by some supposed intrinsic value, nor by their expressive significance, but by their efficiency in the production of benefits, which are ultimately consumed by individuals. In Taylor observation, in such a civilization, social relations and practices, as well as nature, are progressively objectified. In the Enlightenment outlook, those profits, efficient production, and growth, are just external purposes to the institutions of a modern industrial economy. It means that these institutions serve only as instrumental reason. While the contribution of the Romanticism which has been contained in the modern civilization of the West, like the individual fulfilment, private and imaginative life.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.: p. 74.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.: pp. 69-84. The reference in Chapter 2 on Politics and Alienation.

The description above shows Taylor's critical observation that modern society is a combination of the Enlightenment outlook, which is utilitarian (instrumental reason) in public and effective life, and Romantic trend as in its private and imaginative life.

### **3.4. Towards a Disciplinary Society**

Taylor uses the term "disciplinary society" in order to explain a civilized society, which is governed by orderly people. The Reformation gave way to individual reform (which will be discussed in Chapter 6), and a new individuation emerged, reinforced by the elite's attempt to build a disciplined society in the West. A modern concept of the self has been grounded on this reform which underlines the individual right and freedom. He describes the idea of civility, which marked the modern civilization in the West and contributed to the development of human person/self; although it started among the elite, however, gradually spread to the masses of people through education, toward a civilized society. Modernity has created a new individuation stepping towards progress in social, economic, and technical terms. This new individuation has been expressed in terms of independent individuals who are equally free agents. It is a move to the view of man as natural being who acquires raw nature, wild and even violent, that must be controlled by reason. Our raw nature needs to be governed according to the ethical rule in view of creating justice, peace, and harmony. From this emerged the idea of polite society as a program of the elite to create and reshape the societies. The members of a polite society were dedicated to the arts of peace and yet a warrior class, therefore, this society was a productive one, giving an important place to the useful arts and to their improvement.

According to Taylor, the transition to polite society came through the development of commerce and the fine arts, involving literature, conversation, and philosophy. Polite society was civilized, it had reached a higher level of refinement, which also means that it defines itself not only by its crucial goals, like peace rather than fighting, self-improvement rather than in warrior skills, but also it prided itself on its characteristic styles of action.<sup>229</sup> Good manners defines a certain kind of sociability, the

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<sup>229</sup> Idem (2007): p. 235. Refined and polite manner were the key-words at that time. The shift to modern identity started among the elite and then spread to wider horizon of mass society through education and discipline.

way people relate to each other, approach each other, converse with each other. In his description, Taylor explains that the trend of polite manner was identical with a civilized person who approached other as independent agent, with his own legitimate views and interests and enter into courteous exchange for mutual benefit.<sup>230</sup> Similarly, mutual respect for each other as equals had strict limits, in a sense it did not include the mass of peasants or artisans.<sup>231</sup> Thus, the transition from which emerged this new culture was seen partly in economic and political terms, like the extension of commerce, wider travel and discoveries, the rise of stronger states, which could force the warring nobles to disband their irregular forces and keep the peace. But it was also seen as a change of outlook, like widening of mind, refinement of sensibility, greater interest in the sciences and philosophy.<sup>232</sup>

Accordingly, the features of modern order are important in consonance with liberty.<sup>233</sup> The self-understanding as polite society, the central role played by what Taylor calls the modern moral order, refracted in the civilizational ideal. The more significant is that there comes an ideal of sociability, derived from this order, which has been erected into an independent criterion for social relations. *Independent here means first from the political structures and independent from ecclesiastical, or any doctrinal, authority*<sup>234</sup>. For Taylor, this does not mean independent from religion, because one could easily conceive of the modern moral order in a providentialist framework, as the design of God for humans. He argues that the modern moral order in its earliest formulations, *like that of Grotius, was simply meant to give political authority a place to stand independently from confessional strife*<sup>235</sup>.

Consequently, there has emerged gradually the separation of religious influence from the state, or public affairs. To live according to a polite society means to hold that the normative force of the sociability cannot be overruled by the deliverances of any

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid. A paradigm locus for this kind of sociability apart from the market, was the salon or coffeehouse, in which enlightened conversation took place, it is a kind of meeting and exchange.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.: pp. 235-236

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.: pp. 326.

<sup>233</sup> Taylor gives some examples of these features like a mode of sociability which respects the independent interest and opinion of the other, the understanding that social intercourse is designed for mutual benefit, the high place given to commerce and the productive activities.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.: p. 236.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.: p. 237.

church.<sup>236</sup> Within such a framework of polite society, there came to be a set of normative limits on the action and intervention of churches.<sup>237</sup> Polite society puts a strain on allegiance to strong forms of sacral authority, claiming a right to intervene in society and politics in ways which go beyond the order. It puts a strain on the various beliefs and practices which could be the basis of such strong religious authority. These changes include a strong notion of the sacred as located in some people, places, times or acts, as against others as *profane*. Taylor explains that polite civilization, and the moral order it entrenches, can easily be lived *as a self-sufficient framework within which we find the standards of our social, moral and political life; the only transcendent references admitted are those which underpin the order and do not justify to infringe it.*<sup>238</sup>

Taylor argues that polite society fits perfectly with the buffered identity, the self-understanding which arises out of disenchantment; and it builds for the buffered identity a buffered world. He points out the outlook emerging from this logic in some of the key terms used by the writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in describing history and present state of polite civilization. These key terms are dangerous in religion, which were categorized as superstition, fanaticism, and enthusiasm. Taylor invokes the underlying definitions of these terms from Abbe Raynal concerning the attitudes, which oppose to the ethic of polite society:

*superstition as designated the enchanted dimension of religion, the rite and cults and practices which partook of magic in their understanding; Fanaticism designated the kind of religious certainty that seemed to the agent concerning to licence of going well beyond and committing gross violation against the order of mutual benefit; and enthusiasm meant the certainty that one heard the voice of God, and could act on it, without having to rely on external authority, ecclesiastical or civil.*<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid.: p. 238. This was the reason why the reaction of polite society to an act like revocation of the Edict of Nantes was negative.

<sup>237</sup> So, there was a strong potential conflict between the ideal of sociability and the kind of social authority claimed by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, or the *High* interpretations of Authority in the Church of England.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.: pp. 238-239.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.: p. 239. Taylor quotes from GAUCHET, Marcel (1998), *La Religion dans la démocratie*, Paris: Gallimard, pp. 34-35, which quoted from in RAYNAL, Abbé (1770), *Histoire philosophique et Politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes*,

Here he exposes the justification to conform with the modern idea of order as the supreme principle of civil society, and the general interest is to rule everything which should subsist in the state.

According to Taylor, the less radical wing of Enlightenment could be much softer on superstition, because writers like Hume or Gibbon seemed to take for granted that Enlightenment and politeness would remain elite positions, but the question was how to keep order among the masses. Therefore, a little superstition could be a good thing, satisfying their religious impulses without inculcating rebellion. This supposed that religion would be primarily defined by cult, and not by doctrines, which could be the source of disputation with believers of other creeds. The anti-model here was Catholic Christianity whose superstition was indeed linked with a militant doctrine. But the model for Gibbon was the ancient world, whose unbelieving elites were sophisticated enough to conform outwardly to the national cults and leave the people undisturbed in their sacred practices.<sup>240</sup> A disciplinary society fought against the enchantment.

The process of becoming civilized people, prompted by the program of reforms, impacted on reshaping the self, in a wider sense implicates discipline with open mind and good manner. The civilized society was constituted by individuals of the newly emerging form of individuation imposed from outside, such as deriving from the efforts to reforms in all levels through education in schools and universities, developing urban societies and creating a new world with rapid cultural changes. The idea of the Greek *polis* in the ancient regime, especially in Aristotle's treatise on politics, became sedimented background in this program of social and cultural reforms. These have resulted changes in human conditions, in which belief and unbelief took part. New individuation constitutes the buffered identity, which characterizes the modernity. The enlightenment and Romantic mainstreams have given great impulses for the change in individuation.

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.: p. 240. Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: Penguin Edition, 1994, p. 56. In Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 240.

## CHAPTER 4. THE IMPULSE OF SCIENCE

### 4.1. Anthropocentric Shift

Scientific research undoubtedly is sparkly expanding human consciousness toward the dimension of deep space and time, reaching beyond and beneath the empirical world, gradually unfolding some truths about things in the universe and the human agency. From these emerge continuous epistemic changes, enlarging and expanding our horizon to explore the unexplored universe, searching for its origin, our role in this immense space and our genesis. Science with disembedded reason has fostered the anthropocentric shift emphasizing on the immanent frame and resulted the emergence of Deism and Atheism.

Taylor proposes the idea of *providential deism*, which sees the world as designed by God, and atheism as the denial of any higher entities beyond human agents. He sees that these two positions have some affinity in vision, such as that the world is for human beings, but the deistic position recognizes the world as created by God, while the Creator does not interfere in human affairs after creation. These two positions affirm human agency as the only capable beings endowed with reason and will, in relation to other beings in the world. Taylor invokes some authors whose ideas are fundamental in understanding the anthropocentric shift and refutes certain views as extreme. The emergence of anthropocentric shift has been gradually affirmed in the ethical development of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which Taylor associates with the *providential deism*, from which came the exclusive humanism. Taylor concludes that the anthropocentric shift can be seen as crucial for the subtraction view, which reduced the role of God in human life.<sup>241</sup> In his perspective, secularization, as the shift in condition of belief, involves three categories: the self, authenticity and recognition, human agency and language, and social imaginary. These categories have rooted deeply in how people imagine the world and the challenges emerged from lived experience.

According to Taylor, the anthropocentric shift has been strongly developed among the elite in the Protestant English-speaking countries. He describes it as a revision downward of the purposes of God for us, inscribing these within an immanent order,

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.: p. 242. Taylor gives example like the plan of God for human beings was reduced to their coming to realize the order in their lives which He had planned for their happiness and well-being, essentially the carrying out of the order of mutual benefit was what God created us for.

which allows for a certain kind of human flourishing, consonant with the order of mutual benefit.<sup>242</sup> In his description about a striking anthropocentric shift happening around the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Taylor unfolds a fuller view of this shift in four directions, each one is reducing the role and place of the transcendent. These directions of anthropocentric shift consist of the eclipses: of the sense of further purpose, of grace, of the sense of mystery, and of God's plan to transform human beings. He presents some authors who have propagated the reducing of the role and place of the transcendence, and consequently this reduction changes the understanding of providence.

The eclipse of the sense of further purpose was promoted by Mathew Tindal, who claims that *we owe God essentially the achievement of our own good, that is, his plan or purpose for us.*<sup>243</sup> Taylor refutes Tindal who had an extreme position, which was not convergent with many others in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. There were other people who adopted Tindal's idea as a humanizing trend of belief, in which the transcendent dimension of faith becomes less central.

The eclipse of grace was determined by the idea that only with reason and discipline we could face the challenge of life and be able to realize it.<sup>244</sup> Regarding the benevolence, the authors are divergent, some rely on an inherent benevolence and others on the rewards and punishments. Taylor refutes Locke as stands at one extreme: *we are as being so susceptible to be driven from the path of right reason by sloth, covetousness, passion, ambition, that God has acted providentially in establishing and punishing through revelation, such as rewards and pains.*<sup>245</sup> While Shaftesbury and Hutcheson insist on the force of the motives of love, benevolence, and solidarity within us. The trend gains ground throughout the century, effecting the decline of hell, reluctance to accept traditional beliefs about a God who punishes.

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<sup>242</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 290.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.: p. 222. Reference in TINDAL, Matthew (1730), *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, London, p. 14. This expression of Tindal reflects the third facet of Deism, the appeal to an original natural religion. For Tindal, God's purposes for us are confined to the encompassing of "the common interest, and mutual happiness of his rational creatures", which Taylor quotes from SMITH, Adam (1976), *The Wealth of Nations*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.: p. 222. Taylor refutes this trend by noting that the power of reason and the rational discipline require the grace of God because of our fallen condition, without which the full measure of our good will fades away in the spiritual climate of Deism. He reiterates that God still has a role on us, because He made us and endowed us with reason and benevolence, and these faculties enable us to get things together and to carry out his plan.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.: p. 223. See also the transition in MANN, Michael (1986), *The Source of Social Power*, volume I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 458-463, speaking of the English case.

In the third shift, the sense of mystery fades, Taylor refers to Toland as protagonist expressed in his book *Christianity not Mysteriorious*.<sup>246</sup> For Taylor, Toland had an extreme position at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a trend in which natural order is understood. Taylor articulates the argument of those who hold that there is no sense of mystery by stating that:

*If God's purposes for us encompass only our own good, and this can be read from the design of our nature, then no further mystery can hide here. If we set aside one of the central mysteries of traditional Christian faith, that of evil, of our estrangement from God, and inability to return to Him unaided, but we see all the motivation we need already there, either in our self-interest well understood, or in our feelings of benevolence, then there is no further mystery in the human heart.*<sup>247</sup>

In effect, if there is no mystery there has no place for God's providence.

The eclipse of an idea that God has a plan to transform human beings, which means he would take them beyond the limitations inhere the present condition. In Christian tradition, it is expressed in terms of *humans becoming partakers in the life of God*.<sup>248</sup> This transformation takes us beyond the limits of human flourishing in this life and it will be realized in another life after death. This theological vision of the afterlife in the corporeal world gives us an impulse for the hope of a lasting transfigured humanity. Taylor invokes major figures of Christian apologetics like Boyle and Clarke, whose concern was to produce solid proofs of the existence of God and his goodness; Butler, who also in his writings largely manifested the apologetic content, when he spoke of the general decay of religion in 1751, in which he addressed to his diocesan clergy pointing out the increase number of unbelievers.<sup>249</sup> Another prominent figure

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<sup>246</sup> It is a controversial book which was burned in Ireland.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.: p. 223.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.: p. 224. This transformation perspective is understood as God's plan for human beings to become divine, which is part of human destiny, in the theological concept of the Greek Fathers of Church known as *Theiosis*.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.: p. 225. The reference in BRYSON, Anna (1975), *From Courtesy to Civility*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 72.



was Michael Buckley who pointed out the fact that the great apologetic effort called forth by this disaffection itself narrowed its focus so drastically.<sup>250</sup>

The anthropocentric shift concerning theological issues like grace, free will, and predestination, should be less theologically elaborated as an effort to attend to the plea to emphasize on devotional practices and holy living. In Taylor's analysis, a move from the Cambridge Platonists through Tillotson to Locke and the 18<sup>th</sup> century apologetics is a reductivism, which is no longer concerned with sin as a condition in need to be rescued through transformation, rather as a wrong behaviour which we can be persuaded, trained or disciplined to turn our backs on.<sup>251</sup> Taylor considers these as narrowing arguments to a simple morality in accordance with the modern notion of moral order because of the possible demands of reason and a way of returning to a simplest, less theologically elaborated religion. In the context of this epistemic change, he quotes Tillotson saying that

*nothing is more likely to prevail with wise and considerate men to become religious, than to be thoroughly convinced that religion and happiness, our duty and our interest, are but one and the same thing considered under different notions.*<sup>252</sup>

The understanding of this same thing is not just changing but also evolving with different concepts which reflect the dimension of our consciousness.

The notion of anthropocentric shift has emerged from a subtraction account, which presents the secularization thesis in a simpler way that religion must retreat before reason. Through reason one could put everything in doubt, even a compact core of unquestionable belief is doubted. In method, the doubts can probably help us evolve in deepening our knowledge about the questions we raise about the objects, including all metaphysical beliefs, but also can reduce the meanings they inherently present. According to Taylor, the Cambridge Platonist attempt was to define a simpler, purer religion, which would nourish holy living, but their account of reason had a place for an intuition of the divine. This Cartesian-Platonic understanding is undermined by the

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid. See the reference taken from POCOCK, J. G. A. (1975), *The Machiavellian Moment*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>251</sup> Religion is simply reduced to moralism.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.: quoted in p. 226. Reference in Adam Ferguson (1980), *An Essey on the History of Civil Society*, London: Transaction Books.

success of the new natural science. Taylor argues that even if we accept the new account of knowledge empirically and focused on the evidence of senses, we still cannot find enough ground to exclude Christology, devotion, and religious experience from Apologetic preaching. For the Anglicans, reason would undercut their enemies, both Papist and Puritan, by refuting superstition and groundless fanaticism.<sup>253</sup> Taylor acknowledges the threat from the new natural science, which hastened to disenchant the world, helping to split spirit from matter and its conception of exceptionless natural law, which later raises question about the possibility of miracles. Such a trend is to uproot us from the essence of our existence as being with reason and will, or intelligence and consciousness, which lies in the spirit, not in the matter.

The earlier modern period was marked by the development of devotional practices, emphasizing the inward religion, which reached its greater force in the end of the Middle Ages. Taylor underlines some aspects of spirituality of that period, such as discipline, method, the new sense of human agency, and among some prominent figures were Ignatius of Loyola who began a new form of spiritual exercises, which sought to open us to God, and Henri Bremond, who described the pious humanism of early 17th-century France and explored ways to achieve a theocentric vision in individual life. This new devout humanism of Bremond emphasizes on the efforts to intensify and to awaken a sense of reflective awareness in individual orientation and self-absorption and openness towards God, in whom we can find our real existential root, and before whom we feel our ruined nature in need to be redeemed by his mercy. Such was a spirituality which emphasizes on external conduct, both moral and ritual, and evidently they also contributed to atrophy the inner devotional life based on a sense of our inner link with God.<sup>254</sup> In this way, they may have accredited and understood religion so one-sidedly in terms of morality of correct conduct and this religion of correct conduct comes to be a popular trend in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The narrower religion and apologetics of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century fits well within a conception of the buffered-self and understanding of providence as shaped by the modern moral order.

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.: p. 226. Reference in Gerard Robertson Cragg (1950), *Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study of Changes in Religious Thought within the Church of England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 97.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.: pp. 227-228. This falls afoul of the strand of Hyper-Augustinian Spirituality which was so powerful at that time. And Jansenist stream of spirituality it's obeying God's Commandments from a distance in fear rather than presume to approach him in love.

The anthropocentric shift was also reflected in the doctrines of harmony of interests in terms of the idea of natural order. It is an economic view, in a sense of order, peace and productivity, and it is an activity which becomes greater model for human behaviour, devaluing and demeaning the role of grace and mystery, and affects the fourfold anthropocentric shift.<sup>255</sup> Taylor observes that this idea of peace and order depends not on some heroic aspiration, but on the lowly, interest-driven self-love in us, which seems to render no results of any attempt to transcend ourselves, to aim beyond human flourishing. He sees the idea of peace and order based on the heroics, which is more at home with the aristocratic-warrior honour ethic, as very dangerous and threatening to disrupt the orderly exchange of services moved by mutual interest. He suggests that it is better to accept the limitations of our nature as self-loving creatures and make the best of it, and citing what Tindal holds that God is capable of disinterested love. While we only love God because He is good to us, otherwise we do not love him; consequently, the greatness of God exists precisely in his not needing us but being disposed nevertheless to think exclusively of our good.<sup>256</sup>

The anthropocentric shift has a fuller view which is reducing the role and the place of transcendence. In line with these anthropocentric shifts Taylor unfolds two implicated doctrines such as Deism and Atheism.

#### **4.1.1. Deism**

Taylor delineates the main line of his secularity account focusing on the anthropocentric turn. The question is the following: *how did the exclusive humanism become a live option for large number of people, first among elites, and then more generally?* He points at Deism as intermediary to spread the exclusive humanism in such a large scale in society.<sup>257</sup> He recognizes many facets of Deism, but there are three that should be emphasized. First, the notion of the world as God's design went through an anthropocentric shift in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which he calls providential

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.: 229. Such an economic order is known as the economic-centred idea of harmony, which is also understood in terms of the idea of natural order. He points at Halivy as a prominent figure of that age expressing in his idea of *harmony of interest*.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.: p. 230. Taylor contests Tindal of not realizing that we are called to participate in a self-giving love.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.: p. 221. Taylor gets inspired by what Marcel Gauchet calls "la sortie de la religion", see in his *Le désenchantement du monde*, Paris: Gallimard, 1985.

deism. Second, the shift in understanding of God in terms of an impersonal order, which means God relates to us primarily by establishing a certain order of things, whose moral shape can be grasped, and we obey God by following the demands of this order. Third, it deals with a return to the idea of deism in terms of a true original natural religion after periods of laxity and corruption.<sup>258</sup>

According to Taylor, the move to Deism was justified by the arguments in the core of Christian tradition, those that had been used by the Reformers. He refers to what Tindal wrote in his book that *we should not think of God as injured by human wrongdoing; it is wrong and demeaning to God to think that he punishes us to restore his own honour; he does it purely for our sake.*<sup>259</sup> Taylor classifies Tindal's reaction against Christianity as a reduction of human scope, a removal of the heroic dimension from human life, and this comprehensive reduction entails a kind of self-transcendence in another direction. Human being as a rational agent is capable of seeing that self-love and social love are the same and a social order should be designed on this basis. Taylor analyses the Enlightenment outlook, which sees man as an agent of instrumental reason, standing at a point of view of the whole and being moved by the greatness and design of the same view of the whole. This mode of transcendence of the human agent serves as a motive force of background. Taylor sees that the apologetics of the 18<sup>th</sup> century focused on the universe as an order of mutual benefit. He articulates this apologetic view with the new natural science, which presents the universe as a system before our gaze, whereby we can grasp the whole in a kind of tableau in accordance with the dominant moral theory of that period. This kind of idea of the universe contrasts to the view of cosmos as a hierarchy of forms in the pre-modern outlook. He observes that the view of the whole makes us aware that, as observers, we are standing on a certain level lower than other higher levels and having some ideas of their nature, but undoubtedly our grasp of them is imperfect. With this, Taylor refutes it as impossible of seeing the whole in a tableau in which all parts and levels are equally intelligible because identically place in relation to the thinker; he argues that the view of the whole is from a certain position within it and it essentially reflects that placing.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.: p. 243. The Reform of Hildebrand in the eleventh century and the successive waves of reformers, reacting to the laxity and corruption in the Church Hierarchy at that time.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.: p. 231. Taylor quoted from TINDAL, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, chapter 4.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.: p. 232.

According to Taylor, Providential Deism emphasizes on the human instrumental reason in working the world according to the divine purpose, or God's design. He unfolds two facets of the anthropocentric shift and the slide to impersonal order which bring about a purified religion based on nature, or on reason alone, according to which there is no need of revelation. Everything God communicates to us through creation itself, which reveals to our rational scrutiny, and reason itself plays a fundamental role here.<sup>261</sup> In this perspective, God's relationship to us is seen as mediated by an impersonal, immanent order. Taylor explains the idea of Providential Deism in two levels: on one level, we have the natural order, the universe, purged of enchantment, and free from miraculous interventions and special providences from God, operating by universal law and has no respondent causal laws; and on another level, we have a social order, designed for us, which we have to come to discern by reason and establish by constructive activity and discipline. Finally, the law which defines these orders, whether as political/constitutional law or ethical norms, can be expressed in rational codes, which can be grasped quite independently of any especial relationship we might establish with God, and by extension with each other.<sup>262</sup>

Taylor explains how the modern moral order has shaped the understanding of Providence and led us to a sense of economic view of it. He argues that the purposes of the Divine Providence are not for the mutual benefit God has designed for us, rather they are crucially to the good of the creatures as his further purposes in creation. Our recognition of God and dependence on him place on us a demand which goes beyond human flourishing. The question for Taylor is this: *How does the view of the whole affect religion and apologetics of this time?* He supposes that probably the confident way in which the purposes of God are being read off the universe and his good intentions demonstrated reflects precisely this stance of the world-picture, the disengaged grasp of the whole which has put behind it in the sense that the higher levels may not be fully capable of being understood by careful study or investigation. More perhaps the very emphasis on theodicy, on proving the goodness and justice of God from the universe, which dominates the apologetics of this age, reflects this disengaged stance, following

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.: p. 292. This is a very optimistic view of human original capacities, which Taylor calls as the first religion of humankind.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.: p. 290. The human relationships which matter are those prescribed in the code, for example, Natural Law, Utilitarian Principle and Categorical Imperative.

the *Age of World-picture* in the context of Heidegger.<sup>263</sup> It is also a complexity of forces which brought about the fourfold eclipse in ideal type of Providential Deism. Taylor articulates the forces that bolster Deism and pave the way to the genesis of exclusive humanism:

*partly the social experience of successful imposition of order and discipline on self and society; partly the caring forward of reflection which was already very much part of any way, Reformed Christianity, and pushing it on to a more radical stage; partly a reaction against the juridical-penal framework which Medieval and Reformed Christianity had made into an exclusive horizon.*<sup>264</sup>

Taylor shows his conviction that after the Deist fourfold eclipse God remains the Creator and our Benefactor to whom we owe gratitude beyond all measure. In this context, the God's providence means his design for our good, but this remains exclusively general, while particular providences and miracles atrophy.

In his analysis, once the disenchantment has befallen the world, the sense that God as an indispensable source for our spiritual and moral life migrates, for instance, neo-Stoicism, according to which the power to impose order on self and the world is God's power in us, which we must recognize and nurture. But with growing confidence, reflected in the new harmonious and economic-created order, neither grace nor the nurture of this divine power in us seem indispensable. Taylor admits that the space has been created for a shift, in which the power to order will be seen purely intra-human, and Deism conveys this truth with a valid argument that God can also help us in another way. In consonance with this argument Taylor defends that the contemplation of the goodness of God in his works inspires us and strengthens us to do his will. However, in the exclusive humanism this inspiring power comes from the contemplation of the order of nature itself, without reference to a Creator. Taylor states that the exclusive humanism can take hold as a theory, held by a tiny minority, but as a more viable spiritual outlook. He presents two conditions for its appearance: *first*, the enchanted world fades; *second*, a viable conception of our highest spiritual and moral aspirations emerges as such that we could conceive of doing good without God in acknowledging

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.: p. 232.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.: p. 233.

and pursuing such aspirations. This humanism came about *in ethic of imposed order, which played essential role in disenchantment, and in an inexperience with this ethic which made it seem possible to rely exclusively on intra-human powers to carry it through.*<sup>265</sup>

In his description, Taylor illustrates a set of changes in a very long-lasting bent in the European culture towards Reform, in the widest sense. The process began with the attempt of elites to make over society, the life and practices of non-elites, to conform to what the elites identify as higher standards, turning towards a polite society. This had happened since the Hildebrand Reform in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there were recurrent attempts to raise the standards of mass practice.<sup>266</sup>

For Taylor, Deism is a change in understanding of God and his providence in the world; it is a drift away from orthodox Christian conceptions of God as an agent interacting with humans and intervening in human history, and towards God as interdict of a universe operated by unchanging laws, which humans have to conform to or suffer the consequences. In a wider perspective, Deism can be seen as a move from a view of the Supreme Being with powers, analogous to agency and personality, to a view of this Being as related to us only through the law-governing structure he has created, and ending with a view of our condition as at the grips with an indifferent universe, with God either indifferent or non-existent.<sup>267</sup> From this, Taylor concludes that Deism can be seen as one of the contributors to the rise of contemporary atheism, causing the decline of the view of the cosmos as the locus of spirits and causal powers.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.: p. 234.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid: The detailed description in pp. 242-245. Hildebrand was reacting against the collapse of the pagan religion by Christianity and the corruption within the Church.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.: pp. 270-271.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.: p 274. Trevor-Roper comments on Gibbon projecting his *philosophical history* following his predecessors in venturing to *handle the Church history in a secular spirit, to see the Church not as repository of truth but as a human society subjected to the same social laws as other societies*. Trevor-Roper sees the Enlightenment as moments of *enlargement of the mind*, moments of rise versus moments of sliding back. According to Taylor, Trevor-Roper's interpretation of Gibbon is part of the modern subtraction story of the Enlightenment *that people started using reason and science, instead of religion and superstition, and that the conclusions they then came to simply reflect this salutary shift in method*. In his conclusion, Taylor states that the slide to Deism was not just the result of reason and science but reflected a deep-seated moral distaste for the old religion that sees God as an agent in history. He argues that this is easy to lose sight of, because many examples of the *activity of God that were propounded by the orthodox could be made to look tawdry or morally offensive; and the prevailing doctrines of majority damnation and divine grace were calculated to make God look like an arbitrary tyrant*.

Taylor points out the perspective of Spinoza concerning the picture of God portrayed in the Old Testament, according to whom the historical religion could be written off as an indulging to popular fears and illusions, offering an utterly unworthy picture of God.<sup>269</sup> He presumes that people who agree with the analysis of Spinoza either do not believe these accounts or reinterpret them in a derogatory way, but the point is that their stance is not forced from a certain interpretative grid. The question is that *What generates and motivates this grid?*<sup>270</sup> In his thinking, what Deism in its various forms wanted to reject was that of seeing God as an agent intervening in history. Deism holds that God could be agent of original Architect of the universe, but not as the author of myriad particular interventions, *miraculous* or not, which were the stuff of popular piety and orthodox religion. This sounds a reinterpretation of Christian doctrine, which has the influence from Greek philosophy like Platonism and Neo-Platonism.

The following descriptions are Taylor's summary of the Platonist views, the principal points of tension defining the crucial axes of change.<sup>271</sup> First, for the Platonists, we reach our highest state in a condition beyond the body, therefore, being incarnate is a hindrance. The body needs to be controlled by discipline in this life, but the contact through intelligence with the highest is at its most complete beyond this life. For them, stressing on the disembodiment is an extreme position.<sup>272</sup>

Second, the re-entry of the body brought with it a new significance of history. This Jewish understanding is seeking a Greek expression and the relation of the human heart to God was a story of falling away and returning. It was inseparable from human history and became the central narrative of this history at its most extreme, for instance, in Plotinus ascent. The Platonist ascent ends in a timeless condition beyond history, while the Jewish story has an ending, which means some variants within history. Where, as in Christianity, the *eschaton* is beyond history, the understanding of eternity is very

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid.: pp. 274-275. See also in Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*; see also Yirmiahu Yovel, *Spinoza and other Heretics*, volume 1, *The Marrano of Reason*, Princeton University Press. 1989, pp. 131-132.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.: 275. The grid here means a network of lines that cross each other to form a series of squares.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.: pp. 275-277. Taylor's reference in BROWN, Peter (1988), *The Body and Society*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 34. For Plotinus, to accede to the eternity is to lose individuation.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid. To solve this dualism of body and soul, for Taylor, it is necessary to study Peter Brown's concept of the *heart* as the place of our most profound and basic orientation, of our love and concern. The dualism was not between the *heart* and something else, but rather between different kinds of the direction of *heart* can be stony heart and open heart (flesh).



different from the Platonic concept, the site of God is (*nunc stans*) the point of gathering of all time, rather than an ever-unchanging point outside of time. This idea is that the whole story belongs to the end, not just the last state it arrives at.

Third, the significance of history, entering eternity as gathered story, entails the significance of the individuals whose identities are worked out in it. Even in Aristotle, individuation is seen as secured by the matter, the embodiment of a form. On the level of Forms, there are no individuals, only a single archetype. For Aristotle, immortality could only be that of our active intellect, but this would be indistinguishable from the intellect of any other person. Fourth, this doctrine about Forms implies a new significance for contingency. The accidents arising from the condition of matter, and the flow of events, can indeed, affect how Forms are embodied, but the forms themselves remain quite unaffected. This is true for both Aristotle and Plato. In this context, contingency does not affect our existence in the highest state, where it is seen as beyond time, like of Plotinus. But the Christian *eschaton* is made up of paths, of stories and these are shaped by contingencies. In the teleological perspective, such an end is seen as having been rigorously scripted from the beginning according to God's *providence*. Taylor sees the Christian *eschaton* as following the Stoic principle: *God plans sins, so that he can script in mercy*.

Biblical model suggested that the providence of God is his ability to respond to whatever the universe and human agency throw up. On the parable of the Good Samaritan: *who is my neighbour?* According to Taylor, the answer surprises because it takes us out of the skein (flock) of social relations in which we are embedded, and we are told of a Samaritan who rescues a Jew. But it also takes us beyond any established relations animated by agape. The body, the heart, the individual, these become central, so also the emotions.<sup>273</sup>

In connection with the Cappadocian theology, Taylor comments that body, heart, emotion, and history, make sense only in the context of the belief that the highest being is a personal being, not just in a sense of possessing agency, but also that being capable of communion, *koinonia*<sup>274</sup>. The new sense of *hypostasis*, which is translated no longer

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid. Here is another difference of classical thought. For Plotinus, and in another way for the Stoics, our higher condition is one which is purged of emotion. Martha Nussbaum comments on Augustine and defines characteristic of God as *apatheia*, that is, a state beyond passion.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. *Koinonia* is the notion of Cappadocian Fathers of the Church concerning the Trinity.

as *substance* but as *person*, was part of this new theology.<sup>275</sup> The intervention of God in history, in particular the incarnation, was intended to transform us through making us partakers of the communion with God, and it was meant to affect our *deification*. Emotions have their proper place in the love of God, where love describes the nature of the communion. But it also underlines all the other changes, such as communion must integrate persons to their true identities, as bodily beings who establish their identities in their history, in which contingency takes place. This central concept, which makes sense of the whole, is communion, or love, defining both the nature of God and our relation to him. The whole package arose out of the Patristic theology, with earlier ideals of impersonal order, which can either identify the highest with an *Idea* (Plato's), or with Plotinus *One*, or with God, but one whose defining characteristic was *apatheia*. According to Taylor, now in the modern period, we see this package was changed by new understandings of order, running at one end of the spectrum from Deism to modern Atheist materialism on the other. These understandings offer a picture of human order, either as normative, or as the end point of historical development, or both, which sees us as historical agents, bodies in a material world, moving towards modes of common life in which our individuality is respected.<sup>276</sup>

In Taylor's thinking, accidental events can derail the process of history, but the ultimate shape of civilization is often conceived in rather tightly-defined terms, and there is little room for the idea, central to Christianity, that the path we take can help us to shape the goal. Disenchantment dissolved the cosmos, whose levels reflected higher and lower kinds of beings, distinctions had undeniable meaning and relevance for human beings, moreover they contained spirits and meaningful causal forces, which made things respond to us in their human meanings, for instance, relics that could cure is a natural-cosmic order. In this context, the universe was ruled by causal laws, utterly unresponsive to human meanings. The universe itself was unresponsive, or indifferent, like a machine, and in a sense malign and cruel, it's designed for our benefit. This view

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.: p. 278. The notion of person was correlative to that of communion (*koinonia*), the person is a kind of being which can partake in communion.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.: p. 279. The paradigm shift in individuation is closely connected to the concept of the self.

emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and deeply challenged the belief of the Providential Deism in benign design.<sup>277</sup>

Taylor also traces the transition from the society of feudal relation to modern society as equal citizens, which was going on in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by pointing out a network of personal relation of lordship, fealty, and tenure to categorical egalitarian order, in which we are all related in the same direct-access way to society. We see not only a congruence of orthodox religion with monarchy, but also a consciousness of change in which the driving force can be seen more congruent with a religion of impersonal order. Modern society, for instance, as in American case, could be seen as following a design of God, so that his presence was here in our institutions, which follow his prescription. This also relates us to God via an impersonal order, which is referred to the institutions of our society. So, Deism serves as a link between orthodox religion and American freedom. There is an affinity in ethical consequences of both the Christian faith and the categorical society of the Enlightenment or Kant. Orthodox Christianity is seen in terms of communion: the coming of God through Christ into a personal relation with the disciples and ramifying through the Church to the whole humanity. It is bounded by the love of a new relation like agape. The link is invoked in another form by David Martin in his comment on the 18<sup>th</sup> century of British scene: *that latitudinarian clergy deployed a public version of Isaac Newton to promote a separation of creation from its Creator in order the better to ensure that rationality ruled both the natural and the social universes.*<sup>278</sup>

Taylor interprets the agape in a way that is not understood just in terms of a set of rules, but rather as the extension of a certain kind of relation, spreading outward in a network. This relation is not mediated by the historical forms of relatedness, such as kinship, citizenship, like in a categorical society. It transcends all these into a network of even different relations of agape. By contrast, categorical societies are bound together by codes, law of codes in the first instance. Taylor refers to the history of modern ethics which have developed in the wake of the Grotian understanding of the human

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.: pp. 279-281. This makes Taylor to conclude that it can be felt to accredit the idea that we have entered a new age in which the older religion is no more at home.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.: p. 282. Reference in MARTIN, David (2002), *Christian Language and Its Mutations*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 175.

predicament.<sup>279</sup> He divides the dominant metaphysical ethics today in two major branches of utilitarianism and post-Kantianism, both conceive of morality as determining through a certain criterion of what an agent ought to do under the codes of law. They are rather hostile to an ethic of virtue or the good, like that of Aristotle, which goes beyond codes; and as Christian conception, where the highest way of life cannot be explained in terms of rules but rather is rooted in a certain relation to God, which is also beyond codes. From this emerges a view of the human agent as totally free and unconstrained by authority.<sup>280</sup>

Taylor also refers to the Lockean outlook which claims that the law constrains, or imposes, but it is the deliverance of reason, which means both *ad extra* and *ad intra*. For utilitarian, it is based on what human beings in fact want, and not on the demands imposed from outside (*ab extra*). For Rousseau and Kant, the very nature of law is to be self-imposed, while in contrast, Christianity sees our highest mode of being as arising in a relation, one which we draw to know and be ourselves. Comparatively Taylor analyses modernity as the era of freedom which can be seen to be congruent with relating ourselves to an impersonal law, not to be the goals which arise out of a personal relation. All these forms of impersonal order, like the natural, the political and the ethical, can be conspired together against orthodox Christianity, and its understanding of God as personal agent.

This outlook of impersonal order sees the orthodox Christianity as incompatible with human dignity precisely because the Christian doctrine sees human beings in a condition of need to be rescued, treating us like children. Mercy, as a personal connection, is in conflict with the supremacy of a high code. All these natural, social and ethical orders slide to impersonal, however, Taylor holds that we can see this slide from another angle as driven by our self-understanding as disengaged and rational agents, correlating to the objectification.<sup>281</sup>

The great mechanization of the scientific world picture in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was an objectification, which is the main characteristic of science. Formerly, the cosmic order

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.: p. 282. Regarding the different relations of agape, see in Ivan Illich, *The Corruption of Christianity*, publication of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the series of "Ideas", January 2000.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid. One attractive feature of an ethic of code is freedom. This was implicit in the Grotian outlook.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.: p 283; Idem (1989): pp. 159-164. To objectify a given domain is to deprive it of normative force for us, or at least to bracket the meaning it has for us in our lives.

was seen as the embodiment of the Ideas, but with the revolution of science everything should be deconstructed for the sake of scientific analysis. Taylor explains in summary a double teleological view of the former cosmic understanding in some essential points. It underlines the Renaissance doctrine of correspondences, comparing a king in the realm as corresponds to lion among animals, or an eagle among birds, in other words, the things surround us take the form they have so that to exemplify ideas, corresponding to each nature; the whole order of things in itself exhibits certain perfection. In the Platonic variant, everything is ordered under the Idea of the Good, and it is also meant to exhibit reason, therefore, such Idea is a self-manifesting reality. This order defines excellence in several levels: the Idea of each thing exhibits the good of that thing; the whole cosmos exhibits a hierarchy of beings, from the lowest to the highest, and hence defines the rank of different things; the whole exhibits its own kind of goodness, such as plenitude, reason, or the benevolence of the Creator, in Christian version.<sup>282</sup>

This conception of order, in Taylor's perspective, can be called meaningful order, one involving an *ontic logos*, it sets the paradigm purposes for the beings within it. As humans we too conform to our *Idea*, and this in turn must play its part in the whole, which among other things involves our being rational, who can see the self-manifesting order. In the framework of *ontic logos*, Taylor argues that no one could understand reality without seeing its meaning or normative force. He affirms that we as agents-living-meaning withdraw from this enquiry, we place ourselves outside a certain meaning while examining the things of this domain, such is disengagement.<sup>283</sup>

There emerges a tension between the perspective of disengagement and the orthodox Christian faith relative to the story of healing or miracles as the actions of God. Taylor invokes Francis of Sales who taught that a closer relation to God can transform us spiritually, which for him is undeniable. However, the question here is unclear

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.: p. 284.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.: p. 286. The mechanization of the world picture involved one such withdrawal, but Descartes calls on us also to withdraw from the meanings correlated to our existence as embodied agents and emphasizes that the real ontological locus of our experiences is in the mind, not in the things we observe, which are confused and obscured. Taylor objects that though we have to open to the person or event in the world, allowing our responses to meanings, however, our feelings and understanding of human meanings may also block us to grasp them because they are different from us. He highlights the Gadamerian view in using a neutralized language of social science in solving the issue by proposing of not to jump out of the range of human meanings altogether. Taylor refers this to his discussion in "Understanding the Other: A Gadamerian View on Conceptual Schemes", in Jeff Malpas et al., eds., *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honour of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 2002, pp. 279-297.

boundary between the *spiritual*, or *psychological*, and *physical* domains. Even an unbelieving doctor can acknowledge that a strong will to live, or a condition of inner peace, can affect the cure (healing). For Hume and Gibbon, it is not the perspective of Francis of Sales that matters, rather the superstition in general. In their perspective, all categories under the domain of popular belief (piety) connected to a personal God, including miracles of cures, are considered as superstition, fanaticism, enthusiasm.<sup>284</sup>

Taylor includes the Modern Deism in his list of five, like body, history, the place of individuals, contingency and emotions. He argues that Modern Deism integrated these as essential dimensions of our understanding of human life but also excludes them altogether from our relation to God. In other words, the eclipse of God turns out to be morality, the law that binds us.<sup>285</sup> In this context, he also tackles the history of human society through several stages, which are defined in economic terms, from hunter-gatherer society to agricultural and commercial societies. These modes of society determine modes of religion and the higher stages represent a development, or gain, and consequently it would be quite irrational to try to retreat to none of the former stages; this clearly applies to the current stage of commercial society. Recent history is understood as gain, or progress, based on some big structural changes: displacement of a feudal, warrior aristocracy, with a commercial, production-oriented elite, consequent participation, economic prosperity, softening of manners, politeness, and so on. The superiority of our present outlook over other earlier forms of understanding is part of what defines the advance of the present stage over earlier ones. Intellectual regression would be unthinkable, anthropocentric shift sees the religious phenomena of the orthodox Christianity as outdated and impossible today.<sup>286</sup>

This powerful understanding of an inescapable impersonal order, uniting social imaginary, epistemic ethic, and historical consciousness, becomes one of the ideal forces of the modern age until our time.<sup>287</sup> The slide towards the impersonal order is seen as the perspective of anthropocentric shift.

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid.: p. 287. One of the consequences of these was the persecution against heretics and unbelievers.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.: p. 288.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.: 289.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.: pp. 289-291. About the growth of a certain temper among elite, Taylor admits that we in fact live in an immanent order of law, ethics, and a universe governed by natural law.

#### 4.1.2. Atheism

In 1751 Butler spoke of *the general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by everyone and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases, and with their numbers, their zeal.*<sup>288</sup>

Based on this fact, Taylor concludes that real unbelievers were not numerous at that time. Butler was reacting to a decline in zeal, even disaffection with religion, this has existed in many epochs in history. For Taylor, the shift from belief to atheism was through an intermediary stage, such is Providential Deism. He argues that the move to Deism involves more than just a change of belief, more even than a shift in what was taken to be rational argument. Rather, it really reflects a major shift in our background understanding of the human epistemic predicament.<sup>289</sup>

The emergence of atheism takes place in various forms, one of them is through the subtler language, which involves poems and arts. Taylor points out Earl Wasserman as a prominent figure who has shown the decline of the old order with its established background of meanings necessary for development of new poetic languages in the Romantic period.<sup>290</sup> In his commentary on the condition that as mentioned by Wasserman, Taylor testifies that, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the change was from a mimetic, imitative of creation, to creative conception of poetry. Wasserman explains the cosmic syntaxes in public domain until the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, affirming that men accepted the Christian interpretation of history, the sacramentalism of nature, the Great Chain of Being, the analogy of the various planes of creation, the conception of man as microcosm.

*Until the end of the eighteenth century there was sufficient intellectual homogeneity for men to share certain assumptions ..... In varying degrees, .... Men accepted ..... the Christian interpretation of history, the sacramentalism of nature, the Great Chain of Being, the analogy of the various planes of creation, the conception of man as microcosm ..... these were cosmic syntaxes in the public*

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.: p. 225. Quoted from MOSSNER, E. C. (1936), *Joseph Butler and the Age of Reason*, New York: Macmillan, p. 8.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.: p. 293. It is through this intermediary that a place was opened for unbelief in the Western civilization.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.: p. 353. The reference in WASSERMAN, Earl (1968), *The Subtler Language*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 10-11.

*domain; and the poet could not afford to think of his art as imitative of 'nature' since this patterns were what he meant by 'nature'. By the nineteenth century these world-pictures had passed from consciousness. The change from a mimetic to a creative conception of poetry is not merely a critical philosophical phenomenon .... Now ..... an additional formulative act was required of the poet. .... within itself modern poem must both formulate its cosmic syntax and shape the autonomous poetic reality that the cosmic syntax permits; 'nature', which was once prior to the poem and available for imitation, now shares with the poem a common origin in the poet's creativity.*<sup>291</sup>

In this sense, Taylor notes that the Romantic poets and their successors have articulated an original vision of the cosmos. In the description of Wordsworth and Hölderlin on the natural world around us, in *The Prelude of the Rhine*, or *Homecoming*, Taylor notices that they no longer play on an established gamut of references, as Pope could still do in *Windsor Forest*, rather they make us aware of something in nature for which there are as yet no established words.<sup>292</sup> Taylor concludes that the poems find words for us, and in this *subtler language* something is defined and created as well as manifested.<sup>293</sup>

The same with painting in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Casper David Friedrich turns away from the accepted conventions by searching for a symbolism in nature. Taylor unveils the ambition of Casper to let *the forms of nature speak directly, their power released by the ordering within the work of art.*<sup>294</sup> In this sense, he considers Casper as a prominent figure who is seeking a *subtler language* and trying to say something for which no adequate terms exist and whose meaning has to be sought in his works rather than in a pre-existing lexicon of references. He builds on the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a sense of the affinity between our feelings and natural scenes, but to articulate more than a subjective reaction.<sup>295</sup>

According to Taylor, the subtler language in music can move us towards more absolute forms; when we think of chanted prayer in a liturgical setting, we think of

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.: p. 353. Quoted from Earl Wasserman, *The Subtler Language*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968, pp. 10-11.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.: p. 353. See also reference in Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, II. 307-311.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. The term "subtler language" was taken from Shelley.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.: pp. 353-354. See also reference in ROSEN, Charles and ZERNER, Henri (1984), *Romanticism and Realism*, New York: Norton, p. 58. Carper distances himself from the traditional iconography.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid. Feeling can never be contrary to nature, rather it is always consistent with nature.



poetry and music as in the category of art. What is special in music here is not to be understood in aesthetic category, in terms of the way in which the listener is moved, but in the ontic category: a special important kind of action is being carried out, such as worshiping God, praising heroes. In the original context, even telling a story within certain canonical forms, singing a love song, can be understood in this earlier ontic way. It lifts the events to a higher plane and places them in a higher register than with song and story, in which we sooner or later come to a shift. In chant and bardic recitation, we have understood social action but there is no such an art in the modern sense yet, as a separate activity from religion, praising heroes.<sup>296</sup> Taylor states that art, as allowing this kind of contemplation, holding things up before us, can be described as mimetic, or tragedy in Aristotelian understanding.

Taylor continues explaining the disembedding arising from the subtle languages in the case of music, which develops over history of its use in heightened action, and later in mimesis a kind of *semanticisation*, or giving meaning. The first contemplative disembedding left the music with a clear context of human action: prayer, love declaration, dance, the plot of opera. The second disembedding is the step to absolute music, instrumental music of the baroque and classical ages, before being theorized in the Romantic period. *Disemanticization* and *resemanticization*, for instance, the Mozart G Minor Quintet gives us a powerful sense of being moved by something profound and archetypal, not trivial and passing, both are immensely sad but also beautiful, moving and arresting. In another way: 1) a love song evokes our being moved profoundly by some love story, which seems to express a human archetype, like Romeo and Juliet; it gives both the response expressed, and the intentional object of this response. 2) now with the new absolute music, we have response in some way captured, *made real there unfolding us but the object is not there*.<sup>297</sup>

Taylor makes clear that the subtler languages operating in the absolute mode can pave the way for modern unbelief, and affirms that for those who are moved by the critiques on the Romantic axes: *the modern identity and outlook flattens the world*,

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid.: pp. 354-355. Art as a separate activity from religion arises when come to value creations because they allow us to contemplate, that is, to hold before ourselves so that we can appreciate whatever it is without participating in the actions they were originally embedded in.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.: p 355.

*leaves no place for the spiritual, the higher, for mystery.*<sup>298</sup> This also moves us to another direction, which is entirely anthropological depth, or mystery. Taylor asserts that the atheists, humanists, cling on to this kind of profoundly moving, as they go to concerts, opera, read great literature. From such narrative, he concludes that one can complement an ethic and a scientific anthropology, which remain reductive and flat.

Taylor connects the move to anthropological depth, which is buffered identity, to breaking away with the traditional correspondences of the earlier languages, as an inescapable consequence of disenchantment, the decline of the cosmos, prompting a universe to be understood in mechanistic terms. The languages of theology and metaphysics, which confidently mapped out the domain of the deeper, the invisible, shift to another domain, which is the language of symbols, constitutive to Wasserman's *subtler language*.<sup>299</sup> Wasserman inspires Taylor in acknowledging that it is very difficult to make a symbol because it needs a creative power, even genius. According to Taylor, there is a close connection between the modern cosmic imaginary and the subtler languages of the last two centuries, particularly the poetry. In the Romantic outlook, the emphasis is on the search of a spontaneous unity, a harmony of all our faculties, and this we find in beauty, like in Schiller on *the aesthetic education of man*.<sup>300</sup> He reinforces that in beauty, form and content, will and desire, come of themselves together, indeed they merged inseparably.

Taylor synthesizes the Romantic outlook of nature in accordance with a number of indirect ways: *in art, in our feeling of renewal as we enter countryside or forest, in some of our responses of alarm at its destruction*.<sup>301</sup> There is a sense of inadequacy in our way of life connected to the nature from which arises the critique of the dominant form of Enlightenment anthropocentrism, particularly as a moralism. Taylor takes note of Schiller concerning the imposition of morality by the will on our refractory desires which divides reason and sensibility, and in effect enslaves one side of our nature to the other. In his analysis on the thought of Schiller, he sees the close link between beauty and morality and the prevalent stage of aesthetic unity over moralism. It is an integral

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid.: p. 356.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.: p. 357. Unlike the allegory, whose images refer us to a domain, which we could also describe directly in literal language as in theology and metaphysics, the language of symbols only gives access to what it refers and cannot simply rely on the established languages.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.: p. 358.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

fulfilment, in which all sides of our nature come together harmoniously, in which we achieve full freedom, since one side of us is no longer forced to submit to the demands of the other, and in which we experience the fullness of joy beyond morality, which is reality point of our existence.<sup>302</sup>

Taylor is convinced that the Schiller's aesthetic stage cannot be considered as contradicting to morality, rather complementing it in a sense to complete human fulfilment, unlike Nietzsche who sets the aesthetic against the morality. The aesthetic in this context is seen as established for an ethical category, which serves as a source of answer to these related questions raised by Taylor: *how should we live? What is our greatest goal or fulfilment?* The answer is found in the art, especially the beauty as what will save and complete us. The beauty can be found outside of us, in nature, or in the grandeur of the cosmos. But in order to open ourselves fully to it, we need to be fully aware of it and have to articulate it in the language of art. The works of art are not only important places of the beauty, which transforms us, they are also essential ways of acceding to the beauty which we do not create. In the Romantic period, artistic creation comes to be the highest domain of human activity, and its highest goal is immanent because it appears to us through art and the aesthetic.<sup>303</sup> In Taylor's view, it would represent an alternative to the love of God as a way of transcending moralism.

For Taylor, God is not excluded in Romantic period and nothing has ruled out an understanding of beauty as reflecting the work of God in creating and redeeming the world. He takes the theological aesthetic of Von Balthazar as an example of an open possibility after Schiller. The shift of understanding is expressed in Taylor's comparison between the pre-modern notion of beauty with the modern one. In the pre-modern time, the beauty of art was understood in terms of mimesis: the imitation of reality, which was set in an ordered cosmos, with its levels of being, which was further understood as God's creation. In this context, great art refers to the correspondences, to the order of being, to sacred history. However, in the modern age these backgrounds are fading away, with the coming of the buffered self, and we have the growth in subtler language as referred by Wasserman. Absolute music expresses feeling, which is moved

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.: p. 359.

by what is powerful and deep, but does not need to identify where it is to be found, whether in heaven, or on earth, or in the depth of our own being.<sup>304</sup>

For Taylor, the middle space between religious commitment and materialism is undoubtedly in the languages of art, for instance, the music in the concert hall and opera house from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tourism is an activity involving masses of people in the late twentieth century, people travel with all kinds of reasons and one of them is to see the important sights of our and other civilizations. Churches, temples, sites in which the strong transcendent meanings of the past are embedded. Some people argue that these monuments prove nothing about the transcendence, except simple civilizations of the past; they admire the art of these monuments, and nothing more. However, there is also a certain admiration, wonder, mixed with some nostalgia at these sites where the contact with the Transcendence was so much firmer/surer.<sup>305</sup>

Taylor comments that one of the cultural facts of modernity is the loss of the pre-modern languages alongside with the concern for lost meaning as we are embedded in the buffered identity and immersing in a condition of malaise and uncertainties. Consequently, the shift from cosmos to universe gave way to the development of deeper and more solid forms of materialism and unbelief and moulded a new shape to the cross-pressure, felt by the buffered identity, between belief and unbelief. Along with the development of post-Romantic art, the shift helps to create a neutral space between both positions.<sup>306</sup>

Taylor unfolds at least two reasons which made people reject Christianity: its Counter-Enlightenment doctrine of human evil and of divine punishment; and the practices of exclusion in the Church. Altruism was one of the key values of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, allowing exclusive humanism to claim superiority over Christianity, which tended to exclude heretics and unbelievers from its purview, while humanism became truly universal.<sup>307</sup> According to Taylor, other logical conclusion to the emergence of the materialism, was *the defence of ordinary human desire against the demands of such a*

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid.: p. 359

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.: p. 360.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.: p. 361.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.: p. 361. The practices of exclusion in the Church moved to its siding with the obscurantism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*supposedly superior renunciative vocation*.<sup>308</sup> In the context of ontological shift, the defence came as an invocation of the innocence of sensuous nature, of solidarity with human nature against the tortured demands of an illusory inhuman perfection. For Taylor, all these factors had already been operative in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although perhaps not focused in quite the same way in the case of altruism, but now entered two new factors: science and scholarship, and the new cosmic imaginary. He admits that both science and scholarship have evolved considerably since the 19th century. Fortunately, scholarship was very much relevant in forming the Biblical criticism, which put into question the sources of the Bible. While science had a main role to support a materialistic outlook of the universe, principally in connection with the work of evolution of Darwin.<sup>309</sup>

Taylor acknowledges that there is a deep conflict in Western intellectual sensibility between those who keep the Christian personal-historical faith and those who turn to seek an ultimate framework in impersonal order. Consequently, the draw to the impersonal framework prompted to further the progress of Deism and eventually unbelief. Faith in a personal God submerges under the stream of modern outlook which underestimates it. Taylor traces the less mature form of understanding, which becomes weaker and weaker as the modern thought and culture gain more and more strength, from Spinoza through Goethe to our present time.<sup>310</sup> In other words, the success of science underestimated the Christian religion by considering it as belonging to the earlier and primitive form of order.

Such a bent to impersonal order was greatly reinforced by an emergence of new cosmic imaginary, linking to the new form of understanding the world, a shift from cosmos with its limited outlook to the universe idea with its infinite and deeper horizon. Taylor highlights the plausible thought emerged from the shift, which claims that the vast universe seemed to be impersonal, blind and indifferent to our fate. Such a stance of indifference, or disengaged reason, is part of the modern identity of the buffered self which finds natural affinity for the impersonal order. The moral outlook of modernity

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid.: p. 362. Ontological shift here is understood in a sense of affirming the perfection of things in of each own nature. The superiority of renunciative vocation over the ordinary lay people was also undertaken by the reformers.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.: 362.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.: pp. 362-363. The moral outlook of modernity consists of modern social imaginary with its strong sensibility and the great centrality of the moral code which articulates the modern moral order.

calls on us to rise to a universal standpoint, according to which we have to rise above and beyond our particular view of things to a view from everywhere, the analogue of the *view from nowhere*, which is in the domain of natural science.

From this perspective, the real *telos* implicit in the earlier forward steps of humanity resulted the disenchantment, the end of a cosmos of spirits, and the coming of the impersonal order, are defined by moral code.<sup>311</sup> Taylor asserts that the turn to impersonal order caused an unease condition among the elites, some people who had opted for science over religion were later influenced by the sense of spiritual flatness and they turned to various forms of spiritualism, para-scientific researchers, para-psychology. In this context, Taylor explains two moves emerging from the thought of Friedrich Myers: 1) a loss of Christian faith owing to Darwinism; 2) then a return to the spiritual, but within the bounds of an impersonal framework. Myers spoke of himself as *re-entering through the scullery the heavenly mansion out of which I had been kicked out through the front door*.<sup>312</sup>

In the perspective of Taylor, the new regression of Christian faith in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was because the line of attack was in a sense new, the old arguments maintained, supplemented by new approach. His statement concerning the important retreat occurred in the mid-century is based on what John Stuart Mill said: *The old opinions in religion, morals and politics, are so much discredited in the more intellectual minds as to have lost the greater part of their efficacy for good*.<sup>313</sup> The retreat of Christian faith was also caused by the unavoidable thought of impersonal order and the need to avoid flatness, emptiness, the fragmentation. Still in line with the thought of Mill, Taylor adverts that the pull to impersonality reflected a rejection of orthodox Christianity, but it seemed imperative to save certain values of historical Christianity. Taylor underlines what Mill thought of this uncertain condition of the elite who opted for unbelief and yet because of their sense of weaknesses, ugliness, or evil of their ages forbade them to accept the more reductive, scientific or utilitarian modes of order. Taylor also refers to Carlyle as a prominent figure whose influence and impact had

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid.: p. 364. This earlier forward steps of humanity is referred to the axial period, the end of paganism and polytheism, the Reformation.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.: p. 364. See reference in HYNES, Samuel (1968): *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, London: Pimlico, p. 139.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.: pp. 377-378. See reference in MILL, J. S. (1960), *Autobiography*, New York: Columbian University Press, p. 60.

advanced unbelief in the context of impersonal order, though it is hard to understand him because at the end of his career he attacked some of the most basic values of modern liberalism.<sup>314</sup>

Taylor comments on the role of Carlyle and the Victorian loss of faith connecting to the impact of Darwinian evolution, which seems to have directly refuted the Bible. This condition of malaise creates an existential conflict among the people of devout upbringing. From this, Taylor takes some crucial conclusions:

*that evolutionary theory did not emerge in a world where almost everyone still took the Bible story simply and literally, rather this world was already strongly marked by the ideas of impersonal order, not to speak of the dark abyss of time; and that an influential formation had already been given to the displacement of Christianity by a cosmic vision of impersonal order, that of Carlyle.*<sup>315</sup>

The theory of Darwin had a strong impact on pushing towards materialism, a reductive view of the world, from which all teleological motive was purged or removed. According to Taylor, Carlyle shared the view of Goethe, Schiller and the German Romantics, in reacting against all features of Christianity, which are not compatible with impersonal order, like the importance of a personal relation to God, particular providences, Divine judgment as a personal decision of God, and above all miracles. He presents Carlyle's view:

*The mythus of Christian religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth, who will help us to embody the divine Spirit of that Religion in a new Mythus. In a new vehicle and vesture, that our souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live?*<sup>316</sup>

According to Taylor, the idea of Carlyle seemed to implicate the existence of some not purely human spiritual force, which could help humanity to move forward to higher forms of life.<sup>317</sup> In his commentary on Carlyle, Taylor illustrates that these higher forms

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<sup>314</sup>Ibid.: p. 367. See reference in Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado: A Life of Thomas Carlyle*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1995.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.: p. 378.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.: p. 379.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid. They involved some forms of providence, history and moral absolute.

would allow us really to affirm the goodness and rightness of all beings. Carlyle has a very important contribution to this belief in fighting the degradation of human life:

*the ugliness and egoism of commercial-industrial society, the atomism and lack of common concern that this society bred, held together only by the cash nexus, the absence of any larger, more heroic perspective on life, beyond a myopic hedonism, which it tends to inculcate in us.*<sup>318</sup>

In this age, the universe and society appear as merely mechanical, devoid of meaning. Carlyle says: *to me the universe was all void of life, of purpose, of volition, even of hostility; it was one huge dead, immeasurable steam-engine.*<sup>319</sup> Taylor agrees with what Carlyle said, referring to the requirement of some assurance to move to a higher stage.

There is also a massive shift in horizon identified with the rise of modernity, which has been differently understood. By secular humanists, it is often framed by what Taylor calls *subtraction story*, according to which the religious-metaphysical illusions fall away and human beings discover that they are just humans united in societies which can have no other normative principles, but those of the modern moral order. From the opposed perspective, Taylor traces the way through which the theological understanding of Aquinas was lost, and the arguments for the existence of God came to take on the quite different meaning in the new horizon.<sup>320</sup> The shift in metaphysical domain, which is epistemological, appears in the question of the validity for the existence of God, which is in a different understanding from Aquinas. Taylor sees that the move of the updated form of the classical early-modern horizon of metaphysical argument still contains human beings uniting in societies under the modern moral order, but these are now set in an indifferent and even hostile universe.<sup>321</sup>

Atheism takes the stance of materialistic view of the world, which excludes all possibilities of the existence of higher Being who has created the universe and dictated moral law on us. Taylor adverts that

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.: p. 379.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid. Carlyle sarcastically defines organized philanthropy, the desire to promote the well-being of others, as a universal Abolition of Pain Association.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.: pp. 294-295.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.: p. 295.



*science seems to show that we are nothing but a fleeting life-form on a dying star; or that the universe is nothing but decaying matter, under ever increasing entropy, that there is thus no place for spirit or God, miracles or salvation.*<sup>322</sup>

For Taylor, the traditional unbelieving attack on religion since the Enlightenment contains the accusation of childish pusillanimity. Therefore, according to him, once the epistemological story is properly in place, turning to dominate the philosophical discourse, then the new construal comes to be more clearly and unchangeable with the courageous adult agency of disengagement. Using the term *close world structures*, he explains that what is *natural* is opposed to something *socially constructed* and how one could oppose it by a deconstructing outlook. Consequently, what was once one possible construction among others sinks to the level of a picture.<sup>323</sup> From this context, Taylor moves descriptively to a richer view of *close world structure* as a proponent of the *death of God story*, which belongs to the moral facet of science driven. This is not just a new discovery of epistemology, rather a way through which things could be made to look from within a new historical formation of human identity as disengaged and objectifying subject. Taylor sees this process as a reinvention, a recreation of human identity along with great changes in society and social practices.<sup>324</sup>

The rise of this new outlook is prompted by the conditions arisen in the modern world in which to believe in God is no longer possible. Taylor presents two conditions, like the deliverance of science and the shape of contemporary moral experience. Those who opt for the first conditions see the second conditions of moral predicament as unnecessary and science alone can explain why belief is not possible anymore. This materialistic view is invading all levels, from the most sophisticated one to the most direct and simple one. From the most sophisticated level Taylor cites Richard Lewontin: *We exist as material beings in a material world, all of whose phenomena are the consequences of physical relations among material entities.*<sup>325</sup> The story described by Taylor in response to the moral issues helps us to understand the way the socially constructed reality works in accordance with the interest of materialist outlook. He

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid.: p. 569.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.: P. 564. He follows Wittgenstein's idea.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.: p. 560.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.: p. 561. Reference in LEWONTIN, Richard (1997): *New York Review of Books*, January 9, p. 28.

acknowledges that the moral issues are inescapable because of the real world is utterly indifferent to us, even in certain degree dangerous, threatening. So, they fit in the accounts of why people run away from reality, why they keep on believing illusions, which is a childish attitude, and this fear will disappear as we are growing towards adulthood although such a transition is not an easy path.

The unbelievers have the courage to take an adult stance and face reality, they know that human beings are on their own, they determine to affirm human worth and the human good, and to work for it, without illusion or consolation. The *death of God* moral critique accuses religion as terrible self-mutilation, imposing mortification on human agents and considering human beings as in need to be rescued. Taylor refutes its scientific-epistemic part as completely self-supporting and presents the opposing perspective in showing its weaknesses and unconvincing arguments.<sup>326</sup> According to him, modern science, along with many other facets, like buffered identity with its discipline, modern individualism with its reliance on instrumental reason and action in secular time, make up immanent frame which can be lived in many ways. He refutes the *death of God narrative* by arguing that

*natural science is not just one road to truth, but becomes the paradigm of all roads; and secular time, seen as homogenous and empty, is not just the dominant domain of present day action, but is time itself. Those who move to closure are considered as value-soaked construal of agency and draw on notions of the good, which have unavoidably played a big role in the immanent frame, such as disengaged reason, the courage to let go comforting illusions, the reliance on one's own reason against authority.*<sup>327</sup>

He finds the deconstruction of the death of God view, derived from the arguments of natural science for godlessness, unconvincing. Many people believe that they are atheists and materialists because science has shown these to be irrefutable, they have good reason to do so. Taylor considers their view based on a bad reason and argues that we need an account of why the bad reason nevertheless works. Individuals can just take some conclusion on authority from their milieu, like common people take the latest

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.: p. 562.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.: p. 566.

scientific report about the micro-constitution of the atom from the Sunday paper, they may take it on authority from a Sagan or a Dawkins that science has refuted God, but there is still unexplained how an authority of this kind gets constituted. *Why do these common laypeople believe in such an invalid argument? Why do they not believe in other alternatives?*

Taylor compares the case in an analogy with the story of Desdemona so that to justify his argument:

*What makes Othello a tragedy, and not just a tale of misfortune, is that we hold its protagonist culpable in his too-ready belief of the evidence fabricated by Iago. He had an alternative mode of access to her innocence in Desdemona herself, if he could only have opened his heart/mind to her love and devotion. The fatal flaw in the tragic hero Othello is his inability to do this, imprisoned as he is in a powerful code of honour, an imprisonment undoubtedly aggravated by his outsider's status and sudden promotion.*<sup>328</sup>

The reason why Taylor cannot accept the arguments that science has refuted God, without any supplementary explanation of the rise of unbelief, is precisely described on the story of Othello. We cannot just explain what we do based on the information we received from external sources without observing what we made of the internal sources. The question is that *why the testimony of Desdemona was not heard?* For Taylor, the voice of Desdemona reflects the view of human epistemic predicament within the modern horizon.

One of the first modes of exclusive humanism sounds atheism in the writing of Nietzsche *The Will to Power*.<sup>329</sup> According to Taylor, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the peak moment of the rise of unbelief, many people lost their faith and new positions were devised, new niches or spaces for unbelief. The turn to unbelief in the middle or late 19<sup>th</sup> century is in a sense something new, not just that the movement is wider than its 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessor, still within the elite of these advanced societies, but nevertheless it is more widespread and qualitatively deeper. This depth reflects something else that the unbelieving outlooks were more deeply anchored in the lifeworld and background sense

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid.: pp. 567-568.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.: p. 245. See reference in NIETZSCHE: *The Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1967, paragraph 1067.

of reality of 18<sup>th</sup> century people.<sup>330</sup> These social phenomena were caused by the change in the way the world is imagined from cosmos to universe.

#### 4.2. Materialistic Trends

The materialistic view of things had emerged from a philosophical outlook with its proposition that *everything exists, is* and *nothing exists beyond matter*. It came to be reinforced by the development of science, which Taylor traces from the Newtonian period to two hundred years later. The materialistic theorists refute the theistic view that the existence of Design requires a Creator and created beings show evidence of benignity. The new version of the horizon of argument takes the materialistic position, resulted from the natural science as royal road to truth in all domains. This leads to a shift in epistemology, where all truth about everything and all arguments about the existence of God or human purpose are only justified if they are validated and endorsed by science. However, in his refutation, Taylor argues that the power of materialism today comes not from the scientific facts but has rather to be explained in terms of the power of a certain package in which materialism is united with a moral outlook. He calls this package *atheist humanism*, or *exclusive humanism*. The question he raises here is that *what gives the package its power?* The answer he presents is in terms of certain values implicit in immanent frame, like the disengaged reason, which pushed to the limit, generate the science-driven *death of God story*. Second level of the death of God account starts from our contemporary moral predicament with the same conclusion as the argument from science, that we can no longer rationally believe in God, but the starting point is now the ethical outlook of the modern age.<sup>331</sup>

Taylor acknowledges that the great deal of our political and moral life is focused on human ends, such as human welfare, human rights, human flourishing, equality between human beings. Indeed, our public life, in societies which are secular in a modern sense, is exclusively concerned with human goods. However, he also admits that the adversarial picture of the relationship between faith and modernity is not an invention of unbelievers, but is matched and encouraged by the strand of Christian

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.: pp. 322-351 (chapter 9: detailed description under the title “The Dark Abyss of Time”).

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.: pp. 568-569. Taylor makes reference to Friedrich Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, the famous passage about the madman who announces the death of God, who used this horizon image.

hostility to the humanist world, for example, the fulminating syllabus of Pope Pius IX in 1864 against all the errors of the modern world, including human rights and democracy, equality, and all that our contemporary liberal state embodies.<sup>332</sup>

The transition to modernity comes about through the loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances, resulted from the institutional changes.<sup>333</sup> Materialism has prompted the thesis of utilitarian outlook, which gives us confidence to reorder and reshape our lives and the motivation to carry it out for the benefit of all. Concerning benevolence and universal justice, Taylor acknowledges that they are the hallmarks of the exclusive humanism of the 18th century, or in Kantian theory, or in the Enlightenment advocates of the rights of man. In this context, the moral sources had to be created or discovered, which were simply found in human nature with which the locus of the highest moral capacities was identified. The subtraction story, which claims that once the old religious and metaphysical beliefs withered away there remained the purely human motivation, links up with centuries of non-exclusive humanism. However, Taylor refutes it with argument that the modern humanism is different from most ancient ethics of human nature, it is exclusive, its notion of human flourishing makes no reference to something higher which humans should reverence or love or acknowledge.<sup>334</sup>

Comparatively Taylor distinguishes the two humanisms of benevolence and universal justice. First, the modern image of human flourishing incorporates an activist, interventionist stance, towards nature and human society. Both humanisms are to be reordered, in the light of instrumental reason, to suit human purposes.<sup>335</sup> Secondly, the new humanism has taken over universalism from its Christian roots and supposes that we are motivated to act for the good of our fellow human beings, because we are endowed with a specific bent in this direction. In this way, the moral psychology of modern exclusive humanism is strikingly different from that of ancient humanism, which bound others in ties of friendship or common citizenship. Community transcendent beneficence is reflected in the moral psychology of modern exclusive humanism, with

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.: pp. 569-570.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.: p. 570. The institutional changes are caused by the mobility and urbanization which erode the belief and reference points of static rural society. Taylor quoted from *Dover Beach*, II. 21-28.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.: pp. 222 – 269: Taylor elaborates this related to the Providential Deism, but more specific in page 245.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid. Activist reordering and instrumental reason are key categories here.

its claim that human beings are endowed with capacity of benevolence, or altruism.<sup>336</sup> Attempts are made to give a naturalistic explanation, such as Hume's theory of sympathy, that human motivation includes an inclination to act for the good of others as fellow human beings, independent of any notion of common interest. A specific drive to benevolence in modern humanist moral psychology, independent from pre-existing ties, with its scope ideally universal, is derived from the historical trace of Christian agape.

Taylor concludes that it is an immanentizing move which attributes the power of benevolence or altruism exclusively to humans, and this would be a reason for an attempt to reject Christianity, returning to a pre-modern exclusive humanism, like that of Lucretius. According to Taylor, it is very far from being a return to ancient wisdom, because the main thrust of modern exclusive humanism is to immanentize the power of benevolence, Nietzsche is proponent of this effort.<sup>337</sup> His emphasis lies on the innovated modern humanism in relation to the ancient, which drew on the forms of Christian faith they emerged from active reordering, instrumental rationality, universalism and benevolence. But indeed, their aim was also to reject the Christian aspiration to transcend human flourishing, only the self-giving which conducted to general flourishing as now defined was allowed as rational and natural, the rest was condemned as extravagance or enthusiasm.<sup>338</sup>

Taylor identifies two pertinent things regarding the retention of *agape-analogue*. First, it would probably not have been possible to make the transition to an exclusive humanism on any other basis. He supposes the transition began to move closer to the ideal model of mutual benefit, but agape, or benevolence, was built into this ideal model at three levels: *charity was part of the ideal of personal conduct; good social order must involve taking care of all members of society; and the proper inward dispositions of a decent man included charitable ones.*<sup>339</sup> The basic move in the transition was the recognition that the power to create this order is constituted in part by agape or benevolence, then this power must reside in us. Second point takes up this issue from

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.: p. 246. The Christian roots of the new humanism have Stoic sources, as with the influential modern school of thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or neo-Stoicism.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.: p. 246.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.: p. 247. In this context Taylor attempts to challenge us to think of the contempt Hume or Gibbon had for the Christian ascetic traditions, for monasticism, for missionaries, etc.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.: pp. 247-248.

another angle in Lucretian moral outlook, claiming that people could find within their own human resources the motivation to universal benevolence and justice. They might find these resources in pride, a positive force which was central to the warrior-aristocratic ethic, whereby one is moved by the sense of his own dignity to live up to the demands of his state, like in 17<sup>th</sup> century France.

He singles out Descartes's description about generosity as the key to all virtues and as a general remedy for all disorders of the passion. The high station whose demands we must live up to is not a social rank, but the state of the human being as such, as an agent of rational control, and its command is to obey the demands of the rational disengagement.<sup>340</sup> Descartes was not the only person to link the affinities between the honour of ethic and the ideal of disengaged self-discipline that emerges from neo-Stoicism. Undoubtedly the warrior ethics had stood alone without being part of an outlook which recognized a God or gods, they would have been exclusive humanism; indeed, the later attempt by Nietzsche at a transposed aristocratic ethic was clearly exclusive. But, according to Taylor, the problem was that the new ethic of universal benevolence needed something more and other than a motive which was in its essence self-regarding. He points to the view of Montesquieu, who said that it is just an internal satisfaction.

*The virtue we are shown here are always less what one owes others than that owes oneself; they are not so much what calls us to our fellow citizens as what distinguishes us from them. Here men's actions are judged not as good but as fine, not as just but as great; not as reasonable but as extraordinary.*<sup>341</sup>

Taylor explains the new humanism in more concrete way that: *living up to my dignity as a rational being, in one way, involves acting for universal beneficence and justice, then a bent to these must be part of what rationality requires, part of what a rational agent finds herself as a defining feature.*<sup>342</sup> There is no way around it and a sense of pride cannot fully replace universal benevolence. Therefore, the new humanism needed and found inner sources of benevolence. He cites Bertrand Russell who in *The Essence of*

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.: p. 249.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.: pp. 249-250. See the reference in the modified translation in *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. By Anne M. Cohler, Bahia Carolyn Miller and Harold Samuel Stone, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1089, p. 31 ff.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.: p 250.

*Religion* distinguishes two natures of human beings: 1) particular, finite, self-centred; 2) universal, infinite, impartial. The infinite part shines impartially.<sup>343</sup> Taylor presents another way of immanentizing moral power which was through a sense of pure, universal will, an inner power before which we stand in awe, evident in the invocation of Kant *the starry skies above, and the moral law within*.<sup>344</sup> He argues that it lifts and inspires us to rise to the full demands of justice and benevolence. A third way was through a sense of universal sympathy, which only needed the right conditions to flourish into virtue. The source of love is no longer considered here as residing in dispassionate reason; hence it lies deep in our emotional constitution, but it has been suppressed, distorted, covered over by the false and denaturing conditions which have developed in history.<sup>345</sup>

Another, later view of moral inspiration comes from Feuerbach, whose vision is that the powers we attribute to God are human potentials. Taylor concludes that what was new here was not only the theoretical account of the sources of morality, however, there are new modes of moral experience. He argues persuasively that we may be led to think that the feeling, the sense of moral strength, is the same before and after; it is just explained differently in one case as agape, in the other as the moral law within.<sup>346</sup> For Taylor, the sense of moral inspiration articulated by Bertrand Russell, as referred to in *The Essence of Religion*, is not just offering an underlying explanation, but also giving expression to the experience of being lifted to a higher, more universal moral plane, and it has to be different from the experience of Kantian contemplation of the moral law within.<sup>347</sup> His claim here is to identify what is moving and it can fail in many ways, arguing that the experience goes dead if the inspiration fails, in a sense that when we understand things better, or else, without repudiating the original experience we may come to reinterpret it, like what happened to Bede Griffiths who first was persuaded by a kind of *worship of nature*, given shape by his reading of the Romantic poets. Bede saw this as a moment in which he was turned to the search of God. But the reinterpretation

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid.: 251; Idem (1989), pp. 407-408. Quoted from CLARK, Ronald (1975), *Bertrand Russell*, London: Cape, p. 190.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. Reference in Kant “Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft”, Berlin Academy Edition, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968, V, 161.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.: p. 251. Our task is to find the conditions which can liberate it.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.: pp. 251-252. In neo-Stoic thinking, reason was a spark of God within us.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.: p. 252.



does not align with the original experience of which we now have an alternative explanation, because the meaning is integral to, constitutive of the experience. It is not only that by re-interpreting it one becomes incapable of living it again in quite the same way; it is also that the change may consist in our seeing in it now a deeper and richer meaning than we were able to take in then. Taylor explains that what we have here in this discovery of new moral motivations is a composite, experience and reality claim together, amounting to new modes of moral life, which in placing the moral sources within us constitute forms of exclusive humanism.<sup>348</sup>

According to Taylor, these new modes of moral life innovated in relation to the traditional humanist ethics was derived from the ancient world. But the most common subtraction story does not give much importance to these, because of its simpler account that once religious and metaphysical beliefs fall away, we are left with ordinary human desires.<sup>349</sup> Taylor adverts that these ordinary human desires undergo reversal in value: in the pre-modern time they were comprehensively condemned in the name of an other-worldly salvation; but now it is affirmed, like sexual fulfilment, instead of being condemned as a path to perdition, is now seen as one of our greatest joys. Ordinary self-love is no longer sin, but the very basis of healthy human life and the value of ordinary desires shines out, in its true nature, as it has always been, not really subtracted or reduced.

The rehabilitation of human nature is certainly an important strand of the Enlightenment moral outlook, in which nature seems to recover its innocence in disengaged reason.<sup>350</sup> So, exclusive humanism was not just something we fell into once the old myths dissolved, or the infamous ancient regime Church was crushed, rather it is a historic-cultural process, which is complicated. It opened new human potentialities, to live in these modes of moral life in which the sources are radically immanentized. Taylor refutes the subtraction story precisely because it does not align with these great realizations in the history of human development.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, religious outlook protects us from the truth of an indifferent universe, modern cosmic imaginary, unlike materialism outlook considers it as an

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid.: p. 253. According to Taylor, this is difficult for the subtraction story to account for.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid. These ordinary human desires are the basis of modern exclusive humanism.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.: pp. 253-254.

immature outlook wrapped up in childish image of God. Scientific materialism is seen as the stance of maturity, of courage, of manliness, over against childish fears and sentimentality.<sup>351</sup> Taylor describes the conversion from faith to science under some attitudes which he sees as a consequence of certain scientific conclusions. There were those who were deeply wedded to certain particular beliefs and could not conceive their faith without them, like the dogma of creation account of Christianity and any other cosmic theories, or the deistic providential order. They were challenged by science, which refuted their faith, causing an inner insecurity within them and they might end up resolving the tension by abandoning their religion, even if with sadness and a sense of irreparable loss. They also felt the accusations of childishness levelled against faith as hitting a target in their own religious life. Here we notice a person sees himself as abandoning one world view (religion) because another incompatible one (science) seemed more believable.<sup>352</sup>

Taylor in his own account claims that what made it in fact more believable was not scientific proofs, rather he presents a whole package which makes it to be as such. There is a battle between two packages of science with its rival picture of epistemic-moral predicament representing a mature stance and of religion with its rival picture of epistemic-moral predicament representing childish stance. From this emerged a vision which claims that science beats religion in the fight. Here the decisive consideration the scientific stance of moral predicament offered a more convincing account for moral and spiritual life of the convert. It is through this whole way of seeing things that has brought about modes of solidified unbelief in the 19<sup>th</sup> century trajectory. According to Taylor, materialism is tamed and creeping close to be common sense, and it has not just solidified, but has also deepened.

In Taylor's analysis, such a materialistic world picture, emerged from the new cosmic imaginary, which laid foundation for the mechanistic universe, had dissipated totally the earlier view of meaning in things captured in the Platonic-Aristotelian idea that the world around us is the realization of Forms, like the theory of *ontic logos*. This materialism also wipes out further purposes of God in creating the universe. He

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid. Reference in *The Poems of Mathew Arnold*, ed. Kenneth Allott, London: Longmans, 1965, pp. 285-294.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.: pp. 365-366.

articulates the arguments, taken from the Epicureans, of materialism in the following statement:

*in this purposeless universe we are liberated from vulnerability and having determined the order of human things and are empowered to discover in ourselves the motivation, and the capacity to build the order of freedom and mutual benefit in the face of an indifferent and even hostile universe.*<sup>353</sup>

The feeling that we are alone in the universe is frightening, but it can also be exhilarating, in a sense that there is a certain joy in solicitude, particularly for the buffered self. Taylor expresses the idea of universe from which life emerged and evolved, as a further dimension being added by the new cosmic imaginary, in this way:

*Having come to sense how vast the universe is in time and space, how deep its micro-constitution goes into the infinitesimal, and feeling thus both our insignificance and fragility, we also see what a remarkable thing it is that out of this immense, purposeless machine, life and then feeling, imagination and thought emerge.*<sup>354</sup>

For a religious man, this evokes a sense of mystery, which is repudiated by a materialist, and science in its progress has prompted a senseless mystery by affirming such experiences of things as temporary puzzles.<sup>355</sup> This sense of awe allows us to recapture the sense of connection and solidarity with all existence which arose in the eighteenth century out of our sense of dark genesis, but now with an incomparably greater sense of the width and profundity of its reach.<sup>356</sup> Based on the idea of Mathew Arnold, Taylor sees that materialism has become deeper, richer, but also more varied in its forms, the reasons to opt for unbelief go beyond judging religion and the supposed deliverances of science. This option includes the moral meanings we now find in the universe from which emerges our genesis. Taylor shows this as one way, through science and the cosmic imaginary, in which unbelief deepened and solidified in the nineteenth century,

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid.: p. 367. This was derived from the Epicureans; knowing that all are constituted of atoms and their swerving, that the Gods are utterly unconcerned with us, is to liberate us from fear of the beyond, and thus allow us to achieve ataraxia.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.: p. 367.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.: p. 368. See also the sense of awe in HOFSDTER, Douglas(1980): "Reductionism and Religion", in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3, p. 436.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid. Reference in ARNOLD, Matthew (1939): *Culture and Anarchy*, New York: Norton, Preface, p. xi.

and he admits another way through the forms of social imaginary built around simultaneity and action in secular time.<sup>357</sup>

Taylor also emphasizes the important sense of the impersonality of modern societies, which is based on stranger sociability and involving the creation of collective agency among equals, who privilege categorical identities in which people are linked through shared properties, rather than through a network of personal relations, as in kinship, or the relations of fealty central to pre-modern European societies.<sup>358</sup> Taylor speaks of people whose religious life was embedded with forms of network society would be deeply disoriented and unable to live their traditional religion, once they transferred to an industrializing city in the nineteenth century.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century would be the time when the modern schism occurred, such as mentioned by Foucault and Nietzsche, deeper and more anchored forms of unbelief in that time are basically the same today.<sup>359</sup> Taylor sees the post-Scopenhauerian visions as giving a positive significance to the irrational, amoral and violent forces within us. According to Taylor, we cannot condemn these forces because our existence, vitality, creativity, strength, and ability to create beauty depend on them. In his conclusion he claims that this turn finds a new moral meaning in our dark genesis out of the wild and pre-human.<sup>360</sup> It is a rebellion against the standard form of modern anthropocentrism, along the tragic axis, in which suffering, evil and violence are excluded. It is a turn against the values of the Enlightenment, but unlike the Counter-Enlightenment, it is not in any sense a return to religion or the transcendent, rather it remains absolutely naturalist. Taylor calls it the *Immanent Counter-Enlightenment*. The principal adversary in the rebellion is a crucial strand of modern exclusive humanism, which in turn derived from the precedent religious tradition. Taylor considers it as a powerful constitutive strand of modern spirituality: *an affirmation of the value of life, of succouring life and sustaining it, healing and feeding*.<sup>361</sup> This was intensified by the anthropocentric shift, according to which the purposes of God were just to sustain human life and flourishing, and that it is

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid. Such forms of social imaginary implicated the market economy, the public sphere, the polity of popular sovereignty.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.: p. 368. Share property for instance, being Frenchmen, Catholics, Moslems. The pre-modern European societies were feudal.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.: p. 369. See also ARNOLD, Mathew (1939): pp. xiv and 11.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid. It is seen from the Romantic perspective.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.: pp. 369-370. This reflects the idea of moral order and the affirmation of the ordinary life.

perhaps evident in the contemporary concern to preserve life, to bring prosperity and to reduce suffering, world-wide. This affirmation was originally inspired by a mode of Christian piety, exalted practical agape, and was polemically directed against the pride, elitism, or self-absorption of those who believed in higher activities.<sup>362</sup>

Taylor highlights the theological perspective, which also shifted to emphasize on the immanent approach to spirituality in accordance with the perspective of Reformation that the real holy life for the Christians was within ordinary life itself. The reformers adopted the same rhetorical stance against monks and nuns, even it was taken up by secularists and unbelievers against Christian faith itself. Taylor sees it as a critique against the higher vocation, or purely imaginary higher end, which scorns, or rejects, the real, sensual, earthly human good. It was prompted by the exclusive humanism, which has inherited both the allegiance to moral order and the affirmation of ordinary life.<sup>363</sup>

At least there were clearly two important sources of the reaction against the Enlightenment humanism with its utilitarian variant, which was seen as flattening human life. Taylor articulates them in this way:

*One was the continuing spiritual concern with the Transcendent, which could never accept that flourishing human life was all there and bridled at the reduction; the other sprang from the older aristocratic ethos, and protected against the levelling effects of the culture of equality and benevolence.*<sup>364</sup>

The main concern was the reduction of humanity, which also threatens us in a democratic age as in the concern of Tocqueville. The resistance also came from within unbelief against the primacy of life, not in the name of something beyond, but more just from a sense of being confined, diminished by the acknowledgement of such a primacy

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid.: p. 370. This affirmation constitutes a major component of our modern ethical outlook and becomes fundamental for a shift in spirituality.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.: p. 371. This has provoked a revolt from within, a revolt against what is called as a secular religion of life, which is one of the most striking features of the modern world.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.: pp. 371-372.

of life.<sup>365</sup> This primarily happened in the literary and artistic domains that grew out of Romanticism and its successors.<sup>366</sup>

One of the major themes of the immanent Counter-Enlightenment is a new understanding of the centrality of death, an answer to the inability of the mainstream of exclusive humanism to deal with mortality.<sup>367</sup> There is also another kind of revolt against the primacy of life, inspired mainly by the other source of resistance in the external Counter-Enlightenment, against levelling, in the name of the great, the exceptional, the heroic. The most important influential proponent of this view is Nietzsche and then Foucault, Derrida and Bataille, who are anti-humanist thinkers of our time. Nietzsche fought against the idea that our higher goal is to preserve and increase life, to prevent suffering, and he rejected this idea both metaphysically and practically. According to Taylor, the Nietzschean rebellion is in a sense also internal and life itself can push to cruelty, to damnation, to exclusion, and indeed does so in its moments of most exuberant affirmation, and so there is nothing higher than the movement of life itself.<sup>368</sup> Life also wants to rehabilitate destruction and chaos, the infliction of suffering and exploitation, as part of the life to be affirmed. This can be noticed in the movement of life, which arises from one destroyed by death, giving and restoring a new one. He puts it in another level that a religion of life, which would proscribe death-dealing and the affliction of suffering, is confining and demeaning. Nietzsche thinks of himself as having taken up some of the legacy of pre-Platonic and pre-Christian warrior ethics, their exaltation of courage, greatness, elite excellence. Central to this has always been a paradigm place for death, such as the willingness to face death, the ability to set life lower than honour and reputation, has always been the mark of the warrior, his claim to superiority.<sup>369</sup> Life involves construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, something natural that we cannot avoid but let it flow according to nature.

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid.: p. 373. These resistances were nourished by a long-standing tradition such as those of transcendent and the standard of honor and excellence but abandoned these traditional sources. It is neither grounded in transcendence though it may be inspired by earlier versions of warrior ethic, as in the case of Nietzsche.

<sup>366</sup> The protest against flattened world was typically the theme of the Romantic writers and artists. Romanticism is one of the important loci of the Counter-Enlightenment.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid. This also finds some of its sources in the religious tradition.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. Taylor takes the idea of Nietzsche in the "The Will to Power", in which he admits that life itself affirms death and destruction.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid. Taken from Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967.

From Nietzschean perspective, Taylor observes that modern life-affirming humanism breeds pusillanimity. It was a counter-culture, referring to the Counter-Enlightenment, and one of its fruits was Fascism, to which Nietzsche was not entirely foreign, however, true and valid is the refutation of Walter Kaufman regarding the simple myth of Nietzsche as a proto-Nazi. But in spite of this, the fascination with death and violence recurs, and this was shared by Bataille, Derrida and Foucault. Taylor is intending to show that there is an anti-humanism, which rebels against the unrelenting concern with life, the proscription of violence, the imposition of equality. His conclusion on the Nietzschean understanding of enhanced life, in which it can fully affirm itself, also in a sense takes us beyond life. It is analogous with religious notions of enhanced life, however, it takes us beyond by incorporating a fascination with the negation of life, with death and suffering. It does not acknowledge some supreme good beyond life (anti-religion).<sup>370</sup> These anti-humanists in the nineteenth century rebelled against exclusive humanism and rejected all *ontically-grounded* understandings of transcendence.

The unbelief in the 19<sup>th</sup> century develops a solidity and a depth, but seems in a variety, a complex of internal differences. There are exclusive humanists who are unsure of their position, but the direction from which they feel vulnerable is neo-Nietzschean anti-humanism. Taylor thinks that these post-modernists themselves may have occasional pangs of doubt when they read John Stuart Mill or Karl Marx, in which the transcendence is off. With the anthropocentric shift, the sense of God as ordering power begins to fade, and another sense starts to rise with an affirmation that we can sustain the order in our own. For some, God retreats to a distance, in the beginning or the end (Deist); for others, God fades altogether. According to Taylor, the shift in cosmic imaginaries undermines intensively and completely our sense of ordering presence. It is not just his presence was identified with the earlier apologetic argument of *design*, but also the vast and unfathomable universe in its dark abyss of time makes this ordering presence lose sight. In the Epicurean-naturalist sense, one can indeed live in a world where God is absent. Taylor describes this in analogy by saying that a universe whose

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid.: p. 374. The immanent Counter-Enlightenment involves new valorization, even fascination, of death and violence.

outer limits touch nothing but absolute darkness and correspond to human world in which we really experience Godlessness.<sup>371</sup>

In Taylor's optic, the development of what he calls *nova* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in which alternatives open to unbelief are multiplied and enriched prior to their diffusion to society as a whole in the process he calls as *super-nova*.<sup>372</sup> Therefore, the process of secularization occurs in a zigzag way, not in a linear way, for instance, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there is a resurgence in belief and practice associated with the Evangelicals and partly driven by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. But in 1830s, the orthodox belief among intellectual and social elites comes once again under pressure.<sup>373</sup> He also acknowledges that the philosophical radicalism, with its utilitarian principles, was very much an intellectual product of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Ontological shift was a direct consequence of the materialism with its radical view of reality, claiming that what exists, is simply matter. In this materialistic outlook everything can be explained mechanically, negating the existence of any higher or supernatural entities. In the old view, reality for itself is unseen and considered as *ens creatum*, or created being, and in the phenomenological point of view, what is seen is just simply a representation of reality itself, and the true knowledge emerges from this assumption. While the materialistic assumes that all facts, including human mind and will, inclusively other courses of human history, are causally dependent upon physical processes. The change involves the epistemological domain because of the materialistic variant, deconstructing all metaphysical affirmations.

The paradigm shift in the ontological level has its fundamental impulse in the development of natural science, which shapes the modern cosmic imaginary. In the pre-modern world, people were related to things in the nature in terms of the normative patterns, then this outlook gradually changed along the history of Western civilization. Taylor traces the history concluding that such a paradigm shift had occurred since the crucial period of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance, the nominalist period of 15<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance humanists and the Galilean-Newtonian turn of the seventeenth century. According to him, the modern exclusive humanists, who are considered as secularists,

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid.: p. 376

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.: pp. 300 and 377. Referring to a kind of galloping pluralism on the spirituality, which mainly takes place after the second world war.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.: p. 377.



show their interest in nature as it is and reference to God atrophies. However, he argues that this view of thing for its own sake also depends on the background of how it shows up itself such as in science, like of Aristotle, in art, like in realism of Giotto, and in ethics, like the ancient ethic of nature in Aristotle and Stoic. The origin of the view of thing in-its-own-sake is rooted in the ancient regime. In the ethical level, the view implies the perfection of things in themselves, which means that things in the world have their own natures, or forms they embody, hence they have their own kind of perfection according to each own nature (form). The new-Aristotelian Christian view of autonomization of nature, which takes its influential form in Thomas testifies that reference to Nature and to God went together.<sup>374</sup> Taylor follows this view of things in nature by adding that the call to perfection in the dimension of grace does not cancel, or set aside, their inherent natural perfection.

In the context of Heideggerian ontology, Taylor summarizes that interest in nature-for-itself, either in scientific study, or aesthetic portrayal, or ethical reflection, can be different depending on the background of understanding within which things show up for us. He reiterates the view of perfection, in Aristotelian perspective, as independent from the will of God, not God must will whatever is good, which is determined by nature as good, rather he must always force to determine what is good.

In the modern context, Taylor articulates the change by arguing that:

*we are not just to relate to nature of things in terms of normative pattern these things reveal, which is their proper good or perfection in themselves, but also in terms of the autonomous super-purposes of our Creator, which means the purposes things serve are intrinsic to them, or at the service of the purposes of God.*<sup>375</sup>

Then another change derives from it, like the *mechanization of the world picture*, but still in the domain of created being (*ens creatum*) though the order is no longer in the normative patterns, which we should model ourselves as in the pre-modern worldview. He shows an outlook that sees the world as a vast field of mutually affecting parts and we can grasp these purposes if we can discern what ends a mechanism of this kind well

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.: p. 91.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.: p. 97.

designed to serve. In other words, the world is designed to produce certain results. In this context, human beings inhabit the world as agents of instrumental reason, that is, working the system effectively in order to bring about the purposes of God. Thus, we are leaving the cosmos as locus of signs, through which God reveals himself, as in Aristotle and Thomas. Consequently, the shift from symbol to mechanism rewrites humanism in terms of ordering action and redefines human agency in instrumental reason.<sup>376</sup>

In summary, what actually becomes the materialistic argument resides in the epistemological domain, though the focus is ontological. The epistemic change has derived from the argument that everything, which is known to our knowledge, is matter, palpable, with its processes of becoming. In other words, the materialistic theories use epistemological arguments to justify and validate their conception of truth and the empirical nature of things knowable to human intelligence, rejecting all metaphysical affirmations.

#### **4.3. Time and Space Consciousness**

The shift in our human consciousness has fundamentally implicated time and space. Taylor's thinking of secularity should be understood in the context of framework understanding of time and space, within which human condition has been shaped. The shift in human conditions involves how people imagine things in nature and supernatural agency.

##### **4.3.1. The Notion of Time**

In *A Secular Age*, Taylor discusses the fundamental question concerning secularity with its process intrinsic to the shift in time and space consciousness of human agents. He distinguishes the notion of time in the enchanted world in two kinds: eternity or higher time, in Greek *kairós*, and secular or ordinary time, in Greek *chronós*. The emphasis was on the higher time, eternity, God's time, gathering the ordinary and periodic time in which things happen after another. For the people of the enchanted world, what lies beyond the time is timeless, eternity. The real fullness is attained

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid.: pp. 97-99. Also in TAYLOR (1989): Taylor attempts to work toward an understanding of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self.

beyond the flowing time, where we can find the *really real*. In the Middle Ages, people had more than one kind of eternity, such as of Plato, gathered time, extensionless time of Aristotle, Stoic time of circular great years; lately in our age Eliade adds another category such as time of origins, connecting to our genesis. Plato eternity is understood in terms of perfect immobility, impassibility, which we aspire to by rising out of time, which means beyond secular/profane time. The time of God does not abolish secular time, but gathers it into an instant, or an infinitesimal moment, which can only be accessed to by participating in the life of God.<sup>377</sup> For Christians, eternity is conceived in terms of gathered time, God's.

While the time of origins, in terms of secular understanding, is *time out of mind*, not simply in the past, but it is also something that we can re-approach, can get closer to again.<sup>378</sup> Taylor also discusses the Stoic time, huge cycles of time, which is known as the great years in which everything returns to its original states. Another conception of time is seen in Schopenhauer, inspired by Heraclitus, for which every instant of time only exists in the measure in which the precedent instant is destroyed. For Schopenhauer, the past and the future are in vain like a dream, and the only limit without extension nor consistence is the present, which separates both.<sup>379</sup> Everything consists in time and space is a relative existence, which means it only exists for the other to come, similar with it no further permanence than it. Therefore, consistent with this pre-modern ontological thought, especially of the ancient Greek, everything is contingent, and its existence is relative to time and space, and gives way to the coming generation, which is also limited and contingent. For the pre-modern people, the only supreme being in whom we should rely on is God, the transcendence, gods or extra-cosmic agents with powers.

The higher time was inherited from Plato and the Greek philosophy, which is understood as a moving image of eternity; Plato defined it in the way that *the really real, full of being is outside of time, unchanging* and it is true like in the Aristotelian perspective of sub-lunar time. Taylor expresses the new understanding of eternity in a beautiful way: *nothing here can be counted on to be quite totally conformed to its*

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<sup>377</sup> Ibid.: pp. 54-58.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid. pp. 55-57. This is the original founding events, which can be re-approached by ritual only, however, this ritual may also have an effect of renewing and rededicating in order to be coming closer to origin.

<sup>379</sup> Cf. Ibid.

*nature. But there were some processes which reflected eternity without flow: for instance, the stars in their circular courses, without beginning nor end.*<sup>380</sup> This means that what happens in time is less real than in the timeless space, an eternal space where there is no change. This thought has contributed to the understanding of universe in the modern world, which is limitless space expanding infinitely in the flowing time. In the framework of ancient regime, the notion of cosmos expresses just a totality of existence, because it contains the ordered whole. Taylor explores the cosmos idea based on the Aristotelian notion, which has its apex and center in God, whose ceaseless action exemplifies something closer to eternity of Plato; this action, a kind of thinking, is also at the center of our lives: *it is the most divine in us and we should exemplify in our lives, both individually and as a society.*<sup>381</sup> Unlike the universe, their concept of cosmos is limited and bounded because of the notion of order. It has a kind of hierarchy, which consists in higher and lower levels of beings.

Taylor recalls Benedict Anderson, who narrates the higher time as gathers and reorders the secular time by linking the sacrifice of Isaac to the crucifixion of Christ as two events which are drawn close to identity in eternity though they are distant in centuries away.<sup>382</sup> This has its sources in Plato and Greek philosophy and Augustinian ontology, according to which the lived time is the gathering together of the past into the present to project the future. In Augustine's logical thought, time exists but is not, and the real existing time is the present, the past is objectively no longer existing, and the future is objectively not yet but still in the project. It seems that eternity as gathered time is now in the present, the only existing time in which we are turning towards the really real, which is out of time. The shift in understanding of time lies in its emphasis with wider horizon.

The medieval notion of time in the secular sense was heterogenous and colored by their placing in relation to higher time. This tract of secular time is contrasted to a homogeneous, or empty time, which marks the modern consciousness. In this view, time has become empty like a container indifferent to its content. Here Taylor follows the idea of Walter Benjamin, who claims that time is homogeneous and empty, in

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.: p. 55. This happens in time, secular time, is less real than in the timeless.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.: p. 60.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.: p. 55.

distinguishing time and space consciousness of the pre-modern perspective from its modern version.

#### **4.3.2. From Biblical Microcosmic World to Scientific Macrocosmic Universe**

In his discussion on the notion of space, Taylor unfolds the paradigm shift from the cosmos to the universe in consonance with the progress in scientific revolution. He describes the migration from the idea of the cosmos to that of the universe, pointing out the change in the way the world was imagined. By *imagine* Taylor means that it is analogous to the social imaginary, which consists of the generally shared background understandings of society that allow it to function as it does. Our way of imagining the world has changed. So, the cosmic imaginary is understood in the ways the surrounding world figures in our lives as Taylor describes below. *First*, the ways it figures in our religious images and practices, including explicit cosmological doctrines; in the stories we tell about other lands and other ages; in our way of making reasons and passage of time; in the place of nature in our moral and aesthetic sensibility; and in our attempt to develop a scientific cosmology. *Secondly*, the way in which nature figures in our moral and aesthetic imagination. The change has been immense, we move from an enchanted world to a disenchanted one; or we have moved from a world which is encompassed within certain bounds and static to one which is vast, infinite and is in the midst of an evolution spread over aeons.<sup>383</sup>

The earlier world was limited and encompassed by certain notions of cosmos, world orders, which imposed a boundary by attributing a shape to things. The understanding of things as signs or expressions of a higher reality could easily be taken over into a vision of the world as created. Taylor succinctly elaborates the Judeo-Christian worldview, rooted in the Aristotelian view of the world as eternal, including its view of a fixed hierarchy of species, as opposed to evolutionary theory. Here the Scripture framework is interwoven with the cosmos idea. But the whole understanding, defined by the limits, such as cosmos in its short time scale, has been swept away. Our sense of the universe now is precisely defined by the vast and unfathomable: vastness

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid.: p. 323.

in space, above all in time.<sup>384</sup> It is unfathomable in the chain of changes out of which present forms evolve.<sup>385</sup>

Taylor raises these questions: *how the Biblical cosmology was replaced by the march of science in the form of evolution theory? How our sense of things, our cosmic imaginary, in other words, our whole background of understanding and feeling of the world has been transformed?*<sup>386</sup> The answers are in a descriptive way by saying that some theoretical change may leave our imaginary unaffected, such as in the more refined and esoteric developments in contemporary science. Sometimes scientific change may help to undermine or destroy an earlier imaginary, and this is certainly true in the cosmological and biological discoveries that led up to Darwin. But even in these cases, science does not simply determine what imaginary develops in the place of the earlier one.<sup>387</sup> To do this, Taylor opts to follow the fuller and richer story, englobing the transformation of both science and imaginary. He argues that only if we accept the simplest secularization story, that science by itself determines modern unbelief, can we even imagine that we can neglect the broader context. Even the actual course of scientific story is hard to understand if we neglect the broader context.

Regarding the change-over on the level of theory, Taylor takes Giordano Bruno's thought as foundation. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, Giordano Bruno postulated the infinite universe of uncountable worlds. Based on this postulate Taylor divides the change in two categories.<sup>388</sup> First category of change, the immense increase in the dimensions of the old cosmos, centring on the Earth, was orbited by the planets and the fixed stars. Vast as this was to earlier imaginations, it reached its limit in the outer spheres, and the Biblical story sets its earlier limits in time. But now the idea grows that our solar system is just the immediate surrounding of one star in a galaxy; and then later that this galaxy is also one among countless others. The extension in space not only flees outward into the immense, but it also opens an inner frontier of the deep microscopic world. The things we are aware of in our everyday life not only are affected and determined by an immense of surrounding universe, but also the nature of each one is shaped by a micro-

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid.: 324. Here the old framework has changed to the new one, which implicates the change of forms.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.: 325.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.: p. 326.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.: pp. 325-326.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.: 326-328.

constitution whose detailed make-up lies in the unexplored terrain of the infinitesimal. Reality in all directions plunges its roots into the unknown and unmappable. It is in this sense that we can grasp the world as universe, unlikely cosmos; and Taylor admits that the universe outlook is deep while the cosmos picture was not. According to him, much as we are overwhelmed by this opening onto unencompassable space, the extension of time has perhaps had an even deeper impact. From a contained cosmos of merely about 5000 to 6000 years, we come to see ourselves as issuing from what Buffon called *the abyss of time*.<sup>389</sup> This arresting image derives its force from the fact that the vast expanse of time which lies behind us unlike the tracts of space which lie around us, hides the process of our genesis, of our coming to be. The immense universe of galaxies can indeed be thought of as dark, insofar as most of it is empty; but it can also be thought of as lit up by the countless stars. The countless aeons (indefinite) of time which lie behind us are dark in another sense; in attempting to explore them we meet the twilight of our own dawn, and then beyond that the night from which we conscious (light-bearing) animals emerged. Our remote past becomes dark in two sense: in unfathomable sense and in a sense it precedes the emergence of the light we know as conscious awareness of things. This emergence itself is dark in a sense hard to understand or even imagine. As Diderot claims that humans are no longer charter members of the cosmos but occupy merely a narrow band of recent time.<sup>390</sup>

Second category of change is that the earlier cosmos ideas saw the world as fixed, unvarying, but our consciousness of the universe is dominated by the sense that things evolve. The evolutionary process is vast and hard to fathom as the abyss of time which it unfolded. Taylor also unfolds some other alternatives to the Biblical outlook. Evolutionary picture of Lucretius in the ancient world, animals, and humans, had been arising by spontaneous generation out of the soil. The modern mechanistic physics, which was in a sense a return to the certain Epicurean-Lucretian ideas, opened the way for a theory of physical change. The Biblical religion, influenced by Greco-Roman world, develops within this cosmos idea; our knowledge of ourselves is situated in a historical

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid.: p 326. See reference in Buffon, *le sombre abisme du temps*, cited in ROSSI, Paolo: "The Dark of Time," translated by Lydia Cochrane, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 108-109. The whole description of this theme is contained in TAYLOR (2007) pp. 326-230.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.: p. 327. See the reference in Denis Diderot, *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, in Oeuvres, p. 299; modified from *D'Alembert's Dream*, translated by Jacques Barzun and Ralph H. Bowen, in *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*, Indianapolis and London: Hackett, 2001, p. 117.

context, which unfolds within a bounded setting. The cosmos idea faded with the scientific revolution paving the way for the universe, which is limitless; Taylor's argument about limitless here is in a sense that at any rate its limits are not easily encompassable in time and space.

*Our planet, our solar system is set in a galaxy, which is one of an uncounted number of galaxies; our origins go back into the mist of evolutionary time, so that we become unclear as to what could count as the beginning of our human story, many of the features of which are irretrievably lost.*<sup>391</sup>

The pre-modern Christians in the Middle Ages were influenced by the Greco-Roman outlooks and the Church made use of the resistant philosophical thoughts of the Greeks to develop its theology. Eternity in Christian version is unmeasurable time, while secular time is measurable. In the perspective of Augustinian ontology, time as a created reality, which affects the corporeal movements, and it is the expression of goodness, beauty and order. The present is the only temporal dimension that possesses some consistency and yet empty time (vacuity), which is Stoic time. Thus time in the Augustinian ontological perspective is non-being and yet exists as *ens creatum*. Christian notion of time as created by God, within which everything was created and evolving, is based on the Old Testament Scriptures, concretely in the creation account. In Christian view, time has its beginning and end.

Time is intrinsically connected to the notion of space. It is like a container within which every created being flows and moves towards the end, which is also the alpha, or the beginning (principium), according to Christian theology. In the very beginning God created first space and time within which all things came into being, then these things started flourishing and evolving continually. For the Biblical people, the act of creation did not happen at once rather it was a process for all kinds of creatures to become perfect in each own nature. The evolution had begun right in the beginning of time. The seven days in Biblical narrative of creation unfold the process itself, which means that certain periods of time were necessary for everything to evolve according to each own species. The Eternal Word was the principle-creative agent in the beginning and is still giving an impulse for human consciousness to evolve.

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid.: p. 328.



For Taylor, the new understanding of space and time, which was originally arising within a Christian outlook, is taken over by secular variants, starting with neo-Stoicism of Justus Lipsius, whose thought helps to constitute the modern secular outlook in which homogenous and empty time is its crucial constituent.<sup>392</sup> There is a shift from ancient and medieval notion of *place*, which is identified by its content, to the modern notion of *space* in which objects could be moved around.<sup>393</sup> This identification in cosmic terms, according to Taylor, is emerging from the Newtonian understanding of space and time, which is understood as containers indifferent of our human historical events. However, he refutes the tract of time as an indifferent container, arguing that *if a tract of time is identified not just by its placing in secular time order but also its proximity to higher times then what happens within it is no longer indifferent to its placing*.<sup>394</sup> As a logical consequent of this view, a time which has fallen away from the eternal paradigms of order will exhibit more disorder and a time-place which closer to God's eternity will be more gathered.<sup>395</sup>

The modern view of time is exclusively within the horizontal flow of secular time and our secular age has geographical and social as well as temporal boundaries. According to Taylor, this shift is parallel with the disenchantment and the eclipse of anti-structure, which helps to set the conditions for modern secular society.<sup>396</sup> Interwoven with the change in time consciousness is also a transformation in our understanding of the universe from cosmos, which is a totality of existence. The fading of the cosmos idea was the consequence of the scientific revolution, replacing it with the notion of universe, which has its own order that exhibited in exceptionless natural laws. The cosmos was limited and bounded with its hierarchical beings, lower and higher levels, and it reaches its apex in eternity. Taylor observes that Aristotle's cosmos has God at its apex and center, whose ceaseless and unvarying action, a kind of thinking which is also at the center of our lives, exemplifies something closer to Plato's eternity. In the framework of the Biblical religion, we are situated in a defined history unfolding within a bounded

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid.: p. 124.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.: p. 58. This is Newtonian view of space and time as a mere container, empty time. See in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, London: Fontana, 1973, p. 263.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.: p. 58.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid. Taylor takes reference from the Victor Turner by saying that it is the time itself which is hollowed at the pilgrimage center of the saint's feast-day, so the pilgrims go into a higher time (see in Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978, p. 207).

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.: p. 59.

setting.<sup>397</sup> However, the universe approaches the limitless, it means that at any rate its limits are not easily encompassable in time and space.

Universe with its own order has no such a hierarchy of beings and the emphasis is no longer on Biblical eternity but on eternity in the secular sense. This universe idea has become divergent point for the unbelief to challenge the Biblical religion, but Taylor is not convinced that the relevance of the universe conception for unbelief lies in these battles, what caused the battles was the position of Biblical religion in placing the creation of the world on a certain day in 4004 B.C. According to Taylor, there were some earlier thinkers, like Origen and Nicholas of Cusa, who had already made an effort to rethink this creationist account but failed. Paschal in his invocation of eternal silence of infinite space places himself firmly beyond the range of the cosmos and the music of its spheres. In Taylor's idea, the real relevance of the universe understanding is more subtle and indirect. The relevant point lies in the way it has altered the terms of the debate and reshaped the possibilities of both belief and unbelief, opened a new alternative to mystery, as well as offering new ways of denying transcendence.

The main question that Taylor attempts to answer regarding this change is: *how was the human drama of the ancient regime unfolded within the cosmos dismantled and replaced by the transformation which known as disenchantment?*<sup>398</sup> According to him, the main causes are the Renaissance humanism, scientific revolution, the rise of the polite state and the Reformation. It's revolutionary because the drive to reform was the matrix out of which the modern European idea of revolution emerges.

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid. This idea influenced the Greco-Roman worldviews.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.: p. 61.

## CHAPTER 5: MORAL-SPIRITUAL GROUNDING OF SECULARIZATION

### 5.1. Notion of Fullness

Taylor's secularity 3 is defined as the change in understanding of fullness. The notion of fullness becomes central in Taylor's thinking when he speaks about secularity and its process. It's, according to Taylor, our common spiritual and moral aspiration, either believers or unbelievers must look for a sense of fullness. Taylor tries to explain this aspiration in phenomenological terms. It is a lifeworld, pre-reflective, pre-theoretical, everyday sense of the world that most people share without being formulated, like belief. Taylor relies on the general notion of human fullness as a phenomenology of our moral-spiritual experience. The term fullness is related to human flourishing, or plenitude, which is shared by believers and unbelievers as well. Taylor is taking the general notion *as axiomatic that everyone, and hence all philosophical positions, accepts some definition of greatness and fullness in human life*.<sup>399</sup> The difference is just interpretation, for believers it is God's grace, for scientific materialists or atheists, it is another thing within the human subjects or in the nature. From the phenomenological perspective, Taylor claims that we all see our lives as having a certain spiritual and spiritual shape even if we are materialists or atheist. He defines fullness as something that can break through in our experience, or can simply be the sense *that somewhere, in activity, or condition, lies a fullness, richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be*.<sup>400</sup>

Taylor relates fullness to meaning, either meaning of life or meaning of being. Unlike the enchanted view of meanings in objective terms, the modern outlooks are dominated by the perception of meanings in subjective terms, within human mind,

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<sup>399</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 597. Taylor is talking about the cross-pressure in the modern world, in one hand, the reductive materialist account of human beings leaves no place for fullness, and in the other, certain reaction arising from the uneasy sense. The ethical objection, there is a sense that we aren't just determined, that we are active, building, creating, shaping agents (Leibniz and Kant are defender of this view); the spiritual objection, we have higher ethical/spiritual motives; the aesthetic objections: Art, Nature moves us; we have a deeper sense of meaning.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.: p. 5.

faculties as rational being, or being who thinks, and expressive being.<sup>401</sup> The impact of the Enlightenment not only changed the perception of meaning in terms of its sources, but also secularized public spaces and immanentized spiritual-moral aspirations as the ultimate human desire. The materialist perspective not only obscures the transcendent sources of abundance, but also negates all related metaphysical claims. In other words, secularity is understood on the one hand as the separation of religion and state affairs, and on the other hand as the immanence of our moral-spiritual aspirations to fullness. Taylor's story of secularity also meant to explain how something other than God could become the necessary objective pole of our moral or spiritual aspiration, of fullness.<sup>402</sup>

He notices that in the Romantic vision, the sources of fullness are not only in human mind, rather also in the nature itself, which evokes a sense of sublime and a deep sense of unfathomable world where one can feel meanings of things that lead him to richness and happiness or plenitude. According to Taylor, the modern outlooks combine the two streams of thoughts such as Enlightenment and Romanticism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which emphasized the role of individual thought and personal feeling. The alternative sources to fullness are found in the immanent frame substituting the transcendent. However, Taylor is convinced that for many believers this experience of fullness can lead them to become closer to God, reaffirming him as the Creator of all the beautiful things in the nature.

Taylor attempts to bring out and examine the richer background languages in which we set the basis and point of moral obligations we acknowledge. In other words, he intends to explore the background of our spiritual nature and predicament which lies behind some of the moral and spiritual intuitions of our contemporaries.<sup>403</sup> He uses this retrieval method as an argument to refute contemporary philosophy which has ignored such dimension of our moral consciousness and beliefs altogether and has even seemed to dismiss this as confused and irrelevant.<sup>404</sup> Many of our contemporaries limit their concern to what makes life worth living, or self-regarding, such as justice, respect for life, well-being, and dignity. But Taylor wants to see further to what underlies our own dignity and what makes our life meaningful or fulfilling. He criticizes these contemporary

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid.: the whole chapter 4. This is already explained in the previous chapter.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

<sup>403</sup> Idem (1989): pp. 3-4.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.: p. 4.

thinkers and people who share their common moral issues and the vague term spiritual by arguing *that they have strong evaluation, or discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations, or choices, but rather a stand independent of these and offering standards by which they can be judged.*<sup>405</sup>

In the cross pressures Taylor presents the phenomenology of fullness in modern secularity, at least in the West. He illustrates the changing condition we have undergone which involves an alteration of the structures we live within and our way of imagining these structures. We all share this condition, regardless of our differences of outlooks, but this cannot be captured in terms of a decline and marginalization of religion. Taylor calls this condition *the immanent frame* explaining that the different structures we live in (scientific, social, technological and so on) constitute this frame, which means that they are part of *natural, this-worldly* order which can be understood in its own terms without reference to the *supernatural or transcendent*.<sup>406</sup>

## 5.2. Phenomenology of Fullness

Departing from such a condition of immanent frame Taylor discusses the theory of secularization in terms of changing in understanding of fullness. Taylor unfolds the spiritual outlook of modern age guiding to increase life, relieve sufferings and foster prosperity.<sup>407</sup> The affirmation of ordinary life, human flourishing, which was overlooked by the ancient regime, constitutes a major component of the modern ethical outlook and was inspired by a mode of Christian piety. The Christian root of modern moral outlooks is notable in the movements of sympathy and practical solidarity in times of great suffering like catastrophes and war. For Taylor, this is a sign that we are living in an extraordinary moral culture. Indeed, the notions of self-fulfillment and self-realization become the modes of modern ethics of authenticity. There is a moral ideal underlining such desire for authentic self-realization, like the intense desire to live one's life by a higher standard. In Taylor's thinking, the idea of authenticity is rich, vibrant, and

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.: p. 4.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.: p. 594.

<sup>407</sup> Idem (1999): p. 22.

vitality important addition to any conversation concerning what it means to be human. Authenticity, properly understood, is *a picture of what a better or higher mode of life would be, where better and higher are defined not in terms of what we happen to desire or need, but offer a standard of what we ought to desire.*<sup>408</sup>

Taylor identifies fullness, or plenitude, as the unifying point for believers and unbelievers, because it becomes the ultimate target of our human moral-spiritual desire. Such a fullness emerges from human natural search for meaning of life and happiness, which is rooted in our moral sentiment that everyone shares in the lived experience, daily life. Reaching out to the wellbeing of other human beings is not just an expression of moral sentiment but also of our being religious. Fullness is the convergent point of both believers and unbelievers, and what diverges them lies not just in its sources or fountains but basically in its interpretation, and likely it's understood as human flourishing. In other words, the dividing point lies in the affirmation of the believers on the Transcendent source and the negation of unbelievers by turning exclusively to the Immanent source.

Thus, the common line of the spiritual outlook of modern age is concerning to increase life, relieve suffering and foster prosperity. The affirmation on human flourishing in ordinary life, which constitutes a major component of our modern ethical outlook, was inspired by Christian piety. The real holy life for Christians was within ordinary life itself, living in work and household in a Christian and worshipful manner.<sup>409</sup> The anthropocentric spirituality emphasizes on this immanent perspective and affirms the human ordinary life which had been overlooked by the Church in the former regime (pre-modern). Taylor claims that the most crucial foundation of secularization is in the shift of perceiving the *fullness*. The search for *fullness* is objectively existential to human agents, uniting both belief and unbelief. For the believers, the sources of fullness are found in God, or in any higher agents with powers, which the modern materialist view has accused as naïve and childish.

Taylor tells the story of secularization in a way underlining the move from transcendent to immanent frame as a historical construal, which has constituted cultural changes. The move took place when people began to realize that there were alternative

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid.: p. 25.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.: pp. 22-23.

sources of fullness, which are found in human agents, no longer in a transcendent God, or higher entities with power of agency. The fullness has also other variant, like *perfection*, which is no longer understood in term of relation to God, or in grace, or any supernatural agent with power, but in the nature itself. Such a change had developed in the Middle Ages within the Aristotelian version, for example, Thomas Aquinas affirmed the idea of *perfection* in things according to each own nature, which was shaping a new cosmic imaginary underlining the interest in nature *for-its-own-sake* without relating to any transcendent dimension, like the dimension of grace, though Thomas had aimed at it.

The shift in understanding of fullness was prompted by the efforts of reforms within the Church from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which transformed and reshaped the western societies profoundly. The Reformation marked the history of civilization in Western Christendom, which implicates not only moral-spiritual dimension but also the aesthetic dimension. Taylor discusses a narrative of moral development from childhood outlook to adulthood, in which the search for fullness and meanings becomes crucial point of departure. He considers the coming to adulthood as a result of the science-driven arguments leading towards materialism, according to which *people came to this stage of self-authorization when they realized that the higher authorities were just their own fictions and they had to establish their norms and values for themselves, on their own authority.*<sup>410</sup> He sees that the change involved fundamentally the epistemic change, altering our knowledge of the true facts about the world, inclusively the nature of things it contains, and of the moral evaluations, which are simply in human sentiment.<sup>411</sup>

In his discussion, Taylor distinguishes two categories of *self-authorization*.<sup>412</sup> first, the radical one, which he calls *closed world structures*, negates all transcendent authorities and affirms human authority in creating the meanings in which we can achieve fullness of life; the second category is taken from the position of Albert Camus whose humanism was partly defined in opposition to the progressive communist

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<sup>410</sup> Idem (2007): p. 582.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid. This epistemic change implicates not only natural order, but also normative order. Here Taylor refers to Hume on morality in which he claimed that our moral evaluations are simply in human heart.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.: p. 582. The term “self-authorization” is part of the narrative of secularization that Taylor describes in development of moral authority in immanent frame.

leaning, a revolutionary humanism espoused by Sartre.<sup>413</sup> Taylor refers to Camus's that self-authorization takes place over against an absurd universe, which is silent and indifferent, and this absurd universe defeats all attempts to find some meaning in it.<sup>414</sup> Unlike the Christian outlook, this view is a negation to cosmic meaning and assumes that what is absurd is the confrontation between this irrational reality and the wild longing for clarity whose call resonates in the depths of human heart.<sup>415</sup> Consequently, the self-authorization account is pointing to a fact that with the demise of God and meaningful cosmos, we are the only authorizing agency left. This courageous adulthood account shows the figure of human agency as being able to face the loss of meaning in things, being ready to find and to project meaning in face of a universe which itself without sense or void.<sup>416</sup>

Taylor discusses the critique against the *discipline of moral order of modernity* which had emerged from the Romantic view, and it took a radical form in Nietzsche. The rebels consider the discipline of morality as a threat to crush our spontaneity, our creativity, our designing nature.<sup>417</sup> According to Taylor, the attempts by contemporary neo-Nietzscheans to couple their critique against discipline and order with radical critique of modern society were based on one way Foucault and Connolly, and on another way Derrida.<sup>418</sup> There are cross-pressured fields in the debate, such as one crucial choice the immanent frame offers whether or not to believe in some transcendent source or power; for many Western culture, the choice is whether to believe in God or not. However, to many it may not seem a choice because it has been foreclosed by their affinities (milieu) or their deep moral orientation; but the culture of immanence itself leaves the choice open.<sup>419</sup> The crucial determining this stand, according to Taylor, are the different versions of understanding of fullness, either among

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid.: p. 583.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.: p. 583. Albert Camus argues in defending his position saying that the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human call and the unreasonable silence of the world. See in the modified translation of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, translated by Justin O'Brien, Penguin Books, 1975, p. 26.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.: p. 584. In modified version of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, translated by O'Brien, p. 39.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.: p. 588.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.: p. 599. The protest has its adversary the rational, or disengaged reason, which is sacrificing something in realizing human ideals, like creativity or spontaneity. He finds the rebellion against this disciplined of moral order in the Romantic period and Nietzsche took its radical form.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.: p. 600.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid. Many people however end up taking a stand one way or another.



unbelievers or between them and the believers (Christians).<sup>420</sup> Taylor reiterates by stressing that the crucial debate of modern culture turns not just on rival notions of fullness, but on conceptions of our ethical predicament in a broader sense, including all kinds of idea that make sense of our motivations which can carry us towards fullness.<sup>421</sup> The question Taylor raises is this: *can the experience be made sense of in an ontology excluding the transcendence?*<sup>422</sup> He takes the theory of Freud as an example, according to which the force of certain works of art is explained in terms of the feelings arising from the depth of our psychic. Again, Taylor refers to the materialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which recaptures some sense of wonder and depth in contemplating the whole nature, rooted in the ancient world like in the writings of Lucretius.<sup>423</sup> Taylor acknowledges the aesthetic experience of both beauty and sublime within an immanent ontology, but only partly, for two reasons.

*First, the power and genuineness of this experience of wonder does not exclude the possibility that something similar, perhaps even richer, might be recovered in the register of religious belief, as in the thinking of Paschal. Second, there are other modes of aesthetic experience, whose power seems inseparable from their epiphanic nature, that is revealing something beyond themselves, even beyond nature as we ordinarily know it.*<sup>424</sup>

Taylor points out that the aspiration to fullness, or wholeness, is understood differently: one follows the naturalist teaching of Hume, who understands morality as a species of natural human sentiment, as in the Romantic period in general; another one follows the disengaged reason, which perceives morality as an intrinsically higher demand. He admits that it is more difficult to record such experience because of the feature of post-Romantic act whose subtler language allows us to manifest an order in things while leaving our ontological commitments relatively indeterminate.<sup>425</sup> In relation to these ontological commitments, the question is this: *What ontology can*

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid. For any livable understanding of human life, there must be some way in which this life looks good, whole, proper, really being lived as it should.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid. pp. 604-605.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.: p. 606.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.: p. 606.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.: p. 607.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid. The prominent figures are Wordsworth, Eliot and Hardy, who illustrate this point in 19th century.

*underpin our moral commitments, which for most of us constitute a crucial fulfilment that is a mode of the higher level of fullness, which we are called on to realize?*<sup>426</sup> Such a question is raised here because it touches on a theme emerged as central in his narrative, a crucial feature of the modern moral order, which endorses the universal human rights and welfare.<sup>427</sup> Taylor understands this as our stepping into a wider, qualitatively different sense of inter-human solidarity, involving a break and partial replacement of earlier, narrower, ties.<sup>428</sup> The issue can really be captured by the accounts which fit with our favored ontology. In this case, in Taylor's analysis, we are starting from the Humean attempt to understand morality as a species of natural human sentiment among others, rather than as something that reason perceives as an intrinsically higher demand.<sup>429</sup>

Thus, he narrates the moral development arising from the shift in the cosmic imaginary, beginning with the naïve view of cosmos. The concept of fullness was understood in terms of meaningfulness and richness. These are questions implicated in Taylor's arguments against the materialistic view: How does something meaningful simply arise from nature in this vast universe which is even horrible and fearful? Is there any higher being beyond this irrational and unconscious universe in whom we can find the sources of our moral-spiritual aspirations? For him, a moral development which does not transcend nature is likely unconvincing and irrational. Such hypothetical questions guide him to examine the facts of cultural changes from which he defines secularity in terms of a historical construal.

Taylor discusses the ideas of some authors concerning the moral meanings of the cosmos, starting with Kepler who expressed his *secret and hidden horror* at Bruno's infinite space, where we feel ourselves lost. How did moral consciousness emerge? And how did it develop or change? At first, the horror was neutralized by the disenchantment of the world with its development and the evolution of a buffered self. The agent of disengaged reason was no longer got to by the eternal silence of alien vastness. Wild

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<sup>426</sup> Ibid. Taylor's reference is taken from Nussbaum's ontological stance in her *Love's Knowledge*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 307.

<sup>427</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 608. The Kantian solution itself can be challenged on these grounds, especially in relation to its reliance on the notion of principle or law, as well as its radical distinction between feeling (inclination) and moral motivation. See in Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 608.

<sup>428</sup> In analogy Taylor compares it with a biblical passage, no more Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.: p. 609.

places were exorcized, the scary legends connected to them were debunked by humanist thinkers. Mountains and plains were harmonized, brought together in the single ordered space of maps, and scientific theory.<sup>430</sup>

Taylor invokes Burke and Kant who, in their writings on the sublime, see the element of personal safety as a necessary condition of being moved by the sublime.<sup>431</sup> He argues that pursuing the goods of life and prosperity, while eschewing enthusiasm, in a world designed especially to favor these ends, seemed to make life shallow, devoid of deep resonance and meanings; it seems to exclude transport of devotion, of self-giving, to deny a heroic dimension to our existence; it reduces us by enclosing us in a too-rosy picture of the human condition, shorn of tragedy, irreparable loss, meaningless suffering, cruelty and horror. The moral meaning of the sublime awakens us from pretty self-concern and sets to work our aspirations to what is higher. For Burke, terror and pain produce delight because they provide the exercise necessary for our finer organs. Kant, who builds on Burke, while escaping the somewhat reductive-psychological bent of Irishman theory, claims that sight of an overwhelming power in nature, which could never resist (like volcanos or water falls), awakens an awareness of ourselves as noumenal beings, who stand as high above this merely sensible reality, as within the sensible realm the threatening phenomenon stands above our puny phenomenal selves.<sup>432</sup>

Unlike the idea of civility and *polis*, preferring the city, there was the *arcadian* idea of the ancient regime, according to which people had preferred wilderness where they could meet simpler life, bestial desire, and untamed nature. They had always been on the limit of the wild and the cultivated, moving back and forth between wilderness and garden. But there is also a tamer version of the pre-agricultural world, in which the earth produces fruits and grain in abundance, without human labor, and wild beasts do not threaten.<sup>433</sup> The trend was to go back to nature, feeling one with nature and part of

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid. Taylor's reference in Simon Schama (1995): *Landscape and Memory*, New York: Knopf, pp. 424-433.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid. Taylor makes reference from Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the sublime and Beautiful*, London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757, Books IV, chapter vii; Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Berlin Academy Edition, Berlin: Gruyter, 1968, Volume V, p. 262.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.: p. 338. Reference is taken from the Burk, *Philosophical Inquiry*, Kant, Kritik, pp. 261-262.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.: 342. *In the arcadian age people were seeking to escape from the city's vices and returning to a simpler, wore wholesome way of life, they were the lovers of wilderness* (quoted from Max Oelschlaeger (1991): *The Idea of Wilderness*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 148).

it. Taylor also sites from Thoren some questions which show how feeling part of nature arose: *Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mold myself?*<sup>434</sup> This became one of the driving forces for the emergence of modern materialism. The modern materialistic view placed sublimity and the moral meaning of wilderness within the context of the felt inadequacies of the anthropocentric moral sentiment, and the need to recover contact with a greater force.<sup>435</sup> In the context of wilderness as inhuman, the civilized people see the sublime in a narrower focus and very often wilderness is opposed to a sense of life. Taylor judges this view as too shallow because it is simply human-centered. Anthropocentrism was the creation of what Taylor calls *providential deism* from which moral aspiration should originate. The earlier view wove the history of world events in secular time into the framework of higher times. Things and happenings in our world had depth in God's eternity which they lost when the sense of this faded.

Taylor concludes that moral meaning of the sublime and much of the post eighteenth-century cosmic imaginary was a reaction to this shallowness and anthropocentrism. But he also presents the arguments of materialistic moral view as moving backward because the sense of depth cannot be found in an eternity which is no longer a felt reality, rather the sense of depth is now found in the vastness of space and time. It is no longer unproblematic to find the more-than-human (beyond) in God, but it shows up in the frightening otherness of huge and raging torrents. Taylor sees that Vico's dark genesis of humanity is also seen in analogous to depth and a relation to the non-human reality out of which we emerged.<sup>436</sup> Do we really have a bestial origin? Such a question concerning the dark genesis of humanity implies the question concerning the fountains of human moral-spiritual aspirations: Did these desires emerge from an irrational bestial being or from a rational intelligent being? This existential question invades the epistemic domain in searching for the *arche*<sup>437</sup> of human evolution toward consciousness.

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid.: p. 342.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.: pp. 341-342.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.: pp. 242-243.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid. Arché is the Greek term for the beginning, which in this context refers to the origin of our human existence.

Taylor discusses the theory of genesis inseparably with a theory of human depths. Imagining ourselves in deep time is imagining us with deep nature and hence helping to rescue these natures. He refers to Condillac's perspective that human genesis is aided by the Lockean discipline of reason, we advance as we adopt and put into effect a Lockean rational control of the signs we use, and consequently the dark genesis is left behind. In both Herder and Rousseau, something is there at the beginning, an expressive-communicative power, which can be lost, or weakened, or covered over by the subsequent development of civilization. However, the genesis is not simply left behind, rather progressively darkened, by rationalist progress.<sup>438</sup> We have a kinship with nature, it is the source of our life, hence *near of blood*, nearer we sometimes think than the *persons or villagers* we may live among. But at the same time this nature can be *vast and drear (dull/flat) and inhuman*, other, hostile, indifferent. The conflict seems to emerge here out of our kinship to a nature which is also in other ways alien to us. Indeed, the attempt to deny wilderness both without and within is what degrading our lives, it can only lead to stagnation. The idea here is that our existence, or vitality, or creativity, depends, not only on the inhuman outside of us but on the wild and pre-human in us which resonates to that alien eternal power.<sup>439</sup> Taylor links this idea to Kant and beyond, where the sublime awakens supersensible moral agency and where the *starry skies above* can be linked together with the moral law within, as two realities which fill us alike with *wonder and respect*.<sup>440</sup>

Taylor reiterates the idea in the version of Schopenhauer, where our vital energy comes from a will which is wild, unprincipled, amoral. This belief in our reliance on the forces of irrationality, darkness, aggression, sacrifice, has become widespread in our culture. To understand the transformation in the outlook from cosmos to universe, according to Taylor, we cannot just limit ourselves to the changes in our theoretical beliefs. These have taken us from pictures of limited, ordered, and static cosmos to a universe which is immeasurably vast, and in constant evolution. It is not just that our theories have changed, but the spontaneous, unreflecting understanding, which provides the context for these beliefs, has also shifted. But, according to Taylor, what is

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid.: 344.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.: p 346. Such as the overwhelm power of our raw nature which awakens heroism in us.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

also important is the way that our natural world figures in our moral imagination, not simply a change of aesthetical perspective nor just a cosmic imaginary.<sup>441</sup> We live in a nature of deep time and unfathomable spaces, from which we emerged. This universe is in many ways strange and alien, and certainly unfathomable. It involves our deep nature and our dark genesis, and our deep nature needs to be retrieved by examining our dark energy. Such are the complex theories and unreflective understanding in Western civilization in our time elaborated in the post-Freudian psychology.<sup>442</sup> According to Taylor, people may reject Freud's theories, but that surrounding context of understanding which makes sense of these theories is very deeply entrenched. He argues that the idea of deep nature, which we have lost sight of, and many find it difficult to recover, the idea that this has to be recovered, understood, mainly through retelling our story, the idea that this deep nature may be in part wild and amoral, all these are obvious frameworks for self-understanding, intuitively understandable to almost everyone.<sup>443</sup>

Taylor points out the framework change dominated by the psycho-physiological outlook emerged from Marcel Gauchet who shows how the key idea of the unconscious had multiplied sources in nineteenth century.<sup>444</sup> Within the context of a dark genesis, the subject acquires a new kind of depth in evolutionary time, in personal time, and in her relation to his material embodiment.<sup>445</sup> For Taylor, scientific discovery and profound cultural change interacted and inflected each other to produce this new understanding of the cerebral/nervous function. The moral significance of nature is clearly also widely felt: the awe at wilderness; the sense of kinship and ecological concern with nature; the desire to renew oneself by leaving the city and visiting wilderness or living in the country; all these are features of our world. We still have the longing for the bucolic which Virgil celebrated, but we have added the awe at the wilds. Taylor summarizes the moral meanings of the universe he discusses in these ways:

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.: p. 347.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.: p. 348.

<sup>444</sup> This is a new depth which was developed in that century, according to which our thinking and willing emerges out of cerebral/nervous function through the concepts of reflex arc and sensori-motor scheme.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.: p. 349. Taylor's discussion on the psychological outlook of Gauchet and the Cartesian picture of total self-possession.

*the sense of our deep nature, of a current running through all things, which also resonates in us; the experience of being opened up to something deeper and fuller by the contact with nature; the sense of intra-cosmic mystery, which was quite missing from Providential Deism, and from the apologetics of the age of Newton and Boyle lecturers, even as it is today from the scientific outlook and that of much Christian fundamentalism.*<sup>446</sup>

### **5.3. Alternative Source of Fullness.**

In his analysis, Taylor suggests that we need to see how it became possible to experience moral fullness, to identify the locus of our highest moral capacity and inspiration, without reference to God, but within the range of purely intra-human powers.<sup>447</sup> There are various formulations of fullness with an exclusively human reference, for instance, Nietzsche in *The Will to Power*, the atheist version.<sup>448</sup> In this immanent perspective, such sources of fullness are found in the exclusive humanism, because the identification of moral fullness, the highest moral sources, had to be an adequate task of the order of mutual benefit, which is within our human power. It was intended to replace the Christian agape and the disinterested benevolence of the neo-Stoicism. However, Taylor argues that the Christian agape, expressed in the Biblical image of the Good Samaritan, takes us beyond the bounds of any already existing solidarity, which becomes great phenomenon in our age. He interprets this active Christian charity as stepping beyond the bounds of community and can be placed in the context of super community of all children of God, replicating something like the *Stoic Cosmopolis*. Taylor invokes this super-community in an eschatological concept, as something to be built, or be constructed, in the Christian theology.<sup>449</sup>

Taylor reiterates the Epicurean-Lucretian philosophy, which seemed genuinely exclusive, the reference point for many modern thinkers, one of them is Hume. In his comparison, Taylor elaborates two differences between the modern humanism and the new humanism. First, the modern image of human flourishing incorporates an activist, interventionist stance, either towards nature or human society. Both are to be

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<sup>446</sup> Ibid.: p. 350.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.: pp. 244-245.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.: p. 803. Reference in Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1967, para. 1067.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. Ibid.: p. 246.

reordered in the light of instrumental reason, to suit human purposes, which means that human society exists to protect life and property. Secondly, the new humanism has taken over universalism from its Christian roots, or else moves to retrieve it from Stoic sources, as with an influential modern school of thought in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the supposition of the new humanism, we are motivated exclusively by our inner human sentiment to act for the good of our fellow human beings. So, the transcendent source of fullness atrophies.

Science has been a principal protagonist to the alternative source of fullness founded on a mainstream of philosophy which assumes materialist view of reality, according to which the really real is just *matter, what is, is*, negating all metaphysical beliefs and worldviews as simply an illusion. The narrative of secularization reveals that the aim of all human moral-spiritual development from childhood outlook was to arrive in this stage where all naïve obedience of the ancient and pre-modern people become eclipsed and being substituted by the adulthood perception of reality. It changes the conditions of beliefs with new forms of understanding of reality in all domains. The intellectual movement of the Enlightenment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century became crucial point for this alternative, inclusively the epistemic and ontological shifts. In the *death of God* account, the search for meaning relies on human agency through disengaged reason and scientific responsibility. The main virtue requires here is the imaginative courage to face the void, and to be energized by it to the creation of meaning and the crucial protagonists of this spin on immanence are Nietzsche and his followers.<sup>450</sup> Therefore, the alternative sources of fullness, our moral-spiritual aspiration, are found in nature, inclusively human nature.

### **5.3.1. The Eclipse of Transcendence**

With the demise of God and the loss of meaningful cosmos, in the proposition of Camus, we find that the alternative to the traditional view of the sources of fullness is exclusively within human agency as the only creator of meaning. Taylor has outlined four facets of modernity as *Closed World Structures*, which are variants on narrative of

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid.: p. 589.



the coming of age, moving from a naïve childhood to the adulthood consciousness.<sup>451</sup> The first facet claims that science has shown that God cannot exist, or at least that religion is irrelevant to life, and the story of maturation is in the background, but it plays a crucial role in the acceptance of this way of thinking. The second facet is a narrative of subtraction, but this too is minimally arguable and serves more as the unnoticed background to the narrative people tell today. The third and fourth facets offer fuller narratives with a lot of rich detail, of the rise of modern political moral spaces, on one hand, and of the authorization of values by the autonomous self. The four facets form the stories of maturation, or adulthood, of which they present different sides.

Taylor mentions Arnold van Gennep who thought that the older form of religion was irretrievably lost, or a thing of the past, as did Hardy and in another way William James, and the same kind of supposition is widespread today in favor of atheism, or materialism, relegating all forms of religion to an earlier era. In his analysis, Taylor observes that faith is an identity-defining issue in pre-modern epoch.<sup>452</sup> He exposes Hardy's poem of *God's funeral* whose expression manifests a sense of lost; that those who want to opt for the ordered and impersonal universe, whether in its scientific-materialist form or in a more spiritualized variant, feel the imminent loss of a world of beauty, meaning, warmth, as well as of the perspective of a self-transformation beyond the everyday.<sup>453</sup> While the second version of those experiences whose strongest leanings move them towards at least some search for spiritual meaning and often towards God, are haunted by a sense that the universe might after all be as meaningless (void) as the most reductive materialism describes. They feel that their vision has to struggle against this flat and empty world; they fear that their strong desire for God, or for eternity, might after all be the self-induced illusion, which materialists claim it to be.

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Taylor affirms that we all have undergone a change in our condition involving both an alteration of the structures we live within, and our way of imagining these structures. But he objects that this cannot be captured in terms of a decline and marginalization of religion, and what we all share is the immanence frame of our lived

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid.: pp. 590-592.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.: p. 592.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.: pp. 592-593.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.: p. 593.

experience. These structures in immanence frame are part of a *natural*, or worldly order, which can be understood in its own terms, without reference to the *supernatural* or transcendent.<sup>455</sup> Such are the views of the Taylor-made conception of *Closed World Structures* in which all metaphysical and transcendent beliefs are eclipsed. He refutes such views by arguing that the underlined feature of Western societies is not so much a decline of religious faith and practice, though there have been lots of that, more in some societies than others, but rather a mutual fragilization of different religious positions as well as of the outlooks of both belief and unbelief. He reiterates that the whole culture experiences cross pressure between the draw to narratives of the immanence, on one side, and the sense of their inadequacy, on the other, strengthened by the encounter with existing milieu of religious practice, or just by some intimations of the transcendence.<sup>456</sup>

Materialism is too tightly bound up with reductionist views, in which thought, intentions, desires and aspirations, are supposed to be reductively explained either in terms of mechanism or in terms of more basic motivations. According to Taylor, materialism has many forms, among them two are particularly common in human science:

*first, mechanistic explanation of things, according to which we eschew meanings and telos in our explanations, and we only allow for efficient causation; second, motivational materialism, in which we speak of motivated action but only base our explanation on the lower motives, not moral aspirations, for instance, strong evaluations.*<sup>457</sup>

Taylor calls as an *experience far* the success of post-Galilean explanation that science introduced the bias by taking the external view, the view from nowhere, where we can take in the whole universe a panorama. From way out there we all seem like ants, destined to come and to go without trace, like other species. Here everything is reduced to simplify their easy explanation in order to convince others for the non-existence of

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid. p. 594. The different structures we live in scientific, social, technological, etc., constitute such an immanence frame.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.: p. 595.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.: p. 595.

any Supernatural Agent, or God, who can dictate our moral-spiritual aspirations, nor even exists any higher values than simply our human potentials as rational beings.

Taylor elaborates some arguments concerning fullness that trigger the reactions/objections to materialism: First, there is a sense that we are not just determined that we are active, building, creating, shaping agents. Leibniz and Kant are crucial defenders of this view. Second, there is also a spiritual objection: we have higher ethical/spiritual motives; Kant, Jaures, Arnold, and others also take similar positions against reductionism. Third, there are aesthetic objections: art, nature moves us, we have deeper sense of meaning, we cannot see our aesthetic responses as just another form of pleasurable reaction. They have a deeper significance. All these can lead people to reaffirm an orthodox faith, like Christianity. But many of those who share this negative reaction to materialism also want to define themselves against orthodox religion, or at least Christianity. They seek a middle way, it can be spiritual, or theistic, position, which departs from orthodox Christianity, as we see in Kant, Jaures, and Arnold. It can also be an attempt to find some other basis for ethics, starting from intuitions we have about human dignity, which in some is not susceptible to reduction.<sup>458</sup>

So, Taylor concludes that the driving forces behind materialism are ethical and moral. The theorists of materialism accept some definitions of greatness and fullness in human life, and they do not deny ethics, rather their explanation of how we can square their account with these forms of fullness seems terribly implausible to many others. Taylor highlights a major question for all positions which take their stance in immanence, whether materialistic or not, is that *how can one account for the specific force of creative agency, or ethical demands, or for the power of artistic experience, without speaking in terms of some transcendent being or force which interpellates us?*<sup>459</sup> This question is further modulated by whatever we believe that human motivation consists in.

According to Taylor, the more we feel bound by our ontological beliefs to approximate our nature to that of other animals, the more difficult our account is going

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<sup>458</sup> Ibid.: pp. 596-597.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.: p. 597.

to be, but in general these positions try to give an intra-psychic account of the force of our ethical and aesthetical experience. He refers this to Freud by saying that:

*Freud is a good example. On one hand, one of his favourite sayings was: "das Moralische versteht sich von" (morality is self-evident), giving expression to the seemingly obvious link between scientific disengagement and the modern moral order..... On the other, he opened a whole new hermeneutic field in which the appeal for us of works of art could be understood in terms of our intra-psychic economy.*<sup>460</sup>

The polarization between two extreme positions, the orthodox religion and the materialist atheism, can also inspire to create new positions, new ways of rejecting religion which avoid the repugnant effect.<sup>461</sup> In response to this violent rejection, people were willing to call the standard of Christian civilization, hence there was a movement of return to religion in many European countries after the war, like in Germany, the protection of religion was seen as a bulwark of human rights. Taylor's arguments are based on the fact that still many Germans, whose outlook is quite secular, continue to pay the confessional tax, their argument is that they want the Church to give moral guidance for their children, or they see the Church as important for the moral fabric of society. There is no straight forward movement of secularization, rather back and forth move, depending on the human conditions, the lived experience.<sup>462</sup>

There are other lines of transposition, with other starting points, such are notions or forms of life, which have been generated along with the rejection of religion, and which many people recoil from even those who no longer want to accept the old religion. One starting point is that a doctrine of utilitarianism, where all value is homogenized in terms of utility consequences and the different between higher and lower motivations are denied. This provoked a reaction, notably expressed by Rousseau, followed by Kant, and alive today in various versions of neo-Kantianism. Another connected starting point is a thoroughgoing stance towards nature and the world as simply instrument and raw material for human purposes. The reactions against this are evident above all in the ramifying ecological movements and in the anguished

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid.: p. 598.

<sup>461</sup> Taylor gives an example, the savage violation of human rights perpetrated by Nazi regime.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.: pp. 597-598

questioning about the limits of medical research and engineering of the human make-up. Many of these are believers, but many are not but find themselves seeking common ground with those who are.

The challenging question for Taylor is that whether such a naturalist account can make sense of the phenomenology of universalism, the sense of breaking out of an earlier space and acceding to a higher one, the sense of liberation, even exaltation which accompanies this move. The same question could be connected to a sociological account, which supposes a tendency in us, induced by evolution, to act in solidarity with our in-group, often through savage hostility to outsiders and then explains the development of a universalist ethic by the gradual extensions of what is defined as the in-group.<sup>463</sup> Taylor's preoccupation lies in the question of what causes such phenomenological change. He attempts to give two solutions: First, in order to illustrate the kind of question, parallel to the ones concerning aesthetics, also for ethics, the question of how to align our best phenomenology with an adequate ontology, how to resolve a seeming lack of fit such the one just described, either by enriching the ontology of one, or by revising or challenging the phenomenology. Second, this phenomenon of a qualitative step in space and nature of solidarity is one of the crucial features of modernity, which stands out in the story about secularity.<sup>464</sup>

### **5.3.2. Immanentized Moral Sources and Phenomenological Effects**

Taylor describes the anthropocentric shift in moral development focusing on aspiration to wholeness, particularly as it emerges in the reaction against the disciplined, buffered self in the Romantic period. There is a protest that the rational and disengaged agent is sacrificing something essential in realizing his ideas. Taylor refers to Schiller as a paradigm example in the complaint that our rational, formal power of abstract thinking and of positing moral rules, has dominated and suppressed feelings, the demands of bodily existence, the concrete form and beauty. In this context, the remedy is not just to reverse the priority and to sacrifice reason for feeling, or even to reach a fair trade-

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid.: p. 609. Taylor identifies this in Hume who attempts to understand morality as a species of natural human sentiment among others, rather than as something that reason perceives as an intrinsically higher demand.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.: p. 609.

off between them. Rather, it is to move to a higher stage in which the drive to form and the drive to content are harmoniously united.<sup>465</sup>

Taylor unfolds the tension between the Romantic stream and the Enlightenment as an ontological conflict, or an inner conflict. Followers of Schiller and Goethe are in standing polemic with those who aspire to rational control and instrumental reason within modern culture. But both sides have the same aspiration not to sacrifice the bodily and the sensual, hence the tension remains. Taylor raises these related questions: *What else should this reason aim at than the maximization of human desire? Doesn't this require that we set aside all hankering after illusory higher goals, like spiritual purity, or the dedication to virtue?*<sup>466</sup> He identifies these as proponents of the radical Enlightenment. In Taylor's description he points out that both Romanticism and Enlightenment were aiming at wholeness and harmony, only they proposed to reach it not by synthesizing a drive to higher form with desire, but rather by debunking all higher drives and finding a way to provide all sensual, ordinary desires compatible with each other, within and between human agents. With this description Taylor shows that the demand for wholeness, which forbids us to sacrifice the body, becomes central to most of the culture inherited from the eighteenth century.<sup>467</sup>

According to Taylor, utilitarianism and Kantianism can be seen as a continuation of post-axial reform but with vengeance. In the classical equilibrium of the higher civilizations, prior to the Reformation of Latin Christendom, many of the pre-axial forms of collective ritual were integrated into a new religion and the new disciplines of minority of religious *virtuosi* also had an important place for bodily expression. The aim is not to return to the earlier *sacralizations* of sex and violence, but to find new forms of collective ritual, rites of passage, individual and small groups.<sup>468</sup> In opposing to the Enlightenment, Taylor recalls the approach of Schiller to this question: what does it mean to achieve wholeness by rescuing the body? For Taylor, we can understand it not only in the light of the thrust to *excarnation*<sup>469</sup> which we can trace back to the axial

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<sup>465</sup> Ibid.: p. 609. This is in fact a realm of freedom, but also of beauty, which together constitute what Schiller calls *play*.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.: p. 610.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.: pp. 612-613.

<sup>469</sup> Excarnation in Taylor means exposition of body due to freedom and this becomes a common thrust since the sexual revolution in 1960s. This is a reaction against the Church's negative attitude toward bodily desire and the human flourishing has become less important.

period, though the thrust becomes increasingly powerful in the Western drive to reform. However, there is something in the actual reform of Latin Christendom which has pushed this excarnation farther than ever before in human history, we can see both why the aspiration to overcome it must be an invitation to struggle; and, why this overcoming is so differently understood. The pressure and suppression have been against bodily desire as an expression of the higher, in which fullness is achieved. Both are ethical suppression and disenchanting reduction, which Schiller wants to introduce. Taylor proposes that we need to look at the different answers to the disappointed hopes of wholeness, and the question whether or how this should be abandoned.

For Taylor, it is easy to understand how the hope for wholeness and the rescue of the body has been used in the struggle between faith and unbelief. He points out how the Enlightenment has turned it against religion and position of Christianity in relation to the hope for wholeness and the rescue of the body:

*this has allegedly been frustrating a perfectly available harmony of our ordinary desires, by its insistence of chasing supposed higher goods, which lead to senseless mortification. But central to Christian faith is the hope of an ultimate reconciliation of humans with God, and that it is found in the resurrected body.*<sup>470</sup>

In this context, Taylor presents two dimensions of utopia which correspond to the two facets of modern moral/ethical consciousness: *not just the harmony between body and spirit, or bodily desire and our highest aspirations; but also the harmony between all human beings so harmonized, which brings in our attachment to the ethic of universal rights and well-being.*<sup>471</sup> These two facets have usually gone together as a double harmony, within each and among all.<sup>472</sup> The picture changes, however, the is that when these hopes are gone then *what is the conclusion?* For those who cannot accept Christian hope of a reconciliation beyond history, and who cannot accept any more believe in the various formulas of double harmony in our earthly condition, all hopes of such harmony are abandoned from which emerges indeterminate condition.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid.: p. 616.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.: p. 617.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid. This double harmony has also been sought by Schiller, by radical revolutionaries and in Marxism.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.: p. 617.

Taylor elaborates Russell's idea of universal benevolence through disengagement in the light of other similar transformation in the human spirituality; a kind of shifts where we suddenly feel the call to go beyond our narrower circles of solidarity, to embrace a wider range of people, even all humanity, in the scope of our beneficent action.<sup>474</sup> According to Taylor, the newness of the modern form in Russell's articulation is that for the first time we have such an opening to the universal which is not based in some way connecting to the transcendent. Taylor raises the question: *what is the ontic component in the modern understanding of moral order?* He argues that our notions of moral order contain more than just a definition of norms or ideals, and they also offer us a picture of what it is in the will of God, or the universe, or ourselves, which makes these norms appropriate and possible realization. In his description, Taylor explains that the modern understanding of the order of mutual benefit central to the exclusive humanism, which arises out of the Enlightenment, has indeed the ontic component. The difference is that it is now intra-human, which means it is appropriate and realizable by human agents, precisely because we are, under certain circumstances, capable of universal benevolence and justice.<sup>475</sup> But Taylor does not negate the terrible destructive desires of human beings. He argues that through all this, certain conditions of training, discipline, civilization, or affirming, non-punitive up bringing will release the motivations of detached benevolence, or for the moral law, or universal sympathy, on which this order can be built. The idea of benevolence as our inner capacity corresponds to its ontic placement in our nature. He sees it as a fruit of our escaping from our narrow particular standpoint, and we rise to it through Enlightenment and discipline. The root of benevolence lays in our deep nature, in our original propensity to sympathy, which then may get lost and covered over. In other words, it is an intra-cosmic force we acquire in our very own nature without any extra-cosmic sources or transcendent source.

Thus, discipline and rational self-control plays an entirely positive role in the first account, but it is often seen as what leads us away from our original, spontaneous good nature. Taylor analyzes some modern theories which try to combine both of them, like Kant who says that our noumenal nature is, indeed, something innate to us but it takes

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid.: p. 255. Taylor's reference is Bertrand Russell.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.: p. 256.



a long discipline of reason to emerge.<sup>476</sup> According to Taylor, the slide into exclusive humanism was set by the *Deism*, which focuses more on the order of mutual benefit, or even civilization as agenda of humanity and their very reductive, unprecedented, progress in realizing this order; the confidence is generated in human powers and in the tractability of the universe to human ends.<sup>477</sup> He argues that Deism provides the framework, but this progress supplied the material conditions for the leap into exclusive humanism. There were other conditions, such as disengagement and the secularization of public spheres and these two conditions have to do with the self-understanding of agency. The disengaged, disciplined agent, capable of remaking the self, who has discovered and thus release in himself the awesome power of control, according to Taylor, is obviously one of the crucial supports of modern exclusive humanism.<sup>478</sup> Taylor concludes that all this created cultural resources for the immanentization of moral sources.<sup>479</sup>

The disengagement contributes in a way that it is to isolate the agent from its field. Taylor refers to *Cogito ergo sum* as seeing first the ideas which are in us then whether they correspond to what is out there.<sup>480</sup> Tracing from the cultural sources this inward turn is also evident in religious life. Indeed, Taylor has no doubt that the whole turn was largely driven by religious motives. This was the move towards inner devotion of Middle Ages. Then in 17<sup>th</sup> century there emerged the question of theocentric raised by Bérulle and others. For Taylor, their focus on the inner disposition: *Is the center of my existence myself or am I centering on God?* According to Taylor, from these moral sentiments (an inner/inward, intra-human) people developed devotions of sentiment, like Pietism, Methodism and on the Catholic side *Sacred Heart*.<sup>481</sup> Then the development of a humanist culture emerged from these moral sentiments. The story of rejection of the old unchanging religion, which uncovers and releases the perennial human, according to Taylor, is wrong on both courts: reinvention, innovation, exists in both sides and continuing mutual influence that links them. Taylor argues that we can set the stages as well as we can, but we can never fully explain the rise of exclusive humanism,

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid. All German idealism, and also Marx, who follow this Kantian tradition.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.: p. 257.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.: p. 258.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

certainly not if the explanation means showing its inevitability, given certain conditions like all striking human achievements, there is something in it which resists reduction to these enabling conditions.<sup>482</sup>

Two fundamental questions Taylor makes for further understanding: *Does the exclusive humanism help us to understand the present age? What makes the whole range of views inspired by Nietzsche, who denounced the modern order of mutual benefit root and branch?*<sup>483</sup> In answering these Taylor divides it into three sub-parts: First, the exclusive humanism arose in connection with an alternative set of moral sources for the ethic of freedom and mutual benefit. Second, it could not have arisen any other way at the time. Third, the origin of it still counts today, that the much wider range of unbelieving positions available today is still somehow marked by this original point in the ethic of beneficent order. He explains further that the first claim will probably be accepted. His argument is that this transition begins in the latter part of the seventeenth century and continues in the eighteenth century; and one of the first clear signs that something had changed was the reaction of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in France.<sup>484</sup>

For Taylor, it was a decisive shift in the center of gravity of elite moral sensibility in Western Europe. Freedom, in particular freedom of belief, is beginning to become a value, crucial feature of any acceptable political order. Taylor acknowledges that it is complicated to talk about this because it may not be evident if we just focus on short spans of time, it is like a semi geological movement in the outlook of a whole society, which is very difficult to explain.<sup>485</sup> He traces this growing emphasis on freedom, from which arises a greater concern with welfare such as with economic property and growth in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The growth tends to move away from all forms of the providential intervention of God and underlines the importance of the exclusive humanism.

He observes that the anthropocentric shifts involved two things. First shift, the central moral concern becomes the imposition of a discipline on personal and social life,

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.: p. 259.

<sup>484</sup> Cf. Ibid. For Taylor, this violence done to the free conscience of so many ordered and loyal French subjects seemed gratuitous and savage, which was represented by Boyle in his expression to the indignation

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.: p. 260.

ensuring high standards of self-control and good behavior in the individual, and peace, order and prosperity in society.<sup>486</sup> However, it was still a central principle of the religious tradition, according to which humans still need the help of God in any forms to achieve these goals. Second shift opens to a radical field of purely intra-human moral sources: *the right goals had to be brought down into the human realm and faded the highest moral-spiritual goals in God.*<sup>487</sup> What was understood in terms of the Divine Providence is now defined in relation to purely human goals: *we have to see how human life can be organized so as to bring about fulfilment and happiness, dispelling the mystery.*<sup>488</sup>

In his observation, Taylor sees the positive point in the shift that we seem to have come into a greatly increased cognitive powers, thanks to the methods of the new sciences, which make the realm of mystery shrinks away. There is a tendency to conceive life after death in terms of peace, repose, the reunion with loved ones. In short, the buffered identity, capable of disciplined control and benevolence, generated its own sense of dignity and power, its own inner satisfactions, and these could tilt in favor of exclusive humanism.<sup>489</sup>

But Taylor also discovers that there was a negative motive, running through much of the Enlightenment a motive of anger and even hatred towards Orthodox Christianity. This was more powerful in Catholic countries, or in general where the influence of Deism was not strong enough to soften the opposition between anthropocentrism and Christian faith. In his explanation, Taylor explains that what made Christianity particularly repulsive to the Enlightenment mind was the whole juridical-penal way in which the doctrine of original sin and the atonement were cast during the high Middle Ages and the Reformation.<sup>490</sup> The doctrine affirms the belief that only a few are saved. Opinion begins to move against these doctrines in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On one hand, the decline of hell, there is growing revulsion at predestined damnation, even within Calvinist societies. He further explains that as confidence in human powers grows and in particular the power of reason, the claim of Churches to authority on behalf of a faith which partly consists of mysteries, becomes

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid.: pp. 260-261. The highest goals of human beings seem, even in the sphere of religion, to aim at purely human goods.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.: p. 261.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.: pp. 261-262.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.: p. 262.

harder to be accepted, this is another way in which a modern rationalism, based on science, can argue that the rise of science refutes religion.

Christianity conflicts with a new ethic of purely immanent human good. It just took an identification of Christianity itself with this enthusiastic practices. In fact its identification with some or other aspiration beyond human flourishing, in this sense is celibacy, against the modern humanism which defines itself as anti-Christian whether it remained in some weak sense of Deist or flipped over into outright atheism. Taylor identifies these three positions:

*(1) some aligned the “true”, reformed faith with civilization and “politeness”; others (2) reacted against this alignment, and insisted that faith must carry one beyond this beautifully self-controlled and self-sufficient mode of life, that it requires some giving of self, some surrender of autonomy..... (3) There is the response of those who agreed in this more demanding definition of the faith, but just for that reason rejected it as the enemy of politeness, even as ultimately a force for barbarism; people like Edward Gibbon, for example.*<sup>491</sup>

He refers to Gibbon, who articulated and defined eighteenth-century anti-Christianity, had been tempted into a teenage conversion to Catholicism.<sup>492</sup>

The account Taylor is offering here runs athwart (opposite) the widespread subtraction story which sees the development of unbelief as coming simply from the progress of science and rational inquiry. He then shows another way of putting the point concerning relation between Reformation and secularization. Time as *Saeculum*, ordinary time, measure time, can also mean the condition of living in this ordinary time, against higher time (eternity) or God’s time. There emerged two different conditions of life: higher form, city of God (Augustine’s idea), restored condition (ultimate one), and condition here in *saeculum* which is resistant to the form of life which will prevail in the fullness of our restored condition. In this description, Taylor shows a tension which can flare into opposition when humans cling to their secular condition as ultimate.<sup>493</sup>

Taylor sees that the dualistic world of medieval Christianity compressed into a spiritual-secular whole, at least Protestant countries, comes close to being unitary.

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid.: p. 263.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.: p. 264.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.: p. 266.

However, it cannot do so, because the sense of spiritual is still alive, at least as a source of division. There are modes of anti-religion which try to recapture something of higher purpose for secular life in purely immanent terms, for instance, Communism or Fascism.<sup>494</sup> Taylor reiterates a subtraction story, which explains the shift primarily in cognitive terms. For this subtraction story, the claims of Christianity turned to be less credible in an age where science was advancing, and consequently, people were left with purely human values.<sup>495</sup> To shift to a slightly later date in the light of the dominant subtraction story with its arguments against miracles, may seem to us today as crucial blow in the battle for unbelief; but Taylor supposes that without the new moral understandings it would have had little impact. There was indeed a pattern of minority elite unbelief in this age, which saw the ancients as an inspiring model antithetical to Christianity.<sup>496</sup> However, their outlook was often shaped by the modern and Christian-derived value of benevolence.<sup>497</sup> According to Taylor, our understanding of ourselves as secular is defined by the empirical-historical sense that we have to be that way though overcoming and rising out of earlier modes of belief.

Unbelief is understood as an achievement of rationality, however, for Taylor, it cannot have this without a continuing historical awareness. In similar way, the founding importance of the exclusive humanism of freedom, discipline and benevolent order remains ineradicable in our day. But other modes of unbelief understand themselves as having overcome or refuted it.<sup>498</sup> In fact, Taylor explains the project of freedom and beneficent order as so central to Western civilization and argues that all possible positions define themselves in relation to it, as modes of affirming while interpreting it.<sup>499</sup> That is the reason why the narrative of the rise of unbelief does not merely relate to an irrelevant past, rather according to Taylor all present issues around secularism and belief are affected by a double historicity, and he explains this in a two-tiered *perfectensedness*. In one hand, unbelievers and exclusive humanists defined themselves in relation to earlier modes of belief, both orthodox theism and enchanted

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<sup>494</sup> *Ibi.*: p. 267.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*: p. 268. Shaftesbury and Gibbon are included in this group.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.* Reference in Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*, Volume 1, pp. 447-448.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*: p. 269. He takes Nietzsche as an example.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.* Taylor invokes Marxism the offshoots of Enlightenment as examples.

understandings of the world, such definition remains inseparable from unbelief today. On the other hand, later-arising forms of unbelief, like all attempts to redefine and recover belief, define themselves in relation to this first path-breaking humanism of freedom, discipline, and order.<sup>500</sup>

The tendency to immanentize moral sources causes a sense of emptiness in certain people. Taylor notices the general feeling of discomfort in the modernity and calls this as a condition of malaise.<sup>501</sup> Based on this diagnostic condition, he presents an account of the development of contemporary secularity 3 in three stages: First, an explanation of how the exclusive humanism came to be an alternative to God. Second, the fractured culture of what he calls the *Nova Effect*, which was originally that of elites only, becomes generalized to whole societies, reaches its culmination in the latter half of the twentieth century and along with it there arises in Western societies a generalized culture of *authenticity*, or expressive individuals, in which people are encouraged to find their own way, discover their own fulfilment, do their own thing.<sup>502</sup> He holds that the ethic of authenticity originates in the Romantic period, and it has utterly penetrated popular culture only in recent decades, since the second world war. This turn has plainly altered the shape of secularity 3, mainly by shifting the place of the *spiritual* in human life, at least as lived by many. From this description Taylor concludes that we are now living in a spiritual super-nova, a kind of galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane.<sup>503</sup>

The ethic of freedom and order has arisen in a culture which puts at its center a buffered self. This term has a complex meaning, the phenomenon has both objective and subjective sides. To be buffered subject, to close the porous boundary between inside (thought) and the outside (nature/physical), is partly a matter of living in a disenchanted world. Taylor sees that it comes about through a number of changes: the replacement of a cosmos of spirits and forces by a mechanistic universe, the demise of higher times, the recession of a sense of complementarities. But these changes were furthered and intensified by subjective changes, shift in identity, like the rise of disengaged reason, and the transformations, which was wrought by disciplined self-remaking, including the narrowing and intensifying intimacy, and a civilizing process. The

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid. Taylor explains the connection of the present forms with the former ones in the recent past.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.: p. 299. The detailed description from pp. 299-331.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.: p. 299.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.: p. 300.

anthropocentric shift involved a sense of power, of capacity, in being able to order our world and ourselves, to the extent that this power was connected with reason and science, a sense of having made great gains in knowledge and understanding.<sup>504</sup> But Taylor detects that beyond power and reason, there emerged a sense of invulnerability too. Part of the self-consciousness of modern anthropocentrism is the sense of achievement, of having won through to this invulnerability out of the earliest state of capacity in an enchanted world. Taylor points out the historical dimension of modern self-consciousness in our knowing that certain things are modern, and other practices are backward, that his idea is mediaeval and other one is progressive. This buffered distance becomes part of the complex Modern-European concept of civilization, derived from the Renaissance notion of *civility*, and becoming a crucial part of our own historicized self-awareness.<sup>505</sup>

Taylor shows the negative side of buffered identity.<sup>506</sup> It is the general feelings of discomfort (malaise) at the disenchanted world, a sense of it as flat, empty, a multiform search something within, or beyond it, which could compensate for the meaning lost with transcendence. For him, this is spiritually unstable: offering motives not to go back to the earlier established faiths, and on the other hand, a sense of malaise, emptiness, a need for meaning. This pulled the people divided into two extreme groups: Authoritarian Orthodox and Materialist Atheism. Then there has emerged a process with the term globalization in which we are living, where the distances have vanished, and we are more and more like each other.<sup>507</sup>

According to Taylor, we have to bear in mind that it is not only the modern buffered identity, which is triggering negative reactions, but there is also at work in the culture since the eighteenth-century strong objections against Christianity.<sup>508</sup> The loss of meanings, according to some, is inevitable: *it is the price we pay for modernity and rationality*. Taylor also explores the malaise of immanence and the question of the meaning of life. For him, the answers are fragile or uncertain, that a moment may come, where we no longer feel that our chosen path is compelling (overpowering) or cannot

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.: p 301. In this page Taylor explains descriptively the growing self-awareness of human agents which marked the modernity with buffered identity.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.: pp. 302-304. The situation as whole remains unstable.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.: p. 304.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.: pp. 305-306.

justify it to ourselves and to others.<sup>509</sup> He argues that there is a fragility of meaning, analogous to the existential fragility we always live with, that suddenly an accident, earthquake, flood, a fatal disease, some terrible betrayal, may jolt us off our path of life, definitively and without return.

In his analysis, Taylor observes that the questions about the meaning of life were not raised in the earlier epochs, all dangers and sufferings didn't involve doubt and questioning.<sup>510</sup> A sense of emptiness, or non-resonance, may arise in a quite different way. This way of framing the issue partakes the post-Axial outlook, which opened the idea that there is *one thing needful*, some higher goal which transcends, or gives sense to all the lower ones. Some people want to reject the way of post-Axial culture and want to take up an anti-axial position, they want to rehabilitate *paganism* or *polytheism*. But Taylor sees that the malaise is felt on both levels.<sup>511</sup> He describes the condition of malaise in terms of epistemology, like lifeworld, ordinary or everyday life. We can feel this emptiness every day, but it also comes out with force in what should be the crucial moments like birth, marriage, and death. These are the important turning point of our lives and want to solemnize these moments, either of a birth, or of a marriage, or of a death. The way we always do this is by linking these moments up with the Transcendent, the highest, the holy, the sacred, as the pre-axial religious did. Taylor identifies the enclosure in the immanent that leaves a hole here: *many people who have no other connection, or felt affinity with religion, go on using the ritual of the Church for these rites of passage.*<sup>512</sup> But we can also just feel the lack in the everyday, this can be where it most hurts. This seems to be felt particularly by people in some leisure and culture. For instance, some people sense a terrible flatness in the everyday, and this experience has been identified particularly with commercial, industrial, or consumer societies.<sup>513</sup>

Taylor distinguishes three forms which the malaise of immanence may take: (1) *the sense of the fragility of meaning, the search for an over-arching significance*; (2) *the felt flatness of our attempts to solemnize the crucial moments of passage in our lives*; and (3) *the utter flatness, emptiness of ordinary.*<sup>514</sup> He calls these *the malaise of*

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<sup>509</sup> Ibid.: p. 308.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.: pp. 308-309.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.: p. 309.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.



*immanence* because everyone recognizes that they come into our horizon with the eclipse of transcendence. According to Taylor, this doesn't mean that the only solution for them is a return to transcendence. Some people want to return to transcendence, but most moderns seek solutions for the dissatisfactions within immanence. For Taylor, the felt dissatisfaction at the immanent order motivates not only new forms of religion, but also different readings of immanence.

In his perspective, the gamut (the range) of new positions multiplies traditional faith, and the modern anthropocentric shift to an immanent order. This expanding gamut is what Taylor calls *nova*. So, the need for meaning can be met by a recovery of transcendence, but we can also try to define this need in purely immanent terms, for instance, in the project of creating a new world of justice and prosperity. Similarly, without appeal to religion, we can seek to give resonance to the everyday, to nature and to things around us, by calling on our own depth sense. In one such attempt, which has had a great impact on our history: *Nature becomes not just the ensemble of natural reality, but a deep source in us.*<sup>515</sup>

In summary, the original unity was followed by a division which sets its two terms in opposition, like reason versus feeling, human versus nature, and so on. Taylor interprets the protest against the buffered self also as such in the sense that in closing ourselves to the enchanted world, we have been cut off from a great source of life and meaning, which is there for us in nature. He admits that this does not mean as an invitation to return to the past, on contrary, the Romantics rather explored new ways to recover the link with nature, mediated by our expressive powers (Greek influence). It is the model for unity with nature (Romantic outlook) as expressed in Schiller's poem *the God's of Greece* in which the unity with self and communion with nature were. But for Taylor, such communion of the ancient times has been destroyed.<sup>516</sup> This division too could form part of a spiral narrative of recovery unity. Now there is a particular way framing this issue of division from nature. Taylor considers it as the malaise at the adoption of a purely instrumental, rational stance towards the world or human life. In the effort to control our lives, or control nature, we have destroyed much of what is deep and valuable in them. We have been blinded to the importance of equilibrium

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid.: p. 310.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.: 316.

which can be upsetting but cannot be created by instrumental rationality. The most important of these in the contemporary debates is obviously the one touching the ecological balance of our entire biosphere. In this context, the environment is seen exclusively in terms of human purpose.<sup>517</sup>

Taylor supposes that the Romantic critique of division seems to suggest a healing remedy and the critiques that he wants to describe here tend to see the modern outlook as facile and optimistic.

First. *The rejection of the Deistic notion of Providence* as just too absurdly self-indulgently optimistic. Everything fits together for the good and seems to deny the tragedy, the pain, the unresolved suffering which we all know is here. The most famous occasion for this objection was the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. A very common objection of unbelief to Christianity has been that it offers childishly benign view of human life, where everything will come right in the end, something which the really mature person cannot believe, and is willing to do without having the courage to face reality as it is. It was in fact one of the main motors impelling those who moved from Deism to exclusive humanism of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Taylor observes that there is something deep in this rejection, Deism or Christianity is taxed with unrealism, but there is a moral objection here. He thinks that the unrealism does not always have to be moral fault, some may even admire Christians or anarchists for their utopian hopes, and their willingness to fight for things which others recognize as impossible of attainment.<sup>518</sup> According to Taylor, recognizing the tragedy in life is acknowledging some of its depth, suffering can reveal the meaning of life which would not appreciate before, and its greatness, suffering is something born or fought against. Undoubtedly, Taylor refers to what Nietzsche was getting at in the *Genealogy of Morals*, where he says that what humans cannot stand is not suffering, but meaningless suffering. Along with communion, there is division, alienation, spite, mutual forgetfulness, and will never be reconciled and brought together again. This is what we regularly experience as ultimate, and all great religions recognize it and place their hopes in a beyond, which does not simply deny it. Taylor refers to the dark side of creation portrayed in the dance of Shiva, which brings destruction as well as creation.

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<sup>517</sup> Ibid.: p. 317.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.: p. 318.

Simply negating it, as many modern Christians are tempted to do, leaves a vacuum (emptiness).

Second. There is another reaction which has arisen against precisely the models of benevolence and universalism in Deism and humanism. Everybody is equal, and the old virtues of aristocracy are no longer valued, virtues of heroism, for instance, the warrior virtues. In this objection, the tilt (slope/inclination) in modern humanism and civilization towards equality is taken together with the valuing of the bourgeois virtues of production, and the relief of suffering. This is put in the context of the rejection of *extravagance* and *excess*.<sup>519</sup> In this context, wholeness is condemned for levelling, for pusillanimity, for a negation of any high demanding ideal, for the negation of all heroism. Taylor refers to some reactionary thinkers like de Maistre, Tocqueville, Baudelaire and Nietzsche, Maurras and Sorel.

Third. Closely related to both is a critique of the understanding of happiness implicit in modern ideas of order.<sup>520</sup> Humans are so reduced (degraded human life) that will end up finding the point of their existence in the subjects of *despotism*<sup>521</sup> and in horrifying vision of Nietzsche these reduced beings would end up as *last men*. This happiness is in the sensuous forms, most simplistic forms, or down-to-earth, like the certain kinds of utilitarianism. It is often attacked as too flat, shallow, even demeaning, a happiness based on hedonism, thus unworthy of humanity, as profoundly illusory and unrealistic. Human beings cannot be really happy this way. Their attempt to be so will be frustrated, either by the natural, unavoidable occurrence of suffering and death, or by the stifled (ended by force/quelled) sense within them that they were born for something higher.<sup>522</sup>

Fourth. Another related line of attack concerned with death. Modern humanism tends to develop a notion of human flourishing which has no place for death. Death is simply the negation, the ultimate negation, of flourishing. It must be conquered and held off till the very last moment. Against this, there have developed a whole range of views in the post-Enlightenment world, which, while remaining atheist, or at least

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid.: p 319.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.: pp. 319-320.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.: p. 320. Reference in TOCQUEVILLE, Alexis de (1985): *La Démocratie en Amérique*, Paris: Graniér Flammarion, 1985, Volume II, Part IV, chapter 6, pp. 383-388.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.: p. 320.

ambivalent and unclear about Transcendence, has seen in death a privilege position, one at which the meaning, the point of life comes clear, or can be more closely attained than in the fullness of life.<sup>523</sup> From this emerged a new mode of spirituality inhere and now that could challenge the people to think beyond the death. What lies beyond this immanentized spiritual question? Philosophy is limited in answering the question because the discussion on the death lies in the theological domain, although from the metaphysical perspective the answer would be possible.

#### **5.4. Anthropocentric Spirituality**

Modern secularity pushed the Churches to create new modes of devotion centered in the anthropocentric spirituality, which stresses on the immanent aspect of Christian faith. This is part of the program of Christian Reformation, paving the way to a more and deeply good Christians and honest citizens. Taylor sees the effect of exclusive humanism in a spiritual trend, such as a spirituality that puts human beings in the center of gravity. It is understood in consonance with the Biblical anthropology, according to which man is an image and likeness of God. This spirituality was expressed in the medieval arts, like painting and architecture. The modern interpretation of anthropocentric spirituality is dominated by the general search for meaning of life. Taylor insists on the aspiration shared by all humans for a condition after-life, which is beyond this material world.<sup>524</sup> Such is the common vision of anthropocentric spirituality, and what divides believers from unbelievers is in the debate on the existence of God or any Higher Beings.

The contemplation of the image of God in the suffering humanity of Christ on the cross expressed in *la Pietá*, and other paintings, which portray the real human Christ, the virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, are the reflection of the anthropocentric spirituality. This anthropocentric spirituality emerged from the program of reforms in affirming/reaffirming the ordinary life, not just higher life promoted by the monks and nuns in the former regime. Taylor claims that we live in an extraordinary moral culture in which suffering and death through famine, flood, earthquake, pestilence and war,

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<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid.: p. 7.

awaken worldwide movements of sympathy and solidarity.<sup>525</sup> These are the fruits of anthropocentric spirituality which brings us back to affirm the immanent experience of God in our real life, not just concern with higher life. The Christian conscience turns to not ignore the ordinary life by promoting its flourishing without underestimating the life beyond. The notion of holiness does not mean to *run away from the world* as propagated by monks and nuns in monastic life, rather turning toward it for the sake of building a humane world by establishing justice and peace among the peoples. This shapes the spiritual-moral outlook of modern people in increasing life, relieving suffering and fostering prosperity.<sup>526</sup>

Anthropocentric spirituality opens the way for the exclusive humanism because of its turning toward immanence. However, the Biblical humanism does not exclude the transcendence nor even the immanence, rather combines both the transcendent aspiration and the ordinary daily life, which is the reflection of the higher one. Human beings were created in the image and likeness of God, this is the basic view of Biblical anthropology as the point of departure for the humanism of Jesus who helped to relieve suffering, feed the hungry and restore life, while showing the way to the life beyond. Jesus did not exclude the ordinary life. Such a spirituality inspired the revolutionary people to develop their ideas in the name of the poor ones and the needy. Taylor also admits the deviation of the ancient Church, pre-modern Church, from the teaching of Jesus Christ by excessively emphasizing on the higher life. It was undoubtedly the influence of Monastic spirituality, which emphasized prayer and fasting, refuting from the world, or the city, living in the desert and isolated places or mountains. They had developed another elite culture of *refugium mundi* (running away from the world), turning away from the populated world, which was considered sinful and full of people who are destined for damnation. This caused revolts, first within the Church bounded to Reformation, and then from the elites, those learners, and thinkers.

The Reformation became a big impulse for Christians to turn back to the humanism of Christ who came into the world to save mankind by showing them mercy and compassion, it's an act of solidarity and sympathy, linking this ordinary life to a transformed life beyond this world, not to turn away from the people who were

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<sup>525</sup> Idem (1999): p. 25.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

considered by the pharisees and scribes as sinners who might contaminate them with their sins. The tendency of anthropocentric spirituality does not exclude any human beings as sinful rather like Jesus approaching to people who are in the condition of sinners, who need salvation and security not just in the afterlife but also in this life by curing the sick, feeding the hungry, even restoring life for the dead. In other words, this trend of spirituality turns toward immanence using languages or symbols which are more accessible for ordinary people to imagine, starting with this life ascending to the life beyond. The anthropocentric spirituality inspired the modern moral-spiritual outlook and exclusive humanism, which is extreme and dangerous in Taylor's eyes because of its not acknowledging the transcendence.<sup>527</sup> It gave an impulse for the cultural revolution of the early modern period. Based on these facts, Taylor concludes that secularization has moral-spiritual groundings in Christian faith, which has shaped the Western civilization through a cultural revolution with its axis in the Reformation rapidly spread to the societies at large.

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<sup>527</sup> Ibid.: pp. 19-20.

## CHAPTER 6: THE DRIVE TO REFORM

### 6.1. Background of Reform

Taylor identifies two main points of axis for secularization in the modern West: first, the medieval drive to reform in Church and to remake the European society, culminating in the Protestant Reformation; second, the appeal of modern science to reshape the worldview from transcendent to immanent frame.<sup>528</sup> He departs from examining the late medieval dissatisfaction with the Church hierarchy and structures, as an impulse for changes which had happened back in the Hildebrand Reform in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The drive for Hildebrand Reform began to take up a more ambitious goal, to change the habits and life-practices, not only religious/clerical but also ordinary Christians, of the whole population, to instil orderly, sober, disciplined, productive ways of living in everyone.<sup>529</sup> However, Taylor argues that the Reformation of sixteenth century had widest impacts from which emerged more diversified forms of Christianity, paving the way for a more reflective faith. Reform, re-awakening, reorganizing, renewed dedication, and discipline have become part of the standing culture, which had issued out within the Western Christendom. According to Taylor, the religious drive to reform progressively becomes interwoven into the attempts to introduce civility, substituting something secondary for the primary goal of centring everything on God.<sup>530</sup>

Taylor insists that the rise of the disciplinary society, the modern civilization, in the West lies in the increasing interest in nature as *it were*, or in *its own sake*, not simply as a manifestation of God. He illustrates the evolving interest in nature according to the perspectives of science, art, and ethics. ***In science***, the recovery of Aristotelian works in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; ***in art***, new realism of Giotto; ***in Ethics***, the recovery of the

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<sup>528</sup> SHANTZ, Douglas H. (2009), “The Place of Religion in a Secular Age: Charles Taylor’s Explanation of the Rise and Significance of Secularism in the West”, March 16, 2009, in the <http://www.academic.edu>. (accessed on December 18, 2024). The Protestant movements highlights the German Pietism and England Methodism.

<sup>529</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): 242; the detailed description from the current page to page 266. The Hildebrand Reforms or Gregorian Reforms was around 11<sup>th</sup> century following Augustine’s idea stressing on the gap between the city of God and the earthly city. The Church elite (Magisterium) adapted the idea through the attempt to bring society more into line with the heavenly city.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.: p. 244. The source is taken from Foucault’s idea on the Lateran Council of the Catholic Church in 1215. Religious reforms primarily had constituted all attempts to raise the whole body of the clergy, and later involved the mass of the laity, to the higher standard of devotion and pious life, which was largely defined by the monastic and clerical practices.

ancient ethics of nature of Aristotle and Stoics.<sup>531</sup> However, he admits that the change in understanding of things in their own nature had started farther back and gone through several stages and one of the crucial facets was the twelfth century Renaissance. Tracing further changes from then (12<sup>th</sup> century) onward he stresses on the evident paradigm shifts among the nominalists of the fifteenth century, another in the Renaissance humanists, and in the great evolution of science, which took place in the Galilean-Newtonian turn of the seventeenth century. The increase interest in nature for its own sake, which became rapidly advanced in the beginning of seventeenth century, culminated in the early nineteenth century with the publication of Darwinian theory of evolution.<sup>532</sup>

According to Taylor, the religious landscape of today does not reflect that faith in God, or religion, has declined but it has diversified.<sup>533</sup> New forms of spirituality have emerged with the efforts of Reformation and spiritual renewal. The drive to reform involves the paradigm shift with its outcome to further epistemic changes determined by cosmic imaginary in lived experience which moulds the condition of belief. This chapter presents the religious reform and discusses its impacts on the shift in spiritual-moral paradigm. Further discussion involves the move to widening the space for the unbelief with certain ambivalence in the condition of malaise, which decelerates the move and prompts the emergence of diversified outlooks.

## **6.2. Religious Reform**

According to Taylor, secularization has spiritual and moral groundings in Christianity, reinforced and intensified by the Reformation with respective programs of reform aiming to discipline the individual Christians. These reformed and disciplined citizens had contributed to reshape the society and from the effort of reforms emerged the idea of civility and prompted a new notion of the self.<sup>534</sup> He traces the moral-spiritual development grounded on the Church's view of things as created beings, which became the ethical patterns of people in pre-modern age. From this vision came a major change

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid.: p. 90.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.: p. 90.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.: p. 351.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid. This is already elaborated in chapter 3, and in this chapter, I just want to reiterate and reaffirm the importance of the Reformation to society at large.



in the drive to reshape and reorder the society and the self through the program of civility. This program had the objective to discipline and to tame the raw nature of human persons. The paradigm shift kept on through various stages, beginning with the change in how people imagine the world. The normative patterns are being built on the buffered identity. This brought a new perception of individuation and provided alternatives to moral-spiritual aspirations, which emphasizes the immanent frame.

The moral view has gradually been shifted according to the evolution of cosmic outlooks, from naïve to reflective, from childish to adulthood. For Taylor, this development does not mean that the Biblical moral outlook bowed to the brute facts of evolution under the hypothesis of Darwin.<sup>535</sup> The change from porous-self to buffered-self, as I mentioned in previous chapters, gave an impulse to further changes with their respective variants in different facets:

*the replacement of a cosmos of spirits and forces by a mechanistic universe, the fading of higher time, the recession of a sense of complementarities which found expression, for instance, in Carnival.... But these changes were furthered, and in turn intensified by subjective changes, shifts in identity, like the rise of disengaged reason, and the transformations wrought by disciplined self-remaking, including the narrowing and intensifying of intimacy....*<sup>536</sup>

Everything is evolving not only in natural terms but also in human consciousness, pushing and intensifying the migration of ideas. Taylor sees that what motivated the religious renewal/reform was the drive from inner reaction expressed in a more inward and intense personal devotion, in an anxiety (disquiet) with sacramental religion and Church-controlled magic, and in the idea of salvation by faith alone.<sup>537</sup>

According to Taylor, the Reformation expressed a profound dissatisfaction with the hierarchical equilibrium between lay and *renunciative vocation*, masses of people were no longer to live up to the demands of perfection carried out by the minority of Church elite.<sup>538</sup> In fact, religious reform has been crucial for the deconstruction of the

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid.: p. 563. It's just a hypothesis because Darwin scientific claim was just based on his observation on some evidence in the nature without having any solid proof.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.: p. 300,

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.: pp. 75-77.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.: p. 62. The term *renunciative vocation*, used by Taylor, refers to the religious and clerical vocation or calling.

enchanted world and for the anthropocentric shift, giving a new emphasis to Christian spirituality.

Changes as a natural process involve the order of beings and the forms they manifest in the course of time. The former world disappeared giving way to the present one, the lifeforms have gone letting the new forms flourish, old generation passed away substituted by the newcomers.

*See dying vegetables life sustain, see life dissolving vegetate again: all forms that perish other forms supply..... like bubbles on the sea of Matter born, they rise, they break, and to that sea return.*<sup>539</sup>

Taylor presents this view with the objective of explaining the idea of mutual benefit. However, in the context of paradigm shift, the former world is sedimented in the present one; it doesn't disappear, but rather exists in other forms with new variants. In the order of living beings, the former lifeforms become the background for the present cycles. The cosmic order manifests the evolution of things from the simplest forms to their higher and perfect states. In the perspective of mutual benefit, the changes in natural order are analogous not only to the economic and social patterns but also to the normative pattern. The former forms of life, previous forms of societies with their modes of living, turned out to be the background for the contemporary world with new outlooks and higher lifestyles. The change in the external world affects the evolution of human consciousness and moral-spiritual development. Taylor elaborates the change in the Christian perspective as a transformed life, an eschatological dimension, and a different conception of natural order, a transformation, which involves our living for something beyond human flourishing.<sup>540</sup> The change goes beyond the temporal world as stressed in the Christian theology of Resurrection from the dead, a transformation of the cosmic constitution of our natural body to an extra-cosmic form, a kind of *spiritual-body*, which is beyond this earthly life. However, the shift towards the sanctification of ordinary life, the life of family and production, has been spilling beyond the original religious variant into a myriad secular form.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid.: pp. 180-181.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.: pp. 65-67. In the theological perspective, human agents are aspiring to go beyond the transformation of the natural order. The change from communal judgement after death to individual one in the late Medieval perspective was crucial reason for Reformation.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.: p. 179.

The reform has two facets, which are pushing towards the formation of modern civilization. In one side, it promotes ordinary life (life of flourishing) as a site for the highest forms of Christian life; and in the other, it also has an anti-elitist thrust, taking down those allegedly higher modes of existence, whether in the Church (monastic vocations), or in the world, like the ancient-derived ethics which placed contemplation higher than productive existence.<sup>542</sup> The reform spirit abolished the condition of enchanted cosmos and created a humanist alternative which was against all kinds of external mediation and put all Christians in the same plane.<sup>543</sup> Religious reform has ever been done over time, at least in the Biblical account that new wine needs new wineskin.

Taylor adverts that the Reformation prompted a new paradigm with a strong religious renewal, which was turning to a more inward and intense personal devotion. Consequently, the Reformed Churches were leaving *sacramental* and church-controlled *magic* and promoting a new inspiring idea of salvation by faith alone.<sup>544</sup> The new paradigm involved the notion of sacred as narrowly understood, in the church, in certain person (like priest), at certain time and space. Taylor extends his description about the change in understanding of religious belief to the wider sense, arguing that the presence of God is everywhere to sanctify us, hence also in ordinary life, in marriage. Sanctification depends entirely now on our inner transformation, throwing ourselves onto the mercy of God in faith.<sup>545</sup> However, the Calvinist reform was more radically against this stance in their effort to dismantle the enchanted world, rejecting all elements of magic in religion as idolatrous, untrue, and ungodly. The reform movement created a condition where people feel a new freedom and release a great energy to reorder the affairs in secular time. The outcome was its long-term contribution to the rise of a new humanism, which came precisely through the drive to reorder society, not just in its Church structure but also in its secular life.<sup>546</sup> The reaction against the enchanted world was not only through the process of disenchantment, but also the

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid. The first is part of the background to the central place given to the economic change in our lives, as also for the tremendous importance we put on family life, or relationship. The second underlies the fundamental importance of equality in our social and political lives (also in TAYLOR, 1989: chapter 13).

<sup>543</sup> This means that there is no discrimination or distinction between the ordinary Christians and those who renounced of living in the world like consecrated persons/religious and the priests.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid. This is the Christian Protestant Theology.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.: pp. 79-80.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.: p. 88. The Protestants rejected the figure of Pope and accused the Catholics as practicing the papist idolatry.

deconstruction, which involves the continuing attempt to reorder and reshape the society and to build up something new.<sup>547</sup> Taylor associates the age of enchantment with an age of intensified persecutions, which he calls the phenomenon of social panic, prompting the people's attempt to liberate themselves from such a condition.

Taylor tries to retrieve the construal that served as background for the dissatisfaction within the Christianity. He identifies in the Church teaching before the Reformation, which had been based on the Augustine's idea of *uti, non frui*.<sup>548</sup> Augustine's influence in the Church doctrine was linked to the idea of concupiscence, the strong desire not only in sexual affair but also in the use of things of the world, which is considered a sin. According to Taylor, the doctrine implies married sexuality, which totally excludes any sexual joy, putting the priestly and religious vocation in a higher status than the ordinary lay people. He exposes the theological position which underestimated human flourishing and caused the dissatisfaction. This doctrinal background has contributed to the drive to reform.

He also underlines the role of the elite in the process of reforms through the diffusion of their spiritual condition by means of the expansion of standard of education, the spread of literacy, and then of higher levels of schooling, and more recently through the great growth in university training. The elite condition often became generalized by the fact that modern society pushes everyone into the same mode of life, tending to wipe out the distinction between town and country, and inculcates in everyone the same social imaginary. The new condition imposed to the whole society particularly with the penetration of electronic media to the worldwide, from which emerged notion of globalization. But Taylor argues that the actual road from there to here has been much bumpier and more indirect than a simple story can capture. His argument is grounded on the fact several western countries, in which religious practice rose in the nineteenth century and sometimes also in the twentieth century.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Taylor sees this struggle to liberate refers to the French Revolution as a concrete effort of the people to liberate themselves from the social panic.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.: p. 81. This means that we can use things in this world but not enjoy them. In other words, the interpretation is that we are being in the world but not of the world, being in the world yet at a distance, ready to lose it.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid.: pp. 424-425. In the case of France, he uses the data of some people's calculation that the apogee of Catholics comes around 1870, after the crisis of the Revolution with its dechristianization campaigns and constitutional church. See also Robert Tombs, *France: 1814-1914*, London, Longman, 1996, p. 135, sets in 1880; Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine: 1800/1880*, Paris, Privat,

In his description, Taylor unfolds another phenomenon that many individual people are moving away from their ancestral religion but not breaking away entirely from it. The spiritual identity of masses of people remains defined by religious forms from which they normally keep themselves at a *distance*.<sup>550</sup> There was a polarity between the spiritualities of quest/search and the peremptory authority. On one side, many people felt dissatisfied with the Church, which seemed underestimated the human flourishing or lay vocation; on the other, they retained an attachment to the Christian perspective of transformation but in a new form of spirituality.<sup>551</sup> Secularization urges every individual believer the need for a new way of inhabiting their faith. According to Taylor, among a growing number of category of people, who are unable to accept orthodox Christianity, are looking for something within, or beyond, this disenchanted world, which could compensate for the meaning lost with transcendence. With the sense of malaise, expressed in the feeling of flatness/emptiness, in the background, they are looking for some alternative spiritual sources.<sup>552</sup>

### 6.3. Social Reform

The remaking of the self was aimed at social reform. According to Taylor, the social reforms had been inspired and driven by the Church Reforms in the Western Christendom. These reforms constitute a disciplinary society with a new understanding of the world, things in nature, the human agency, and the polity, and alter the individuation in both phenomenological and epistemological terms. Taylor argues that in the Middle Ages the good order of civility and the good order of piety did not remain in separate uncommunicating compartments, but they to some extent merged and inflected each other.<sup>553</sup> The result is that the drive to piety aimed at the real good Christians inflects the agenda of social reform. However, the social reform also provoked

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1985, p. 317, places it around 1860; Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1798-1914*, London, Routledge, 1987, p. 230.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.: p. 521. In the case of England, he uses the data calculated by Callum Brown in *A Revisionist Approach to Religious Change*. While in the case of the United States, he takes Roger Finke as reference, especially the idea of the *An Unsecular America* as quoted by Bruce.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.: p. 518. Referred to Douglas H. Shantz, "The Place of Religion in a Secular Age: Charles Taylor's Explanation of the Rise and Significance of Secularism in the West", March 16, 2009, in the <http://www.academic.edu>.

<sup>552</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 302.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.: p. 105.

many reactions because of the condition imposed by the elite, as a standard, to the whole society. The protest was against the moralism, which put the ethic of discipline and self-control, in both believing and unbelieving variants, as the supreme goal of high moral standard.<sup>554</sup>

One of the major impacts of religious reform on society was the shift in self-understanding, molding a new mode of individuation, or mode of social relation. The move towards individualism becomes the underlying landmark for modern European civilization. The picture of modernity in the level of social relation in the Western world is deeply marked by this human individuation as free agents and expressive beings. In Taylor's narrative, the modern identity has emerged from the disenchantment, which reshaped the self from porous to the buffered, liberating human persons from fears of any external mediation.<sup>555</sup> Hence, the change in self-understanding towards free individuals resulted from the self-consciousness of modern anthropocentrism, prompted by the drive to reform in Christianity and reinforced by the development in science and technology. The social condition, emerging from the Reformation, liberated us from any external mediation, any authority from outside, but everyone has a direct access to the others in the society and a personal access to God. The new mode of individual relations with the external world fosters the social reforms. Taylor considers the outcome of this move as a logical development for the identity change from the pre-modern world to the modern affirmation of freedom from any agents or forces. This liberating power had been suppressed by the fears of God, or gods and spirits in the old regime. The notion of self in the modern context opens new horizons towards what it means to be an individual human person. Taylor explores this in his work *Sources of the Self*, in which he describes the contributions and possibilities of modernity, as well as its limits and potential weaknesses emerging from the excess of individualism.<sup>556</sup>

Taylor explains this new form of individuation with buffered identity by pointing to its Christian root in defining religious belief in terms of personal experience, or

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<sup>554</sup> Ibid.: p. 399. It is the protest against narrow moralism imposed by the elite. It is narrow because it seemed too thin, too dry, concerned so exclusively with behavior, discipline, control, that it left no space for some great elan or purpose which would transform our lives and take us out of the narrow focus on control.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid.: p. 33. Taylor uses the terms *intra-cosmic* and *extra-cosmic* agents or forces to explain the sources of the meanings which are imposed from outside of the human subjects, not within but without human agents. And these sources can be material, inside of the nature, or spiritual, beyond the nature.

<sup>556</sup> Cf. Idem (1989): pp. 3ff.

personal effort to salvation, without neglecting the emphasis on the collective rite. Thus, one of the great ideas arising from the Christian Reformation was the freedom of individual person. The new individual freedom is understood in a phenomenological sense because it arose from the lived experience, the characteristics of which is a new mode of relating to others and to nature not only as free individuals but also as expressive human beings.

The buffered identity of individuation flourishes in the modern civilization where the individuals produce their own world marked not just by rationality, but also by sensibility. Rooted in the renaissance notion of civility the *polis* becomes an especially important place for the development of individualism, which is an excess of individuation. The civilized persons in a sense were individualists. They had arisen in a circumstance of reaction against the popular culture, which they considered barbarous. According to these elites, the *polis* (city) was seen as the site of human life at its best and highest, reawakening the ideal of Aristotle in the ancient Greek *polis*, which affirms that human reaches the fullness of his nature only in the *polis*.<sup>557</sup> This had been asserted by Plato long before in his definition of justice as providing a sense of unity in the city: *Injustice causes civil war, hatred, and fighting, while justice brings friendship and a sense of common purpose*. Factionalism and civil war were not the only greatest dangers to the *polis*, more dangerous even that war against external enemies; also, that peace obtained by the victory of one part and the destruction of its rivals was not to be preferred to social peace obtained through friendship and cooperation of all in the *polis*.<sup>558</sup>

Taylor traces the original notion of civility connecting to the idea of nobility in a sense that the noblemen, influenced by the monks, withdrew themselves from the popular culture. However, interwoven with religious reform the idea of civility went beyond withdrawal into attempts to suppress and remake the culture of the people.<sup>559</sup> The elites had imposed the ideal of civility to the common people, from which they developed the concept of absolutist regime in order to reshape the society through the

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<sup>557</sup> Idem (2007): p. 100.

<sup>558</sup> W. J. Korab-Karpowicz, Anglo-American University of Prague, in IEP (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy) [www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu) (Plato, Republic 351d).

<sup>559</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 110.

ordinances of the economic, educational, spiritual and material well-being by improving the society through discipline.<sup>560</sup>

Taylor illustrates the evolution of the idea of civilization in modern Europe incorporated in three dimensions, namely on economic and technical development, on sensibility and on politics. In economic and technical development, it involves arts, crafts, industry, technology, science. On sensibility as expressed in art, beauty, refinement of feeling and expression, and wider dimension of consciousness. In political dimension, unlike savage tribes, civilized societies were governed in orderly way, they had a state, law and order, internal peace. *To be civilized means to have internalized a demanding discipline, self-control, high standards of behaviour governed by ethics, manners, and other necessary conventions.*<sup>561</sup> He elaborates two models of society, the horizontal one, in which everyone had direct-access to the whole, and the vertical one, in which every human person related to the whole mediated by a hierarchy.<sup>562</sup> The polity requires hierarchy in order to be and the kingdom only holds together as an entity under its monarch.<sup>563</sup>

Therefore, the new facet of individuation in the context of modern civilization has moved to excess, such as individualism, which becomes popular in our age. The phenomenological change from porous self to buffered self has been situated in the whole range of a historical construal in which cultural forms took place. The efforts of the elites to promote civility contributed to the formation of new individuation through education towards free individual persons with qualities and good manners. Taylor agrees with the new facet of individuation that marks modern civilization; however, he also criticizes its excess, individualism, which characterizes societies in the modern West. Thus, the social reforms had been motivated by the religious reforms of the

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<sup>560</sup> Ibid.: p. 111.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.: p. 394.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.: p 392. In the horizontal vision every member of society had direct access created and sustained by common action in secular time, for instance, in forms like the public sphere, the market economy, the sovereign people. While in the vertical model society is seen articulated into hierarchical ordered parts, which determine the identity of those who make them up. They belong to the kingdom as lord or peasant, clergy or layperson, member of an order or corporation.

<sup>563</sup> For instance, without a king there is no France. These two can co-exist, like in British history, in which their polity itself remains monarchy, with vertical modes of hierarchical elements, while people have direct access to the whole; the British social imaginary has become predominantly horizontal. To illustrate his reasoning, Taylor analyzes the hypothesis that at the level of social imaginary, many Britons lived in these last two centuries in a hybrid world. He argues that this complex unity is grounded in the order of things itself, or else it is there since time out of mind.



believers to become good Christians who were also expected to become honest citizens in the society.

#### 6.4. Moral-Spiritual Paradigm Shift

The moral-spiritual paradigm shift constitutes one facet of secularization. The change in understanding of fullness, which is closely related to the understanding of both things in the world and the self, is not just a particular event in the modern world although it has significantly marked the feature of modernity. This paradigm shift in moral-spiritual terms is the central issue of Taylor's concern in the process of secularization. Taylor defines the process not only in phenomenological terms, but also in epistemological terms which implicates the changes in normative patterns, the moral-spiritual frameworks. The change in moral-spiritual paradigm is a move from the transcendent to the immanent frame enlightened by instrumental reason, in a sense that we can create our own norms. In his description, Taylor admits that the modern moral evolution indeed started with the disengagement from the old regime, but did not do away with the Biblical moral outlook, although there were attempts from the proponents of the *death of God* outlook to contest it. However, he rebukes the *death of God* moral outlook by arguing that

*it is only within some understanding of agency, in which disengaged scientific enquiry is woven into a story of courageous adulthood, to be attained through a renunciation of the more "childish" comforts of meaning and beatitude, that the death of God story appears obvious.*<sup>564</sup>

The moral-spiritual paradigm shift is referred to the polarization in understanding, which had resulted in new forms of construal. In this context, Taylor describes the change in epistemological construction by saying that once a narrative is properly in place, starting to dominate the philosophical discourse, then a new construal comes to seem more obvious and unchallengeable, so here comes the courageous adult agency of disengagement. Taylor illustrates the shift in the background picture that one

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid.: p. 565. Here some deconstructors of epistemology want to show how this supposedly obvious truth of reflection in fact only appears so within a certain value-laden construal of agency. The *death of God moral outlook* pushed to an epistemological deconstruction, affirming godlessness as a property of the impersonal universe.

epistemological construction sinks to the level of picture that it becomes part of unquestioned background, whose conditions are largely unnoticed.<sup>565</sup> According to Taylor, the self-consciousness of modern anthropocentrism has won power, reason, and invulnerability from which emerged the ethic of freedom, or authenticity.<sup>566</sup> The buffered self is an axis around which all pictures of reality spin. In this narrative of the picture, Taylor points out that the change of axis has closed the porous boundary between thought (inside world) and nature (the outside world), in doing so, we no longer receive any norms from an authority outside of us, rather from our own scientific investigations, from our own reason. In his critique against this view, Taylor argues that though we take the standards from our own reason, but we do not decide ourselves what is morally right because this is determined by the facts of the case.<sup>567</sup>

Taylor refutes Kant as the prominent figure of this narrative of moral development by saying that,

*Kant would claim that while we legislate the moral law, this is established by reason; only now it is not just the facts of the case, but the nature of reason, which requires that we act on universalizable maxims. We can't decide what is right, but only follow it, acting out of our nature as rational agents, as against beings with desire.* <sup>568</sup>

For Taylor, such a moral outlook brings us to stand before a normative abyss, because of the loss of higher authority. The natural basis of morality has no meaning for Taylor because the blind, deaf, and silent universe offers us no guidance. In order to distinguish what is good and right, Taylor makes a distinction between what is determined by our innate tendency to approve what brings happiness and what is determined by our reason which we make use to know/determine/decide what is morally good and right.<sup>569</sup>

In contrast to the Enlightenment, there is a natural basis for morality and proponent is David Hume who claims that the basis for morality resides in ordinary

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<sup>565</sup> Ibid.: p. 565. He invokes Wittgenstein's sense of background picture. This means the way we think, infer, experience, process claims and arguments.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.: pp. 301-302.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.: p. 580.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.: p. 580.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.: p. 581. The moral law here is established by reason. This reflects Hume's debunking of rational vision as the basis for morality.

human sentiment, not in the reason. While the Enlightenment holds that the basis for morality is in reason because our innate feelings of sympathy ensure that we will not be actuated merely by our own happiness, rather by the general utility.<sup>570</sup> Taylor acknowledges both views with certain objection by saying that

*our moral impulses are natural, just like other impulses; they are part of how human beings function de facto, like our sexual constitution, and our need for self-esteem and our recognition, and all the rest. But of course, moral demands claim to be higher, over-riding, to be those we really ought to listen to, even when other desires clamour to ignore them.*<sup>571</sup>

Taylor discusses thoroughly two sides of the *death of God* perspective and the way in which they neutralize various facets of the emerging modern identity: the science driven side and the moral side. The science-driven side, with the arguments of materialism, seems to be based on the epistemological claims. Taylor argues that materialism itself is an ontological thesis, *everything which is, is based on matter*. However, as he also points out, its arguments are ultimately epistemological and therefore, the ontological thesis appeals to the successes of science. The paradigm examples of valid knowledge in the modern world takes the things, material objects, as exclusively made of matter. In doing so, we are supposed to conclude that everything is matter.<sup>572</sup> This way of presenting materialism makes it sounds like the view of courageous adults who are ready to resist the comforting illusions of earlier metaphysical and religious beliefs, aiming at grasping the reality of an indifferent universe. The claim as such links to a narrative of our rising to the point where we become capable of identifying and resisting these earlier illusions. Such a story is based on Kant's definition of Enlightenment as the emergence of man's from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the ability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance.<sup>573</sup> The narrative of the growth of knowledge was inseparable from a new form of courage, which allows us to take responsibility of our own, of how we got to where

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<sup>570</sup> This is evidently the Enlightenment claim of instrumental reason, utilitarian view.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.: p. 581.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.: p. 574.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid. Reference in Immanuel Kant, "Was ist Aufklärung?" In *Kants Werke*, Akademie Textausgabe, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968, Vol. VIII, p. 33; in "What Is Enlightenment?", trans. Peter Gay, in Gay, *The Enlightenment: A Comprehensive Anthology*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973, p. 384.

we are.<sup>574</sup> As for the second aspect aforementioned, that is, the moral side of the *death of God* perspective, it takes the form of a subtraction story. The first narrative deals with the courageous coming to adulthood, while the second one deals with the subtraction of illusions. According to this materialistic view underlying the *death of God* narrative, what we got rid were the illusions, we took courage to do this and what is left is the genuine deliverances of science unfolding the truth about things and ourselves.

Therefore, the narrative of secularization on the moral development, in the *death of God* perspective, starting from the childhood to adulthood, from barbarity to civilization, from which we come to the point of being capable of self-authorization.<sup>575</sup> According to Taylor, this self-authorization came beyond Hume's moral philosophy to the notion of Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty* as quoted by Taylor as follows:

*In the end, men choose between ultimate values; they choose as they do, because their life and thought are determined by fundamental moral categories and concepts that are, at any rate over large stretches of time and space, a part of their being and thought and sense of their own identity.*<sup>576</sup>

Taylor illustrates Berlin's articulation that the idea of freedom to choose ends up without claiming the eternal validity for them, which was not recognized in the past. He agrees with Berlin that there are important choices to be made in these stages of moral development, nevertheless much of the accepted normative is deeply anchored in our past and in our identity.

Taylor goes on exploring Albert Camus's self-authorization which takes place over against a silent and indifferent universe and defeats all attempts to find some meaning in it. In his critique against Camus, Taylor argues that, indeed, we feel called to happiness, this is not just a desire, but a sense that it is our normal condition, that is what we are designed for, and beyond that we feel an imperious demand in us to make sense of the world, to find some unified meaning in this world.<sup>577</sup> Taylor admits that we

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid.: p. 575.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.: p. 582.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.: p. 582. Quoted from BERLIN, Isaiah (1969): *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 171-172.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.: p. 583. This is against materialistic view, in Camus notion it is "absurd". In Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Paris: Gallimard, Folio essais, 1942, p. 46. Camus position is that the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human call and the unreasonable silence of the world.

have an intuition about the meaning of things, written in our inescapable life experience. But he refutes Camus's claim of cosmic meaning as an absurdity. Taylor's argument against the dramatization of Camus on the human condition is in consonance with the argument taken from Christian outlooks and some metaphysical views. Based on which Taylor argues that

*If the point is that, contrary to Christianity and a host of metaphysical vies, the universe is indifferent and void of meaning, it does not make sense to speak of absurdity either. Absurdity exists where there is reason to expect meaning, and nonsense appears instead. How can there be an expectation of meaning in a universe which is by hypothesis devoid of it?*<sup>578</sup>

Taylor refers to Camus, Derrida, and other contemporary philosophers, who ended up authorizing an ethic that has deeply rooted in the Western civilization, postulated a humanism which takes up some variant of the modern moral order and claimed that our actions and structures should conduce to the benefit of all. According to Taylor, this ethic is in contrast with Nietzsche's radical position of the self-authorization which deliberately rejected universal benefit, egalitarianism, democracy, as well as so many obstacles to self-overcoming, and is a total break with the founding principles of western civilization.<sup>579</sup> Taylor illustrates the entire ethical stance of modernity which supposes and follows the *death of God* narrative and the meaningful cosmos, and as such is considered as adulthood stance. However, in another level, adulthood above all means being able to face the loss of meaning in things, being ready to find or project meaning in the face of a universe which itself is without sense. Imaginative courage to face the void and the creation of meaning is the virtue propagated by Nietzsche and his followers, crucial for the spin of immanence. However, Taylor contests this materialistic stance by questioning:

*Bu how coherent is this view of the creation of meaning and value in face of the void? Certainly, as an account of what happened in the early stages of modernity, it verges on fantasy ..... How coherent the claim itself? Can the values we take*

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<sup>578</sup> Ibid.: p. 583. Taylor understands Camus's point in phenomenological sense, which means that it is part of our life-experience to expect, strive, hope for happiness and meaning.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.: p. 586.

*as binding really be invented? Or in the less radical version of Berlin, where we admit that they emerge from our past and identity, what does it mean to endorse them in their temporality and relativity? ..... Moreover, what are we to make of aura surrounding these standards, the fact that they command my admiration and allegiance? ..... And finally, who has decreed that the transformations we can hope and strive for in human life are restricted to those which can be carried out in a meaningless universe without a transcendent source?*<sup>580</sup>

According to Taylor, the narratives of self-authorization are far from self-evident, and their assuming axiomatic status in the thinking of many people is one facet of a powerful and widespread *closed world structures*, which impose a close spin on the immanent frame we all share.<sup>581</sup> He debunks the concept of self-authorization because its basis is merely on the materialistic perspective which closes itself from any metaphysical frame. The eclipse of transcendence in the *death of God* moral accounts is what Taylor describes as such *closed world structures*.<sup>582</sup>

Under the category of the *closed world structures*, he traces four facets that describe the modern unbelief. *First*, the claim that science has shown that God cannot exist, or at least that religion is irrelevant to life. The narrative of maturation is in the background of this claim but plays a crucial role in the acceptance of such a way of thinking. The *second* is the narrative of subtraction, which serves more as the unnoticed background to the narratives. The *third* is the rise of modern political-moral spaces; and the *fourth* is the authorization of values by the autonomous self.<sup>583</sup> Both the third and the fourth facets form a narrative of self-authorization based on the materialistic outlooks in the development of modern moral order from naïve childish to reflective adult.

Taylor presents two alternatives which can be considered as background to the shift observed in the spiritual-moral paradigm: *First*, the beginnings of modern mechanistic physics, a return to certain Epicurean-Lucretian ideas, where animals and

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<sup>580</sup> Ibid.: p. 589.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.: p. 589. The eclipse of Transcendence in the death of God accounts is what Taylor describes as such closed world structures.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.: pp. 587-588. See the reference in Frederic Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1967, para. 1967 (1885), pp. 549-550.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid.: pp. 589-590.

humans had been arising out of the soil by spontaneous generation, which opened the way for a theory of physical change. Taylor makes a reference to Descartes who accounted that one could understand how the present world order would come about, regardless of the original distribution of matter, following the operation of constant physical laws. *Second*, the disenchantment of the world, the demise of higher time, weakened the traditional outlook. Taylor observes that the cosmos ideas were intrinsically connected to two features: the perception of the world as enchanted (where things are grasped as the expression-embodiment of spirits and forces), and the complex understanding of time in which the secular chain of events was interwoven with higher times, be they the Platonic eternity of the world of forms or the eternity of God.<sup>584</sup> The shift implicates the Biblical creation narrative, which puts a *short 6000-year span*, set in the matrix of the eternity of God. The belief in a purposeful creation was hard to demur as far as such eternity was a felt presence and the divine concentrated power could be felt in certain places, times, and actions. The change took place once people come to live more and more in purely secular time, when God's eternity and the attendant span of creation become merely a belief, but well back up with reasons, the imagination can easily be approached towards other ways of accounting for the strange facts.<sup>585</sup> In Taylor's analysis, it was seemingly disproportionate focus of Christian apologetics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the proofs of God and his benevolence through the design of universe.<sup>586</sup> Here he takes Boyle and other philosophers as references at that time whose focus was on the attempt to prove God, his goodness, and the biblical narrative through the design of things.<sup>587</sup> According to Taylor, to a modern believer, this focus on the external cosmic design seems bizarre, and most likely it would be seen dry and irrelevant.

Taylor attempts to elucidate the mechanistic theory affirming the fact that this perspective refuted one facet of the earlier cosmos idea derived from the Platonic doctrine of Ideas from which originated the order of things.<sup>588</sup> However, apologetically

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid.: p. 328.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid. Reference is taken from Michael Buckley (1987): *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*, New Haven, Yale University Press.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.: p. 329. Reference is taken from the Robert Boyle in Paolo Rossi (1984), *The Dark Abyss of Time*, trans. Lidia Cochrone, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 69. He invokes Boyle as great theorist of atomist mechanism, the *corpuscularian* philosophy.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid.: pp. 328-329.

he asserts that it could be perfectly well accommodated the other facet that this world was created by a benevolent God with purpose to help his human creatures. The assertion of purpose could now be recaptured in a mechanistic mode, through the idea that things are designed to produce beneficent results for us. He considers this mechanistic outlook as one of the ideas underlying the modern moral order. According to Taylor, the mechanistic theory made faith fragile not principally by refuting Plato and Aristotle, but it undermines the enchantment, the expression-embodiment of higher reality in things surrounding us, and thus turned the presence of God in the cosmos into an experience-far. The ordered cosmos idea made heavy use of signs and correspondences, and the new science wanted to sweep this away. What is remarkable about this outlook is the elimination of mystery.<sup>589</sup> This cosmic imaginary constitutes the modern moral order.

#### **6.4.1. The problem of the Origin: From the Creation Narrative to the Elimination of the Mystery**

Taylor describes the battle between the ideological Darwinians and certain Biblical fundamentalists. By ideological Darwinians, Taylor refers to those who not only accept the well-established facts of evolution, that is the descent species including the humans from one another, but also make the dogmatic negative claim that the ultimate account of how evolution works will make no reference to design in any shape or form. They face-off against “creationists”, who wish to deny altogether the descent of species. what other people claim as the battle between the evolution theory of Darwin and the Biblical version of creation narrative. For the Darwinian side there is no intra-cosmic mystery; and for the fundamentalist creationists, there is no locus of intra-cosmic mystery, and they follow Newton: *the mystery is located totally in the Divine will, which erupts fully formed into history in the form of a special creation.*<sup>590</sup> He sees in these both positions as a fragilization of faith partly due to disenchantment, which produces a face-off between religion and science of strangely intra-mural quality.<sup>591</sup> Nonetheless, Taylor

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<sup>589</sup> Ibid. Reference in Rossi, *The Dark Abyss*, pp. 42-44.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.: p. 331.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid. This figures so prominently in the ex parte “death of God” story so popular among unbelievers. One party, moved purely by the interests of science, that is, finding an adequate explanation for the undeniable facts. By ideological Darwinians, Taylor refers to those who not only accept the well-established



highlights the idea of Newton who distinguishes between explaining the ordinary course of things, which can be done according to the natural laws, and trying to explain the origin of this world, which comes about through an act of creation. The Newtonian model of explaining the origin of the world and its continuing function was against the Epicurean model, which would explain the present state of things as evolved from the early condition.<sup>592</sup>

According to Taylor, the creationists feared the explanation on the impossibility of their position as a regression to an Epicurean recourse to chance and necessity and a step to rehabilitate the Aristotelian idea of an eternal universe, eclipsing the idea of design. However, according to Taylor, the pure face-off between religion and science is just a chimaera or rather an ideological construct.<sup>593</sup> Newton's laws of mechanics could be clearly established, whereas any account of origins seems condemned to be wildly speculative. Whoever engaged in this debate was trying to deduce the world, to construct hypotheses, to build systems, and all things that sober scientists in the spirit of Newton eschewed.<sup>594</sup> He sees Newton's distinction of the narrative of creation and the ordinary courses of things as an enlightening for the debate on the origin.

In such an epistemological debate concerning the genesis of the cosmos/universe, Taylor invokes Thomas Burnet and Vico. Burnet, who in the late seventeenth century, wrote *The Sacred Theory of Earth* with deistic background, believed that he could recapture the main lines of Biblical narrative, such as the Creation, the Flood and the coming Apocalypse, in a scientific account. Burnet presented our existing world not as issued from the hand of God at creation, but rather as a ruined version of the original one, devastated by the flood.<sup>595</sup> Burnet broke with the picture of a fixed, unchanging world, and took a big step in the direction of an evolutionary history,

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facts of evolution (the descent of species, including the human from one another) but make the dogmatic negative claim that the ultimate account of how evolution works (if we ever attain it) will make no reference to design in any shape or form.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.: p. 332. This lately was revived by Descartes.

<sup>593</sup> Chimaera in Greek mythology was a fire-breathing female monster with lion's head, a goat's body and a serpent's tail; which means impossible to achieve.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.: p. 332.

<sup>595</sup> Burnet viewed the biblical creation narrative in a more logical perspective based on the hermeneutical approach and tried to reconcile the science driven position with the creationism.

from which our present world must have emerged.<sup>596</sup> But he stood just in the middle position between the orthodox view and the unbelieving stance.

With his orthodox concern Vico attempted to discredit the chronologies of the Chinese, Chaldeans, and others, which cast doubt on the shorter Biblical narrative. He illustrates the story by defending that only the Hebrews, the descendants of Shem, had held on to the original chronology; and the other children of Noah had suffered a catastrophic regression, back to the bestial stage, from which they rebuilt civilization, but inevitably with a large reliance on myth, including the fantastic chronologies.<sup>597</sup> So, Vico's intentions are orthodox, but he is one of the pioneers in developing a theory of the origins of human culture from a pre-human or bestial stage to our time. In other words, Vico helped to do away with the picture of humanity as fixed from the beginning and is an important originating figure in our modern sense of history whose roots are plunged into darkness and unknown.<sup>598</sup>

According to Taylor, these two authors seem to defend the orthodox view by adjusting it with scientific outlooks. However, neither science, understood as the desire to give a credible account of the undeniable facts, nor religion, understood as the attempt to hold on at all costs to received orthodoxy, come close to making sense of the two thinkers.<sup>599</sup> Taylor displays the narratives of these two thinkers for the purpose of showing how the universe and history figured in our moral and aesthetic imaginations. He considers them as key figures in the transformation of the cosmic imaginary.

Burnet saw the mountains of the earth as *the ruins of a broken world*, in which we can grasp a certain magnificence in nature.<sup>600</sup> Here he unfolds the inner world being moved and captivated by these ruins of civilization, the emotion (a sense of greatness) emerges as we see the ruins, which are one of our routes of access to the deep time, because they connect us to an unrecoverable past, a partly lost world, existing in a kind of penumbra. A new sense of deep time is at work when we feel moved by the ruins from which arouses the sense of loss, savoring what was great. Taylor interprets this

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<sup>596</sup> Ibid.: pp. 332-333. See the references in ROSSI (1987), *The Dark Abyss*, Chapter 7, and Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, chapter 2.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid. Paolo Rossi refers to Giambattista Vico, an Italian philosopher in 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.: p. 333. Reference in Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss*, chapter 26.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.: pp. 333-334. For instance, as when from old Temple and the broken Amphitheaters of the Romans we collect the greatness of that people.

experience as a profound and moving truth in the construal of the world not as fixed but as evolving.<sup>601</sup> Taylor argues that Burnet's picture of the world displays the truth as a kind of fall, which is a catastrophic reduction of our world as a punishment for our failings. He sees in Burnet's ideas of these ruins in another way striking, when we see the mountains, deserts, oceans, we sense a vastness, which is alien and strange, seems heedless of us. Taylor sees in Vico two things: first, an account about the evolution of human beings rising from bestial to human; second, an exposition of a new paradigm in understanding the Providence, capable of guiding these blind creatures through their own limited passions back towards humanity and civilization.<sup>602</sup> Vico attempts to trace the genesis of humanity out of lower nature, something which can perhaps never be fully understood, and certainly uncapturable to consciousness and reason if we insist on rationalist account of human action.<sup>603</sup>

In the Biblical creation account, evolution was described in an especial literary form, which displays the process from chaos to cosmos (order). In this narrative, even the origin of humanity is portrayed as emerging from the earth, physical cosmic elements, while our consciousness emerged from an extra-cosmic force, that is referred to as the breath of God. This human consciousness also has been evolving and science should be grateful to the Biblical creation account, creationism, which provides clues to benefit the research and studies through the hermeneutic approach. The Biblical language of creation narrative doesn't concern with the historical facts rather it contends the truth of our genesis through an evolutionary process.

Therefore, the idea of evolution appears in the book of Genesis chapter one, which should understood in a wider and deeper sense, starting with the shift in understanding of the emergence of things from the time out of mind.<sup>604</sup> In consonance with Taylor's descriptive explanation grounded on the Biblical narrative, it is notable that everything is evolving continually from chaos to order and from lower to higher level of beings. Even culture is evolving from a primitive, archaic level, to a sophisticated one, according to the rhythm of evolution in our consciousness. He describes such a

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid.: p. 334. In Taylor's outlook, everything is evolving, including human beings.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.: p. 334. Reference in Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time*, trans. Lidya Cochrane, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 36-37.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.: p. 335.

<sup>604</sup> The Bible just refers to the creation in the beginning of time, and exactly when it happened is unknown.

process of becoming by tracing the shift from the cosmos idea derived from the ancient best fitted cultivated land, where wilderness and desert places could be seen in a sense unfinished, still evolving into perfection.<sup>605</sup>

#### 6.4.2. The Sense of Malaise in the Modern Age

The drive to reform in the European Middle Ages was manifested in the attempts to change religious orders by being moved into forests, waste or desert lands, and turning them into the cultivated land, like the monasteries in the Carolingian times.<sup>606</sup> Yet, even there can be found expressions of dissatisfactions with buffered identity and modern order, which have caused an inner tension that Taylor describes as the malaise of modernity (a sense of emptiness, flatness).<sup>607</sup> According to Taylor, these inner tensions are natural consequences of the evolution of human consciousness within the space and time framework, which is consistent with his view of secularity as historical construal through the continuous cultural changes either at the phenomenological level, or epistemological. The ideas change the world and figure our moral-spiritual aspirations to fullness. The aesthetical view of Romantic period shaped the ethical perspective of modernity, enriched by the Enlightenment thought which in turn contributed to figure a new moral-spiritual paradigm.

Taylor classifies the Enlightenment stream of thought as utilitarian in its ethical outlook and atomistic in its social philosophy.<sup>608</sup> He unfolds its philosophy, according to which nature and society are seen only as instrumental significance, that is, as potential means to satisfy human desire. It is a mode of thought in which different ways of living together are assessed not by some supposed intrinsic value, nor by their expressive

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid.: pp. 335-336. He gives an example in ancient Babylon, quoted in Clarence from Eliade, wild, uncultivated regions and the like are assimilated to chaos; they still participate in the undifferentiated, formless modality of pre-Creation. Settlement in a new, unknown, uncultivated country is equivalent to an act of creation. Also reference in Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodan Shore*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 117. The reference is reproduced by Clarence from Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, New York: Harper, 1959.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.: p. 336. See also reference in Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodan Shore*, pp. 312-313: And this work was sometimes represented as like creation, a human participation in God's work.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid. Taylor describes elaborately the expression of feelings in Arnold who revealed the condition of malaise in the modern world which lacked depth and self-wholeness. The revelation is that we are living on the surface, therefore, cut off from the greater currents of meaning which could transform our lives. See the Oberman figure in Park Honan, *Mathew Arnold: A Life*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1981, p. 88.

<sup>608</sup> Idem (1979): p. 70.

significance, but by their efficiency in the production of benefits.<sup>609</sup> In his critique on the Enlightenment outlook, Taylor emphasizes on the need to rescue some sense of the human potential for moral-spiritual ascent in face of the degrading theory and practice of utilitarian-commercial-industrial society.<sup>610</sup> Such an Enlightenment trend pushes people to opt for Christianity or against it. Taylor articulates this sense of being cut off from some great source which can also be felt as a division from the self by quoting Arnold saying that:

*the mystery of the present age is not in the intensity of men's suffering, but in their incapacity to suffer, enjoy, feel at all, wholly and profoundly.... in their having one moment the commencement of a feeling, at the next moment the commencement of an imagination, & the eternal tumult of the world mingling, breaking in upon, hurrying in away all ..... The disease of the world is divorce from oneself.*<sup>611</sup>

Carlyle and Arnold are Taylor's reference in his critique on the Enlightenment view that the consequences of its atomistic social philosophy with utilitarian ethical outlook are great, but also resulting a sense of loss.<sup>612</sup>

Taylor explores this sense of deep loss felt in us as divided, cut off from a great stream of life without. The emptiness was reflected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where the anthropocentric shift, or buffered identity, was very strong which stressed on the ethic of authenticity, expressive individualism, disengaged reason and invulnerability. According to Taylor, this condition caused the intensification of a kind of galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane, which means that the nova effect has been

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid.: p. 70. In this civilization, according to Taylor: *social relations and practices, as well as nature, are progressively objectified. This instrumental mode of evaluation is endemic to the institutions of modern industrial economy, and the activities, which defines these institutions, relate them to an external purpose like: profit, efficient production and growth.*

<sup>610</sup> Idem (2007): p. 380.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.: p. 380. Quoted from HONAN, Park (1981): *Matthew Arnold: A Life*, New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 126-127. This tension was also felt by Carlyle who was unable to tell his devout mother straightly that he had abandoned his faith. The formulation Carlyle offered was that he had not abandoned the faith, but redefined it, gave some color to the attempted deception.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid.: pp. 380-381. Arnold felt sense of loss and in his own way responded to the same pull: "the old faith is unbearable, but much of what it offered is essential. An atomized commercial society is threatened with anarchy, and only the diffusion of high culture can combat this. To illustrate this sense of loss, again Taylor quotes Arnold's claim that man lacks a deep identity; he suffers from disorientation and ennui, shifting and unsatisfying feelings, shallowness of being, dissatisfaction with his own endeavours....debilities caused by the lack of any compelling authority for the spiritual life." See in Park Honan, *Mathew Arnold: A Life*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981, p. 140..

identified; the connection between pursuing a moral or spiritual path and belonging to larger self, state or Church, has been further loosened.<sup>613</sup> We live in a civilization that values the mechanical and material things, that encourages narrow specialization for advantage and gives impulse to individual action without a sense of the whole.<sup>614</sup> Indeed, this stream of thought was aiming to bring men happiness through perfect mutual adjustment by recognizing nature, which involves man and society, according to the principles of a scientific social engineering, that is, through reason itself.<sup>615</sup> Taylor classifies this civilization as both philistine and atomistic, claiming that fragmented society was the counter part to a fragmented self. Such are the impacts of Enlightenment philosophy and ethics which Taylor refers to.

According to Taylor, these fragmentations and loss of depth are part of the price we pay for the ending of the Christian era. The inner conflict reflects the picture of modernity with its emphasis on the exclusive immanent frame in a secular age. In his descriptions of change in culture, which transformed society and the world, Taylor presents Carlyle, Arnold, and Elsmere, as protagonists who have immersed themselves in the search for a new age of faith, a new positive form of religion.<sup>616</sup> These descriptions show the features of modern society as romantic in its private and imaginative life, and utilitarian in its public and effective life.<sup>617</sup> The Romantic contribution to Western civilization is in the individual fulfilment, that means, in private and imaginative life.<sup>618</sup>

The paradigm shift is remarkable in the notion of human perfection as the growth of our humanity contrasted to our animality. Here, as can be read in Arnold, the perfection is understood in terms of the cultural evolution where morality touched with emotion, and God is described in terms of an Impersonal Power.<sup>619</sup> Such is the tension between the pull to impersonal order, which dictated or reflected a rejection of

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<sup>613</sup> Ibid.: p. 300. Taylor uses the term “nova effect” to describe the predicament created by the move to Deism and then to exclusive humanism.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.: p. 381. See in *The Poems of Mathew Arnold*, ed. Kenneth Allott, London: Longmans, 1965.

<sup>615</sup> Idem (1979): p. 70.

<sup>616</sup> Idem (2007): p. 384.

<sup>617</sup> Idem (1979): pp. 70-71.

<sup>618</sup> Idem (2007): p. 384. To illustrate this contribution on the of Romanticism he takes Arnold’s definition of culture as a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world, and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly and mechanically. Quoted from Mathew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, New York: AMS Press, 1970, Preface p. xi.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.: pp. 386-388.

orthodox Christianity, the need to avoid the flatness, the emptiness, the fragmentations. He acknowledges that the modern sense of impersonal order can give us a sense of our dignity as free agents, it also offers us powerful ideas, honesty, integrity, benevolence, and solidarity. According to him, the reflections of Carlyle and Arnold were crucial to this paradigm shift, serving as bridges through which people started to cross out from Christianity to a religion of impersonal order before their structure was shaken by the controversy over evolution. Thus, the reconstruction of Christian faith in impersonal power simply serves as bulwark of culture against materialism and reductivism.<sup>620</sup>

#### 6.4.3. The problems of Theodicy

Taylor explores the problems of theodicy in the context of malaise of modernity from which he examines the currents and cross-currents (cross-pressures) in the polemics around belief and unbelief in the last two centuries. He focuses on the multiple critiques levelled at orthodox religion, Deism, and the new humanism, and their cross-polemics, end up generating a number of new positions, including modes of belief which have broken out of the humanism of freedom and mutual benefit.<sup>621</sup> From this Taylor sees that our present predicament offers a gamut of possible positions, which extend way beyond the options available in the late eighteenth century.<sup>622</sup> According to Taylor, our present predicament has derived from the ethic of freedom and order which arises in a culture which puts at its center *a buffered self*.<sup>623</sup> The condition of instability in the buffered identity involves the disengaged subjectivity which sustained the order of freedom and mutual benefit. This condition triggered negative reactions, not only the strong objections against Christianity, but also against the whole package of modernity such as buffered identity, with its disengaged subjectivity, and its supporting disciplines sustaining the order of freedom and mutual benefit.<sup>624</sup>

Taylor exposes the main points Tersely put in accusations against Christianity:

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<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.: p. 299. This new humanism emerged from Nietzsche and his followers.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid. Taylor calls this condition something like a nova Effect, spawning an ever-widening variety of moral/spiritual options.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.: p. 300. He admits that this term has a complex meaning, a phenomenon which has objective and subjective sides (which is explained in the setting of anthropocentric shift).

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.: pp. 304-305.

*1) It offends against reason (harbouring a role for mystery, proposing paradoxical notions, such as the God-man)). 2) It is authoritarian (that is, offends both freedom and reason). 3) It poses impossible problems of theodicy. Or it tries to avoid them; being often pusillanimous in proposing to compensate for the most terrible events in history in a future life; or else bowdlerizing in covering up how terrible these events are. 4) It threatens the order of mutual benefit: (i) in mortifying the self: it inveighs against the body, sensual satisfaction, etc. (ii) in mortifying others: in the ordinary case, as well, by its condemnation of the body and sensual satisfaction; but rising to an extreme in actual persecution (Calas case); (iii) in threatening legitimate authority in societies dedicated to furthering the order of mutual benefit.<sup>625</sup>*

The problems of theodicy become more salient, and harder to answer, in the context of Deism and the new understanding of the human epistemic predicament.<sup>626</sup> The atheistic position considers theodicy as a threat towards the order of mutual benefit in mortifying the self, in mortifying others, and in threatening the legitimate authority in societies dedicated to the order of mutual benefit.

In Taylor's point of view, in order to solve the controversy between science and faith, it was not so much the science that decided things, as it was a battle between two understandings of our epistemological predicament, colored with moral import, and related to images of adulthood and childishness, but the issue of theodicy also played a role.<sup>627</sup> Darwinian picture, which tended to shatter even those theories of general design focused on the benevolence, could be very shaking to Christian faith but it also undermined the impersonal conception of Providence, as a cosmically anchored vector in history towards higher modes of being. In the end, Taylor concludes that it is this kind of view, involving a world-soul or cosmic force, that suffered more than orthodox Christianity. Thus, the polemic between atheist materialism and orthodox Christianity is related to theodicy.

However, according to Taylor, the question related to theodicy may also be raised in a theistic context, where in certain conditions it's being felt as a real problem.

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<sup>625</sup> Ibid.: p. 305.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid.: p. 388.



He argues that pressed by a sense of menace, both natural and spiritual, the pre-modern enchanted world could be more condemned with appealing to God as helper. In his analysis on the arguments of atheism and theism concerning the theodicy, Taylor discovers that both atheist and theist are arguing within similar framework.<sup>628</sup> The atheists use any catastrophic events, either horrifying side of nature or history, as arguments to negate God's existence. However, for Christians, these arguments against the existence of God are deeply disturbing in any tragic event, for instance, the death of a loved one, and they can only reply to the accusations with hope. Thus, the main argument for atheists to negate God is based on the hypothesis concerning the existence of evil in the world: if God exists why does evil exist? Theodicy may have played some role in the recession of the theories of cosmic force. The crucial point of atheist seemed in the attempts to hold on to some of the forces of Christian piety, while dropping out the Christian God of personal agency.<sup>629</sup>

Taylor explores the human condition at the turn of twentieth century, which was reinforced by Hardy who recurs to a *Prime Force* underlying the universe. Taylor notices that Hardy describes the Prime Will as blind and cruel, and late in his life he puts forward the idea that this cosmic force may grow and improve along with the humans.<sup>630</sup> Thus, Taylor points out, the dogmatic-metaphysical compromises between Christianity and materialism, based on the modern sense of an impersonal order, do not seem to have an exceptionally long shelf life. He argues that these compromises arise from a deep cross-pressure between the unacceptability of Christianity for those who have deeply internalized the immanent order, in one hand, and a strong dissatisfaction with the flatness, emptiness of the world, and the inner division, atomism, ugliness or self-enclosed nature of human life in modernity, on the other hand.<sup>631</sup> According to Taylor, some people understand themselves to have so adjusted to this purely immanent world.

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<sup>628</sup> Ibid.: p. 389.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid.: 390. Taylor gives an example, religion of humanity in France, promoted by Carlyle, Arnold, and Comte with his positivism and various movements, found some sources of their new religion in the German thought of the Romantic period. They were reducing God to some cosmic force, and attempting to keep the institutions, practices, and attitudes of piety without any of the dogma at all. Even Comte proposed to institute a hierarchy and sacraments, to offer a series of rituals for the crucial transitional moments in life. But his doctrinal core centered on humanity and its progress through science.

<sup>630</sup> Hardy was influenced by Schopenhauer, not of the Goethe-plus-Transcendental-Idealism which inspired Carlyle.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.: pp. 390-399.

He describes that one master narrative of secularization would hold that there is a trend here; and that more and more people will just turn away altogether from the issues to which Goethe, Carlyle, Hardy, and others, in one way and orthodox Christianity, in another, offer answers.<sup>632</sup>

For Taylor, the short shelf life of these metaphysical compromises is a phenomenon of the intellectual academic world, on one hand, and of religious ideological institutions on the other. His questions are: *Where has the set of dissatisfactions of Romantic age gone among contemporary materialists? Are they all unproblematically adjusted?* He projects that the answer seems to be negative.<sup>633</sup>

According to him, the need to articulate a sense of something fuller, deeper, often drawing on the same Romantic sources, continues, as in Hardy and those who keep on drawing on him today. It has to be reinterpreted, so as to be disconnected from any extra-human sources.<sup>634</sup> Taylor highlights the importance of the conceptions of impersonal order on the cosmic level, variants of the modern order of mutual benefit and inclusively the reaction against it, in the development of what he calls *nova*, referring to the multiplication of new options around the polemic between belief and unbelief in the last two centuries.<sup>635</sup> Taylor argues that the modern cosmic imaginary didn't foster only materialism, or enabled people to recover a spiritual outlook beyond materialism, to return as it were to religion.

*But the most important fact about it which is relevant to our inquiry here is that it has opened a space in which people can wander between and around all these options without having to land clearly and definitively in any one. In wars between belief and unbelief, this can be seen as a kind of no-man's-land; except that it has got wide enough to take on the character rather of a neutral zone, where one can escape the war altogether.*<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Ibid.: p. 391.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid. Hardy has an important role in this.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.: pp. 391-392.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.: p. 351.

## 6.5. The Reaction Against Christianity and the Move Towards the Unbelief Paradigm

The previous section presents science-driven moral-spiritual perception, and now it is also important to highlight the background condition that leads to widening the unbelief paradigm. Taylor describes the move to rehabilitate the ordinary human desire, which was asphyxiated by the Christianity as sinful, therefore evil. The reaction was propagated by the Romantic thinkers and reinforced by the Enlightenment as part of human freedom to aspire for wholeness. Christian Reformation and scientific revolution have become the background for the change in the condition of belief, prompting the idea to restore the ordinary bodily desire in the modern culture beginning with the affirmation of the essential goodness, and the innocence of our original and spontaneous aspirations. The epistemic change pushes to a move from spirituality to psychology.<sup>637</sup>

The outcome of this paradigm shift involves certain human struggles (questions, issues, difficulties, problems), which are moved from a moral/spiritual to a therapeutic register.<sup>638</sup> Taylor uses the Biblical narrative of the fall to discuss articulately the move and refutes the psychological depth of therapeutic vision which excludes the evil.<sup>639</sup> He criticizes the therapeutic perspective, according to which we are perfectly all right as we are, as natural beings, and all morally wrong doings are considered just normalcy that need to be treated psychologically. Sin has been reduced simply to sickness, and the sick persons are just to be treated unfairly in reducing to a lower level, being approached as incapacitated and being objectified. Therefore, Taylor laments that what was supposed to enhance our dignity has reduced it. He argues that evil, or sin, has a certain dignity of an option for an apparent good, while sickness has not, and it is a kind of search for the good, although it's deviated by catastrophic, culpable error.<sup>640</sup> But within this error there is a certain appearance of greatness, which has a certain consistency. Such are the

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<sup>637</sup> Ibid.: p. 618. To explain this topic, Taylor quotes David Martin: *the mobile, shifting, hedonistic, technicist mentality that one encounters in the dominant metropolitan culture today has no sense of personal guilt and yet possesses an excoriating sense of collective sin* (David Martin, *The Dilemmas of Contemporary Religion*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978, p. 94.).

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.: P: 619. Here Taylor refers to Philip Rieff who explains the innate human innocence which has transferred many moral issues to the therapeutic register. What was formerly sin is often now seen as sickness (See in Phillip Rieff, *Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud*, New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.: p. 620. Taylor calls this as Lucifer narrative.

<sup>640</sup> The emphasis is on the innocence of human nature and evil is seen as exogenous, brought on by society and the systems in one form or another.

differences between the spiritual outlook and the therapeutic approach which has no Lucifer in its original etiology.

Taylor acknowledges that casting off religion was meant to free us, giving us our full dignity of agents, and throwing off the tutelage of religion. However, he is aware of the consequence that we are forced to go to new experts, therapists, doctors, who substitute the spiritual directors and exercise a kind of control which is appropriate over blind and compulsive mechanisms, and they may even be administering drugs on us. In these arguments against the psychological therapies, Taylor denounces that our sick selves are just treated as things, objects, comparing to the former regime where they were considered as human persons and faithful of yore in the churches. People who are extraordinarily successful in the range of normal human flourishing can undergo feeling of anxiety, predicament. From the perspective of those who deny this supposed spiritual reality, this feeling can only be perceived in pathological terms. Taylor considers psychoanalysis as seemingly part of an intermediate phenomenon, arguing that unlike behavioral therapies, psychoanalysis involves a hermeneutic, an attempt to understand the meaning of our predicament. The hermeneutic digs into the unavoidable, deep psychic conflicts in our make-up, or composition. However, like other psychological therapies, psychoanalysis also has no moral lesson for us, guilt, or remorse, points to no real wrong, we just strive to understand this unease so that to reduce its force and become able to live with it. Concerning the value of these therapies, Taylor concludes that,

*the struggle between a “spiritual” and a therapeutic reading of our psychic suffering doesn’t only oppose religion to unbelief. There are plenty of cases within the general range of unbelief in which a “higher” more “heroic” view of human life is in contest with one which stresses on the fulfilments of ordinary desire.*<sup>641</sup>

Taylor agrees with the idea that human beings are powerfully drawn to fullness under some or other definitions. He invokes Dostoyevsky who admitted that the spiritual or ethical perspective allows for, even requires, the diagnosis of pathology, but the issue

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<sup>641</sup> Ibid.: p. 621. Taylor argues in this way that we may judge that offering people the satisfactions of gainful employment, reasonable prosperity, consumer choice, exciting media, maybe enough to assure a stable modern democracy but still deplore the loss of a more exalted view of life, in which heroic actions, or political self-rule, or great philanthropic dedication, was seen as a higher fulfilment.

is whether one can speak of pathology alone or whether there is a spiritual or ethical hermeneutic to be made. Taylor refutes the therapeutic revolution which attempts to treat our ailments but can end up further stifling (suffocating) the spirit in us and fostering other incapacities more firmly on us, and notices that this is contrary to the transformation perspective of Christianity and Buddhism.<sup>642</sup>

Taylor refutes the Romantic thinkers who accuse religion of inviting us to transcend humanity but ends up mutilating us, leading us to despise and neglect the ordinary fulfillment and happiness which is within our reach. He also denounces the Enlightenment authors who refute religion of not having courage to face the real facts about nature and human life: that we are imperfect beings, the product of evolution, with a lot of aggression and conflict built into our nature. However, he doesn't see the contradiction in both axes of criticism, but rather a paradox. Taylor describes the paradox that they could be consistent on a certain reading: the impossible transformations, which they consider as mutilating in one indictment, are those which are childishy utopian on the other. Taylor debunks them by pointing out that there is a strain between these two lines of attack that the argument of the second group holds against the more liberal Deist forms of Christianity from which emerged the exclusive humanism.<sup>643</sup>

Taylor prefers to examine Martha Nussbaum's idea in relation to the first critique, warning against the attempts to "transcend humanity", in a very interesting and persuasive way.<sup>644</sup> He cites her arguments that the roots of our desire to transcend our ordinary condition in the unease and fear are in our experience of finitude, limitations,

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid.: pp. 622-623. He analyzes comparatively the two approaches to human persons who are in deep troubles. Effectively, he debunks the purely therapeutic approach and shows the prevalence of the spiritual one. He accuses the therapeutic approach to our impotence, incapacities, divisions, not as the fruit of sin, or evil, rather as the result of sickness, and we are taught to get rid of our unease by learning to live with it. In an apologetic style, he reiterates the spiritual outlooks of the transformation perspective by saying that the point where we can achieve our full human capacity, beyond pathological, is placed beyond the level of recognizing human flourishing.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid.: p. 624.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid.: p. 625. See his reference in William James Lecture, "Transcending Humanity", published as chapter 15 of Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, chapter 15. Taylor explores Nussbaum's arguments portrayed in her narrative concerning Odysseus's refusal of Calypso's offer to stay on her island, to enjoy an unending and secure love with goddess, to return to a mortal human woman and a life beset by risk. The human love, caring, mutual support is inseparable from the limited and threatened human condition Taylor.

neediness, and vulnerability.<sup>645</sup> Taylor distinguishes two things wrong in this aspiration as he analyzes her arguments. On one hand, the desire to transcend must defeat itself, starting as a human desire to offset the limits which often make our life miserable and our world threatening. But on the other, if comprehensively granted, the wish would lift us altogether out of the human condition.<sup>646</sup>

According to Taylor, Nussbaum's point is to get to us to see in the extreme case what is already there in less total aspirations, such as of Plato as described in Symposium, that for a love which would no longer to attach to particular human beings, but only to the Beautiful, to Good itself.<sup>647</sup> Taylor has another charge against the aspiration to transcend, not just it is futile and self-defeating, but that it actually damages us, unfits us for the pursuit of human fulfillment by inducing in us hatred and disgust at our ordinary human desires and neediness. Nussbaum's point is not against Greek polytheistic fantasy and Greek Philosophy, but against Christianity in its Augustinian forms. Taylor sees that the hatred at Christianity for having defamed, polluted, rendered impure the ordinary, sensual dimension of human beings is one of the most powerful motivations, that impelled people to opt for exclusive humanism.<sup>648</sup> The move to the unbelief paradigm emerged as a reaction against Christianity in terms of its orthodox view of moral doctrine, which overlooks ordinary human desires.

Another important step to unbelief paradigm, which had been taken by Schiller in aesthetic education, was a direct response to the inadequacies of moralism. As Taylor points out that *the force to which we have to open ourselves to break out of the narrow focus of anthropocentrism can itself be identified with beauty*.<sup>649</sup> Taylor reiterates this aesthetic view as purely based on an immanent outlook. The languages of art, which lead us to beauty, function and have power to move us, but they don't identify their ontic commitment.<sup>650</sup> In Taylor's viewpoint, they were related to the richer forms of

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<sup>645</sup> Ibid.: p. 625. Reference is taken from NUSSBAUM, Martha (1986): *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid. Nussbaum makes this point clear in discussing Odysseus' refusal of Calypso's offer to stay in her island.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.: p. 626. This is a resonance of Plato's description in Symposium.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid. He takes as reference from Martha Nussbaum's *Love Knowledge*, chapter 12: Narrative Emotions.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.: p. 400. This is taken from Schiller's treatise. Taylor invokes Schiller that the languages of art are our privileged channel to beauty, whether it be nature, or God, and effectively they become a drive for people to see the beauty without reference to any God.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid. This becomes a strong argument to modern unbelief.

materialism and of awe at the emergence of human consciousness and sensibility out of the depth of material universe. The human depths, or our strange capacity to be surprised and overwhelmed by beauty, can be articulated and celebrated in languages, which are not undermined or weakened by the certainty of our ontic commitments, or ontological commitments.<sup>651</sup>

Taylor articulates this experience of beauty as a power in unspoiled nature which speaks to something deep in us, such is the power of beauty to restore us and to make us whole, while at the same time, the ontic commitments of the poetry are minimal and supremely hard to specify. He describes the experience of beauty as a *presence that disturbs the subject with joy, or elevated his thoughts, which dwells in nature and the mind of man, a motion and a spirit*.<sup>652</sup> In Taylor's analysis, this sense of nature and the anguish at its potential loss through industrialization and economic development are a theme that awakens a deep response in the last two centuries across wide differences between belief and unbelief. The paradigm shift involves the suspension of ontic commitments in modern languages of art that opens a space outside both morality and religion. Taylor articulates the ontological indeterminacy of the subtler languages of the post-Romantic literature which permitted for three kinds of position: first, one could remain with the indeterminacy, like in the poetry of Wordsworth and Trevelyan; second, one leaves the issue undecided to what extent one is invoking an extra-human spiritual reality, or rather pointing to something wholly within experience; third, one can also firmly disambiguate his position: on one hand, in favor of the first position, as did those who opted for Catholicism, and can opt for the second. Taylor connects the aesthetic experience, experience of beauty, to friendship and argues that it (the experience of beauty) is being intensified by shared experiences and shared experiences are being rendered in depth by being shared.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.: p. 401. Taylor's reference is in the context of English world.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid.: pp. 404-405. The Bloomberg's ethic accepts the discipline but only where it conduces to friendship and beautiful states of mind. In the British context, he unveils the deconstruction of Bloomsbury in a sense of turning away from the ethic of discipline and manliness, dismantling great parts of the reigning synthesis where its religion was utterly sidelined, its sexual ethic was declared bankrupt, its patriotism was severely chastened, most of its conversations were mocked. He unmasks Bloomsbury's two principal targets, such are philistinism (narrow mind), which was so much reigning in English world, and chauvinism (exaggerated patriotism) that makes people incapable of appreciating the artistic and cultural achievements of other countries. In fact, philistinism describes the social attitude of anti-intellectualism that undervalues and despises art, beauty, spirituality, and intellect.

Taylor sees that reaction against moralism, such as the ethic of duty and altruism, is all in different ways drawing on the post-Romantic understanding of aesthetic experience as an ethical category in the context of friendship.<sup>654</sup> He discovers that this reaction is partly due to the fact that the reigning synthesis supposedly incorporated Christian faith, but it could and sometimes did inspire people to explore forms of faith other than of the established synthesis.<sup>655</sup> Then came the trauma of war which damaged the credibility of the British synthesis as nothing earlier could have done. The synthesis incorporated civilization, and one of its key components was to protect life from violence through order and law. At least in its British variant, the war was supposedly fought for civilization. There is some evidence that majority of Britons kept on believing in the synthesis, but for an influential minority of the young, it shattered their faith in the whole complex, and British patriotism was badly shaken.<sup>656</sup>

The trauma could create a sense of uncertainty of disbelief and even cynicism, that there is not morally credible established order. Taylor refers to what Hynes calls the myth of the war in the sense that it created a radical discontinuity in history, that we are cut off from the order enjoyed by our predecessors through an impassible gulf.<sup>657</sup> This condition of disintegrated moral order in Europe was particularly hard to accept in the English context, just because people had lived with such confidence for so long within the synthesis.<sup>658</sup> An important option to solve this decadence of moral order was the integration of it in personal experiences through poetry which can bring us closer to this (moral order) by articulating the fragmentation that Eliot seemed to have done: *These fragments have I shared against my ruins*.<sup>659</sup> This inner individual experience in personalized meaning might inspire others and gave them impulse to do the same, although a renewed public order was abandoned.

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<sup>654</sup> Ibid.: p. 401. The widespread protest among European youth at the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century against the society of its heavy focus on production, material wealth-getting, and its foregrounding economic priorities.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.: pp. 406-407. Taylor refers to Bloomsbury as major protagonist in the second point of reaction. He shows two important shifts: *first, the turn to humanism within the reigning synthesis; second, the reaction against the moralism and the restrictions of that synthesis* (in Taylor, 2007: p. 407).

<sup>656</sup> Ibid.: pp. 407-408.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid. Reference in HYNES, Samuel (1990), *A War Imagined*, London: Pimlico, p. 328.

<sup>658</sup> This reflects the British condition, but this would not have the same sense in France. Taylor reiterates what Eliot referred to in his *Waste Land*, describing a shift in the condition where the moral order was totally disintegrated, fallen away into a heap of broken fragments.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.: p. 409.



In the new understanding, the war itself restored some sense to British patriotism and recovered the link with the past, but the synthesis could never recover its unshakeable force that it had prior to the year 1914. Consequently, there were further retreat from the belief, a relative decline of insularity, and a greater cultural integration of England into Europe. The changes are not just in a spiral move for greater integration but also in a sense of loss of what was great and original.

In his research, Taylor notices that the predicament was felt among elite, but the line between elite and mass of people has been steadily eroding in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Formerly minority's reactions are spreading and so something of the same complex relations of the past no reappears in popular culture. There is nostalgia of the past, of a lost age of certainty and along with this even a sort of comfort is rooted in this condition of loss. All this ambivalent condition seems to balance the widespread of the spaces of unbelief.<sup>660</sup>

Taylor invokes Annan's *collectivism*, a belief that the state should intervene in promoting greater social justice and the egalitarianism, which means that all classes in society should enjoy what had formerly been the privileges of the rich. The condition of alienation in the societies after the second world war prompted the spaces for the unbelief, which have more varied and complex, more acceptance of the irrational and negative elements they involve.<sup>661</sup> Taylor refers to Annan's quotation from Foster, *Lord, I disbelieve, help thou mine unbelief* adding that *Our Age were often sceptics, but self-confidence sceptics*.<sup>662</sup> According to Taylor, the implication of this description shows that there is some global option possible for *belief*, which was considered by those with buffered identity as external and ignorable because it's unnecessary and unfounded beliefs. Towards the end of nineteenth century, Annan assumes an attack by Roger Scruton on the consensus of the age (at that time), accusing the liberal mindset of lacking experience of the sacred and the erotic, of mourning and holy dread.<sup>663</sup> The dimension of profundity comes through art, whose subtler languages can open us to

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid.: p. 410. See reference in ANNAN, Noel (1990): *Our Age*, London: Fontana. Taylor points out the effect of Bloomsbury's effort in England, especially in the post war period, where an elite academic artistic culture emerged, creating a condition where the unbelief was predominant and increasing.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.: p. 411. Reference in ANNAN, Noel (1990): p. 18.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.: p. 411. Quoted from ANNAN, Noel (1990): p. 18.

<sup>663</sup> Taylor also agrees with Scruton that there cannot be holy dread where ontic commitments are suspended and the buffered self lives secure.

mystery, but with its ontic commitments suspended and undefined. In conclusion, Taylor makes clear that the present condition of belief and unbelief cannot be described purely in terms of elite culture.<sup>664</sup> He argues that one of the important events of the twentieth century is that the *nova* has come to involve the whole societies, and it has become what he describes as *super-nova*, the incoming globalization. In the face of the opposition between orthodox Christianity and unbelief, according to Taylor, people were looking for a third way (crossed-pressure), which is part of the dynamic that generates the nova-effect.<sup>665</sup>

Taylor explores the shift from vertical notion of order to horizontal order of modernity in several European societies. He affirms that there have been struggles around ideas of order in European Latin culture and these have been directly relevant to the balance between belief and unbelief.<sup>666</sup> Certain variant of the modern moral order of mutual benefit, heavily influenced by Rousseau, becomes the basis for a Republican tradition in France, and then elsewhere explicitly anti-Christian, but not always clearly atheist. He displays the notions of democracy and human rights as inseparably understood in a view of man as innocent or fundamentally good by nature. The political order and religion, particularly the Christian doctrine of original sin, cannot undermine this nature. Consequently, the free society must inculcate a philosophy and build a social imaginary grounded in exclusive humanism. The original Revolutionaries under the rule of Robespierre tried to substitute a new religion of the *Supreme Being*, and to instill a new outlook attempting to replace the traditional Christian view.<sup>667</sup>

Such Republican hostility to religion was later radicalized, either socially or metaphysically, in Marxist Socialism, which was explicitly committed to an atheist outlook. Many socialist regimes and revolutionary movements have attacked the Church, even more vigorously than the Jacobins, both within the communist world, even beyond, in places like Mexico and Spain. This line-up between moral order, human rights, democracy, and atheism helped to provoke the reaction, or counter line-up. The Catholic ancient regime was heavily committed to an alternative notion of order in the vertical sense. He explains that this Catholic alternative notion of order stressed on the

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid.: pp.411-412.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid.: 302.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid.: p. 412.

<sup>667</sup> They were the radical ones who attacked the Church through their effort of *de-Christianization*.

importance of hierarchy and could subsist where differences of rank were respected, each person had a place where he belonged and the whole was held in place by overarching monarchical power.<sup>668</sup> He refers to Bossuet who had been a major protagonist of the outlook expressed in his argument against the Protestants.<sup>669</sup> What was modern about this idea was that the actual hierarchy was less and less justified by some metaphysical notion of the ontic logos had been explained and defended in terms of its beneficial consequences.<sup>670</sup> Taylor notices that the reconstruction tried to restore this outlook integrally, but this proved impossible, because it was no longer what had been there since time out of mind, the ceremonial just could not have the same meaning. The justification for hierarchy under monarchy now must rely much more clearly and frankly on the claim that it only works to produce order. Taylor concludes that an ideal order in its different variants starting from the individual, and stressing on rights, liberties, and democracy, squares off against a counter-ideal, which stresses on obedience, hierarchy, belonging to, even sacrifice for larger whole.<sup>671</sup>

However, in Taylor's perception, the path to this end was complicated because it did not remain a simple matter of atheist republicans or socialists against clerical hierarchy, there were already variants of the order of mutual benefit which were related to a Christian outlook.<sup>672</sup> According to him, the counter-ideal was not always or even mainly supported by a Christian outlook, but more and more drew on non-Christian, even atheist sources.<sup>673</sup> An important facet of the struggle between belief and unbelief, including the development of their new forms, has been connected to the ideals and counter-ideals of the moral order in society, rooted in the social imaginary which is progressively shifting and reshaping people's outlooks.

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<sup>668</sup> Ibid.: pp. 412-413.

<sup>669</sup> This is his argument against the Protestants: once you break with Rome, it is continuous, unending fission.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.: p. 413. Ontic logos is defined as a doctrine of the levels of beings as reflected in the orders of society.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid.: p. 414.

<sup>672</sup> Taylor's reference is in the USA and Catholic Europe.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.: p. 415. Like Charles Maurras who led a movement, which mainly appealed to Catholics, but he himself was not a believer, and his reasons for wanting to return France to the monarchy were not simply to restore order and the Christian faith. Taylor argues that it is Christian Catholics ethos of discipline, obedience, dedication, that will form and give an outlet to a higher type of human being. That was the reason for most Catholics to follow Maurras, even after he had been condemned by Pope in 1926.

## CHAPTER 7: EMERGING HUMAN CONDITION

### 7.1. Non-Anthropocentric Construal

Although I do not find yet any explicit reference in Taylor concerning posthumanism, however, the idea of post-secular society, which marks the emerging human condition, is implicit in the flow of his description of secularization in terms of change in the condition of belief. His theory of secularization implicitly delineates changes toward a non-exclusive humanism, opening to transcendence, as antithesis to the modern anthropocentric worldview. These dialectical shifts had generated from the primitive state since time out of mind through the golden age of Christianity in the West with its monastic style that underestimated human flourishing, and the modern state of being secular with the exclusive humanism aiming at self-realization, to the actual condition known for some theorists as post-secular state, post-modern, which is also defined as post-humanistic age. The humanism of post-secular age is arising from the dissatisfaction of people to the failing secularism in modernity where people are pursuing profits and knowledge while ignoring the transcendent goal of moral-spiritual aspiration, such as fullness or plenitude, not just human flourishing.

In this chapter, I want to discuss the picture of actual human condition manifested in the existential questions which support the transcending humanism, characteristic of a non-anthropocentric construal. Transcending humanism refers to all questions concerning the condition where the subjects are substituted by artificial intelligence in human activities. We are living in an age where the subject is declining due to the outcome of currently evolving science, a transitional condition toward a non-exclusive humanism, or an inclusive humanism that does not exclude transcendence. The dissatisfactions arise as reaction against the Kantian criterion of rationality that has purchased radical autonomy at the price of emptiness.<sup>674</sup>

The diagnostic on our contemporaneity challenges us with these questions: How do we define the current human condition? What will be next? Does science give account to all existential questions concerning the world, the human agency, and the nature of things? Secularization in terms of cultural change, or historical construal, is a

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<sup>674</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1979): p. 77. Taylor argues that Kantian moral autonomy is too formal and empty.

move towards condition of post-secular society claimed by some theorists, among them Jurgen Habermas. The current human condition challenges us to redefine ourselves as subject, our worldview, our role in this age of highly evolved science and technology with the emerging scientific discoveries beyond the frontier of reason. Post-humanist philosophy appeals to what is beyond the human, or the subject and a post-secularist would hold that beyond this secular age is a return to religion or transcendence, prompted by the condition of malaise. In this chapter, I also discuss some fundamental emerging questions of the post-modernity.

In the *Sources of the Other*, Taylor illustrates the emerging human condition contrasted to the modern focus on the self, individualized modern identity. Whereas in the *Sources of the Self*, he describes the modern individuality as historical construal which made possible progress in social, economic, and technical terms; but he also points out that there is a price humanity should pay because of a radical break between a human person and his community. The break here refers to the general tendency of people to live the individual life fully, less focus on the collectivity or society. In modern phenomenology, there is a *dialogical self* towards the *other*, or Taylor's reference is the community. Taylor calls this dialogical self with the other as community although the tendency for individual life remains the flag of modern people. In the *Hegel and Modern Society*, Taylor discusses the dialectics of Hegel's philosophy of politics in terms of the continuing conflict between individual life and communitarian life. Taylor points out the tension in modern society because of its combination of two aspirations of Romantic generation such as aspiration to radical autonomy and to expressive unity with nature and within society.<sup>675</sup> Based on this, I argue that the emerging human condition expresses dissatisfactions toward the failing modernity and the return to metaphysical beliefs but in a higher mode of understanding through the reflective stance.

## 7.2. Phenomenological Background

We are arriving in a new frontier of modern civilization in which the human subjects are confronted by alterity. The highly evolved technology reduces the role of human subjects, substituting with the artificial intelligence, prompting some theorists

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<sup>675</sup> Ibid.: p. 69.

to appeal to a *subjectless* civilization where everything is developed by machines, or nonliving intelligent matters, which are artificial or man-made. That is a new construal without subjects, at least replacing the human with the nonhuman which works highly effective and efficient. Such a condition marks the rise of posthumanism, or post-anthropocentrism, *emerging from the philosophical strategies that reinterpreted, decentered, reinscribed, and redefined the subject.*<sup>676</sup> The alterity liquidates the subject and substitutes the human with the non-human intelligent working automatically and at some extent independent from human subject due to the most advanced software programs. A *subjectless* civilization is possible in the sense that human power is diminishing in this historical construal. Ideas create alterity, *the other*, and can accelerate the move to an abyss or catastrophe caused by the war with laser-guided missiles and nuclear warheads. So, we are living in a new frontier of civilization arriving at a pernicious condition of the *subjectless* construal.<sup>677</sup> This lived experience is shaped by the high technological innovations with the revolution in cybernetics and electronic devices.

As historical construal, secularization constitutes an epistemic change with constant intra-subject tension due to the inner opposition and identity in pursuing fullness of life. Forms of human mobilization, prompted by the industrial and technological developments, have resulted a worldview of economic oriented and effectively reshaped humanism according to the new modes of being human expressed in today's lived experience. Post-modern people manifest the most sophisticated tools and deep sense of rational beings, however, there are emerging existential questions related to the role of the human subject in this modern age controlled by technology with artificial intelligence. This new humanism is undergoing an advanced transformation, founded on the highly scientific and technological evolution, unfolding the secrets of nature by deconstructing the structure of nature itself for the sake of knowledge and profits. The question goes beyond human subject who seems to become a prey for the non-living intelligence of his own construction. All these make up the

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<sup>676</sup> ZHAO, Guoping (2019), "Post-humanism or posthuman-ism? A redemption and a hope," in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, volume 50, no. 14, 1414-1415.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid. Reference in *subjectless object* in Callus & Herborechter, 2012.

human condition which changes over time from the porous identity to the buffered one, which emphasizes on reason and individualism.

Within the historical paradigm the idea of secularization has been developed, prompting an exclusive humanism from which certain moral-spiritual questions are raised. The big question is related to understanding of fullness, or wholeness. In Taylor's perspective, wholeness cannot be achieved by human alone; rather in his commentary on the theology of Redemption-Incarnation, he assumes that God comes through the Incarnation to help us to attain wholeness.<sup>678</sup> There are certain trends of modernity that should be evaluated in the light of Christian values, which have profoundly influenced the Western civilization. Uprooting this world from its Christian origin can lead us to an eco-social deconstruction and moral-spiritual abyss. Such is the price that humanity must pay if we fully live in the immanent frame of a close world stance where the idea of transcendence eclipses.

The emerging condition of belief today unfolds new paradigm of an age toward beyond post-modernity, after secularity, driven not only by science and technology but also by the general feelings of discomfort for the failing modernity. Digital technology and cyber connection alter human communication and reshape inter-subjective relationships. In the context of historical construal, this emerging human condition can also be defined in terms of a subjectless civilization moved by highly advanced machine with the programs of automatization and formatted artificial intelligence replacing the subject who possesses intellect, reason, and consciousness. These social phenomena raise new ethical questions that should be highly considered.

The narrative of secularization ends up with what the post-secularists call post-humanism, a condition beyond human/subject. The Enlightenment gave science the hegemony of reason to explore nature, creating a modern human condition that emphasizes the subject. Now the question is: *what is beyond the subject?* If the subject is substituted by artificial intelligence, robots/intelligent machine or devices, and within the self is implanted any micro non-living intelligent then: *Can a non-conscious being*

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<sup>678</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1999). "A Catholic Modernity?": *Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, Edited by James L. Heft, Oxford University Press, p. 14. Wholeness can be understood as holiness or plenitude in religious sense.

*substitute the subject?* Questioning the state after the subject, or beyond secularity, leads us back to the metaphysical claims which secularism denies.

In the modern secular age, the focus is on the subject but now we are challenged to appeal to alterity, the *non-subject*.<sup>679</sup> The essence of the subject is consciousness and reason, while non-subject simply has intelligence, programed by human intellect as a faculty of the mind embedded in the brain, however, it (non-subject) is neither rational nor conscious. The latter is defined as the outside of consciousness, the self, and a non-living intelligent, or reasonless intelligent. This phenomenon deconstructs secular society and construes a new world with the modes of life shaped by these non-living beings.

Inspired by Charles Taylor, I try to contribute to further understanding of human agency in relation to our cosmic constitution, involving both macrocosmic and microcosmic worlds, which not only affect our physical existence but also our moral-spiritual orientations. Our ontological grounding is in the spirit which dynamizes our existence as conscious and rational beings. The crisis emerges when we disconnect our existence from this grounding Spirit, or God, in whom we can aspire fullness, plenitude. This sounds apologetic in Taylor's perspective as a believer, however, the argument is intellectually valid because it is grounded in a deeper and fuller narrative.

From this phenomenological background we can define the emerging human condition in terms of a *subjectless* civilization because the current construal relies mostly on the power of alterity, other than the subject, or non-subject, referring to the intelligent machines with electronic devices, which reduces manpower. This is just one perspective based on Taylor's narrative of secularization, serving as my contribution for further reflection in the future studies.

### **7.3. Ontological Conflicts**

To understand changes in the human world we need to explore both the intra-subject and inter-subject conflicts, or tensions. The ontological questions emerge as the artificial agents, prompted by the highly advanced technology, come to be an expression

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<sup>679</sup> The non-subject is referred to the productive intelligent machine, like robots, that substitutes the role of the subject in human activities.



of human reason and consciousness, while on the other hand they also become a threat to the subject in a sense they perform actions to a certain extent independently from human agents. Hegel's theory of subject, which entails conflicts and contradictions, is valid in this analysis to capture the intra-subject conflicts in which the condition of one's existence is at odds with his/her essential goal.<sup>680</sup> From these inner tensions emanates social conflicts, continually reshaping the human civilization over time. The crisis is not psychological but rather profoundly an ontological crisis, because it is deeply rooted in our nature, within our physical and mental structures as individual self. Therefore, the questions are not only related to the intra-subject and inter-subject tensions but also to the tensions between the self and larger self, between subject and alterity, in the context of growing individualism. We can understand these contradictions of both intra and inter subjective relationships in the light of Hegel's ontology, not in Christian Wolf's non-contradiction. Contradictions and conflicts are constitutive to both the identity formation of the self and changes in the world and society.

The basic feature of inner conflict is ontological in a sense connected to our agency, or our being as agents who perform action aiming to achieve a goal, which is at odd with the conditions of our existence as I mention above. The ontological conflicts entail either cosmic order or social order with ethical patterns, maintaining equilibrium; these imply ideas which are constantly migrating and reshaping our worldviews. Taylor's phenomenological ontology, which relies on the descriptive method in lived experience, shows how ideas, imaginations, change the world and make things happen. Multiple options are offered under two categorical frames, such as transcendent and immanent, and one can opt either for transcendent frame or immanent frame or else the combination of both. According to Taylor, the modern ideological construal is exclusively grounded in the immanent frame, materialism, and its moral philosophy is an anthropocentric oriented, and, therefore, we are misguided by this construal.<sup>681</sup> Based on my analysis I argue that this ideological construal is part of subtraction narrative which also is applied and propagated in education; some behavioral psychological therapies have influenced children and students with programs and formatted methods

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<sup>680</sup> Idem (1979): p. 41.

<sup>681</sup> FERR, F. (2004), "The Self and The Good: Charles Taylor's moral ontology," in R. Abbey (ed.), *Charles Taylor*, Contemporary Philosophy in Focus, pp. 84-104. Taylor's contribution to moral philosophy is non-anthropocentric perspective of the good, the sovereignty of good over the moral agent."

that effectively prompt a society purely grounded on materialistic outlooks, ignoring the essence of *human existential rootedness*.<sup>682</sup>

These following questions can help us to have access to the ideological construal. *What is really the object of study in psychology?* The denomination of the discipline itself shows that its formal object of study is the *soul*, body's dynamic. Nevertheless, from this we may ask: *How does psychology define the soul and its nature?* If psychology defines the soul in terms of the vital principle or dynamic of material body, what makes a matter a living body, then it merely affirms Aristotelian concept of soul, every living being has a soul. Plants and animals also have souls that make their material things living bodies. Life becomes possible if there exists a soul. If life is impossible without a soul, then we may raise another questions: *what is the category of soul? is oxygen, or simply a cosmic force? What are the properties which distinguish the soul of a plant from that of an animal, and of an animal from a man's soul?* In the *De Anima*, Aristotle differentiated three categories of soul according to the properties belonging to each kind of these living beings. Indeed, we share this common ground of the material living body, we are all shaped by what we physically ingest and by the mechanical structures of brain and body.<sup>683</sup>

The materialistic view reduces the human soul to a mere vital principle without having distinguished its properties from the lower living beings. This is materialistic, or mechanistic, because its essence is physical, not spiritual, and thus the soul is understood simply in terms of a dynamic principle of the body, or as energy/natural force, and has no spiritual nature. In physics, energy is the invisible form of matter and matter is the visible form of energy, both are just one thing in the physical laws. Psychology learns from physical science that energy and matter are basic principles of all existing beings, inclusively all living beings, to which we belong. By affirming that the soul is just a physical nature, not spiritual, psychologists are guiding us to an ideological construal which dissents the metaphysical belief of the transcendent-spiritual soul. Hence, according to this ideological construal, the soul becomes a simple dynamic principle of the body emerging from nature, physical world. Human beings, animals, and

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<sup>682</sup> The existential rootedness is in the spirit, which characterizes the human soul.

<sup>683</sup> BLAKE, Charlie, MOLLOY, Claire and SHAKESPEARE, Steven (EDS), "Beyond Human: From Animality to Humanity", commented by Debora Benita Shaw in *Continuum International Publishing Group*, London, pp. 1-8.

plants are situated at the same level, or simply matter animated by an immanent soul, nothing more, and all will vanish after death and their souls go back to the nature. This outlook takes shape in the subtraction account of secularization which emphasizes on the immanent frame with the demise of religion, consequently belief in God atrophies.

However, in the perspective of post-secularity, there would be a return to the transcendence, to the belief in a metaphysical God, which is contrary to this materialistic thesis.<sup>684</sup> Hendricus Prosmán argues that the reaffirmation of secularity in postmodern philosophy is not self-evident because the post-modern condition is generally implying a post-secular turn. He adverts that prominent theorists of postmodern philosophy and theology have defended the thesis of returning to religion. He quotes John Caputo: *If the word postmodern were not overused as it is now, its most worthwhile definition would be post-secular.*<sup>685</sup> Therefore, secularity in the subtraction narrative is an ideological construction based on the materialistic analysis rather than an intellectual analysis grounded in the richer narrative. In the following description, we will see the background pictures of how the narratives have been made.

We go back to the question of the human soul, to grasp the background picture for the sake of conceptual analysis. Christian Theology defines the soul, exclusively of human beings, in terms of spiritual nature, the only indwelling of God's Spirit. The Aristotelian view admits the soul in general definition as a vital principle, but what distinguishes the human soul from that of animals and plants are its qualities, such as intellect and consciousness, which involve senses. For Aristotle, the human soul is not a material object although it is inseparable from the body, therefore, it is the *form* of the body, it is not a separate substance inside the body (the only substance); whereas for Plato, *psyche* (the soul) is the essence of a person which is an incorporeal and eternal occupant of our being and continues to exist after the body dies. Thus, both Christian theology and the stance of Greek philosophy put the human soul in the spiritual realm or metaphysical domain, not just an intra cosmic force.

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<sup>684</sup> PROSMÁN, Hendricus Yohannes, "The Postmodern Condition and The Meaning of Secularity: A study on the religious dynamics of postmodernity," *Ars Disputandi*, volume 4, edited by Marcel Sarot, Michael Scott and Maarten Wisse, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>685</sup> John D. Caputo, *On Religion*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 41-42. Quoted in PROSMÁN, Yohannes Hendricus (2011), "The Postmodern Condition and the Meaning of Secularity", p. 3.

Going back to the ancient concept of the soul, the Greek philosophy and Hebrew literature, based on the Mesopotamian mythological narratives, from which originated Christian and Muslim worldviews, affirmed the spiritual nature of the soul, which means immortal and immaterial. The ancient Greek philosophers generally considered the immateriality of the soul, like Pythagoras who held that the soul was of divine origin and existed before and after death.<sup>686</sup> The Hebrew concept of the soul is *nephes*, breath, close to *living being*, and *ruah*, spirit, considered as a divine gift, sometimes denoting extrinsic forces operating in or through the body or mental faculties, referring to respiration, the inner animating element of life. The Christian faith defines the human soul in terms of the combination of the physical body and the-giving spirit of God that makes up a human being, denoting an integral human person as the image and likeness of God.<sup>687</sup> The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was central to the human transformation beyond physical evolution where the soul will be reunited with the body in a new form of existence which transcends our material bodily living being. Materialistic psychology follows Epicurus and other ancient atomists (Democritus and Empedocles) who defended the material origin of the soul, negating its spiritual nature. Epicurus believed that the soul is made up of atoms like the rest of the body, and both soul and body end at death.<sup>688</sup>

In my analysis, psychology without spirituality is simply an ideology attempting to control human society and to build a homogenous world through education and mass media. Schelling's view is valid for the psychological outlook, according to which nature is visible spirit and spirit is invisible nature, and it was articulated in the creative life in nature and creative force of thought. This is not just the principle of embodiment of the spirit in ontological sense, rather it's in the natural-physical phenomenon like the chemical or nuclear reactions. However, Shelling's view is analogous to something deeper which he could not capture, such is the spiritual nature of the material beings. Hegel's philosophy of Geist shows something analogous to the uncaptured spiritual nature although he had referred to an absolute spirit who embodies in the finite spirits,

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<sup>686</sup> HUFFMAN, Carl (2009), "Pythagoras", in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds).

<sup>687</sup> Ibid. This Christian doctrine does not contemplate dualism, rather the unity of soul and body forming a human person.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid.

physical world. These pictures show the limit of reason to explore the essence of beings which becomes the root of our existence, or our existential grounding.

The modern human crisis is fundamentally existential because people are abandoning their cultural and existential ground, effecting moral-spiritual uncertainty, and moving towards an eco-social deconstruction, rooted in the cosmic vision of instrumental reason, prompting the decadence of inter-human relation, which highlights a mode of living in a virtual world. There is another level of existential questions related to our genesis, not in terms of ontology but of epistemology, challenging the evolution theory, which becomes basis for the materialistic ideology. The mechanistic explanation of our genesis is refutable because of lack of proof but simply based on evidence collected from the organic materials in the time out of mind. However, all empirical objects have their inherent values that are metaphysical, transcendental, with their sources either in a personal God, or in Supreme Being. There are arguments based on the mechanistic view of the origin, our genesis, which can be debunked and refuted. *Do we really have a bestial origin?* Questioning Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis leads us back to the dark genesis in the twilight of humanity. But the bestial can be understood in cultural terms connecting to the evolution of human consciousness. There is an existential question that the material-mechanistic view could not answer, namely the meaning of human suffering and death. It is incomprehensible that human intelligence and consciousness disappear or vanish after death. The simpler narrative is unable to answer the fundamental questions which orient us into the depth of our existence.

Taylor's account of secularization helps us to look beyond the mechanistic cosmic imaginary. The beyond involves the vast universe with the atomic constitution of matter, not just beyond our genesis and coming to be, but also beyond the physical realm. The structures of things in the universe are unfathomable and to grasp their essence we must see beyond physics. His account is an inspiration to go deeper and to answer some metaphysical questions grounding the physical world. This contributes to my conclusion that all cosmic objects and forces have their existential rootedness in the Spirit, an extra-cosmic origin which is in God. It is a refutation against the ideology exclusively immanent which pulls us out from the root of our existence (the Spirit), the primordial structure of all agents and forces in the universe in which chaos and order

are harmonized. Indeed, the shift in space and time is part of the physical world, however, what moves this change is not just the physical law rather should be an agent beyond this world.

Epistemic change is an unending process over time that involves not only the evolution in natural order but also in social order. Our inner conflict is not a social or mental construction, but a natural condition of our beings.<sup>689</sup> Nothing evolves and changes without inner conflicts and external tensions. The emerging moral-spiritual questions are grounded in our very own self as both natural and spiritual beings. Intra-subject conflicts can contribute to an eco-social deconstruction which is fundamentally rooted in the spiritual crisis.

#### **7.4. Spiritual Grounding of the Human Crisis**

The secularity in terms of change in the condition of belief is the context of the whole range of historical construal. According to Taylor, secular society at some point undermines religion and eclipses transcendence, but some religious phenomena in the secular age in the West show that people are returning to religion and to faith, although this trajectory is bumper and not always smooth.<sup>690</sup>

Back to the ontological necessity proposed by Hegel, we see the importance of conflicts for the growth and evolution because of the contradictions within the self, the oppositions between freedom and nature, between individual and society. The debate on Hegel's speculative philosophy unfolds the nature of the human crisis which lies deeply in our inner tensions. In this doctrine, our inner world is grounded in the spirit (Geist), who created us as thinking and expressive beings.<sup>691</sup> The argument on the human nature as the expression of the absolute spirit (Geist) is in a certain sense affirming God's Spirit as the fountain of human desire to fullness, or in whom we find the sources of our moral-spiritual aspirations.<sup>692</sup> In Hegel's theory of subjects, we see this Spirit as a supernatural agent or in the notion of Taylor an extra-cosmic agent from

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<sup>689</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (1979): *Hegel and Modern Society*, pp. 1-66. the description of Hegel's philosophy of Geist.

<sup>690</sup> Cf. Ibid.: pp. 1-46. Taylor refers to the Christianity in France after the great war, concretely in 1960s and the conditions of belief in the United States and UK have shown this tendency.

<sup>691</sup> Man as the embodiment of the absolute spirit can be understood in terms of expression of the Spirit.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid.: p. 38. Although according to Hegel we are created by necessity so that Geist can be. Contrary to the theism that God created the world freely, having no need to do so.

whom all beings emerged. The human crisis is fundamentally spiritual because of the eclipse of this Spirit, and in Taylor, it is a negation of the Providential design. Consequently, the fountain of our moral-spiritual aspiration is no longer transcendent (in God) rather immanent (in human subject, or in nature), and we fail because we deny performing actions according to what we are designed for.

Such is the background to understand the human quest for moral-spiritual aspirations which are in crisis because of our deviated option to the exclusive humanism as the moral-spiritual sources. There is a common belief that has been consistent over time, affirming the existence of an extra-cosmic agent, either God, or Geist, or a higher entity that created the universe; and this agent becomes a source of blessings for humanity, or to whom we are morally oriented, that is what we are designed for. The created universe is analogous to the life-form in which the hierarchy of beings takes place, and the context of a hierarchy of cultural forms and modes of consciousness succeed each other in time and make up human history.<sup>693</sup> This shows the ground of our existence beyond the physical realm and the absolute spirit is the fountain of all finite beings and from which all things came to be and are evolving. The Absolute should be the source of our moral aspirations, and in Christian theology it is God although Hegel's notion of absolute embodies in the finite spirits.<sup>694</sup> This background can help us to understand the existential crisis effected by our option for the materialistic solution, rejecting the higher moral-spiritual grounding. Back to the providential design, if we are designed by the designer (God) to perform an action so to attain a goal then we must follow what we are designed for. If we keep on making decisions and acting based on other perspectives denying this design, then our trajectory is deviating to an abyss where our existence is threatened, creating chaos in nature and disturbing the life of all living beings.

The materialistic proposition, *what is, is and everything exists is just matter*, does not contemplate the whole story of existentialism, such as all life-forms and cultural forms and modes of beings in the vast universe. I do not negate the advanced evolution in science with its mechanistic explanation of the universe, however, I also assume the

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<sup>693</sup> Ibid.: p. 24. Taylor makes reference to Aristotelian-derived category of "internal teleology".

<sup>694</sup> Hegel's theology is confusing and too speculative because of the contradiction of the embodiment of the Absolute (Geist/Spirit) in the finite spirits as necessary condition for it (Geist) to exist.

other option that all changes in this world either natural or historical have their goals designed by God or what Taylor calls Providential design. In Taylor's definition of secularity in terms of cultural changes we can grasp the spiritual basis of the human crisis, which is seen from the angle of thinking being, for the culture is the expression of human rationality. Culture reveals human subjects as rational beings, which means thinking and expressive beings, moral-spiritual beings who quest for meanings through beauty and excellence. The aesthetic imagination shapes the moral-spiritual perspective towards either transcendence or immanence. The crisis emerges when we reject the transcendent meaning of beauty and excellence; this becomes worse once disasters occur, destroying the culture such as arts and monuments that mark human civilization. Indeed, nothing is consistent, even civilization itself will end, so, philosophy tries to understand if there is something consistent or eternal, which is the essence. However, the inconsistency of the corporeal things and events within the consistent patterns of the human crisis manifests a dialectical construal not only of human history but also of nature, like natural evolution of things and events.

The intra-subjective crisis is deeply rooted in the spirit, fundamental to our ontological constitution, the essence of our existence, which, according to the Christian theology, gives life to the human soul. In the perspective of Providential design, we are moved by the spirit with which we are designed for and our thinking as activity of the mind is spiritual.<sup>695</sup> Even the microscopic constitution of the matter is unseen but simply felt, and the invisible powers of elementary particles whose presence is only felt due to the effects that they display.<sup>696</sup> The unseen phenomena occurring in the subatomic particles, which are only partially felt in highly sophisticated machines in laboratory, and in the macrocosmic universe, which is uncapturable to reason even using highly advanced tools, manifest something dark or unknown to reason.<sup>697</sup>

All changes in the macrocosmic world are caused by these particles in the subatomic terrain and they do not only affect our natural bodily being, inclusively

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<sup>695</sup> Ibid. This idea, argument, is based on the Taylor's commentary on Hegel's notion of Geist (Spirit) in opposition to nature.

<sup>696</sup> Christine Sutton (2024): "Subatomic Particle", in the [www.britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com), Subatomic Particle Department of Nuclear Physics, University of Oxford, September 19, 2024 (accessed on December 18, 2024).

<sup>697</sup> There are examples like dark energy, unknown form of energy that affects the universe on the largest scales, and dark matter. They are dark because unknown to reason.



rational being, but also can shake us spiritually. In Taylor's analysis on lived experience (shared by many), the human crisis is spiritual in a sense that bad spirits can impinge on us because of our vulnerability prone to these spirits, which can be either extra-cosmic (supernatural) or intra-cosmic (natural forces). We are also affected by the cosmic forces, unseen subatomic particles with the effects they display, and other non-cosmic forces unknown to science, or incomprehensible to reason. The description here refers to the spiritual agents and the still undetected forces of nature that affect us deeply and alter our moods, which science is still unable to explain. Here we see the limit of science and the frontier of its range in the unknown which remains a mystery.

Grounded in these natural and supernatural human phenomena, I argue that the structure of a human person is a complex constitution of *spirit-soul-body*, in a sense that the Spirit is the vital principle of the soul, or as Aristotle held that it is *something divine in man*, not merely constituted of *soul-body*. That the nature of human soul is spiritual, and this is true at least according to Christian theology which believes that the Spirit of God vivifies the human soul. If we just have the *soul-body* constitution, neglecting the spiritual dimension of our human soul then, as is assumed in the Aristotelian approach grounded in the Pythagorean doctrine, we are simply affirming our animality, since all animals have this structure. In Taylor's view, we are not only natural beings, but fundamentally also spiritual beings who think and express their thoughts in a medium, either community, or culture, including language with its complex codes, which leads us to transcend nature.<sup>698</sup> I want to reiterate Taylor's reference to the non-theistic ethics of the ancient regime, which partially placed us in a larger spiritual or cosmic order, like Platonism and Stoicism. These non-theistic ethics resisted disenchantment and mechanistic view without any necessary binding with magic and wood spirits. From this background, I conclude that the real human crisis is profoundly implying spirituality, not simply social nor natural/material.

Science gave impulse to the mechanistic view of the universe reinforced by the evolution theory of species genetic mutation. Everything is evolving, not created, since time out of mind, therefore, there is not God who created the universe. This thesis is

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<sup>698</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): P. 27. The arguments here are based on the Christian theology as reinterpreted by Hegel in his doctrine of Spirit (Geist) who embodies in external reality, and Taylor's remarks on Aristotelian contemplation for a larger order as something *divine in us*.

founded on the physical laws and serves as basic argument for the unbelievers to deny the transcendence and the existence of God as Creator. Such is the picture of the mechanistic views in the modern world that motivates negation and ignorance of the spiritual dimension of human beings, consequently everything is seen and treated according to instrumental reason and control. This reflects not only atheistic variant but also theistic variant of Deism which affirms the existence of God either as Impersonal Order or as Personal God, but there is no revelation as the source of religious knowledge rather simply relies on reason and observation of natural world. In the theological perspective, denying God as Creator of the universe and his Providential design can lead us to the deep crises which implicate our very existence.

The crisis can be described in terms of immanent frame of spirituality in accordance with Schelling's claiming: *nature is visible spirit and spirit is invisible nature*. This holds an affirmation that nature and spirit are undivided, inseparable, although still in the level of physics. In a higher level, this can help us to understand in analogy the relation between physics and spirituality, which Taylor describes in providential design. Everything works according to the providential design in which harmony in us and in nature becomes possible, without neglecting the ontological conflicts or the inner tensions which form the identity of beings. Thinking as spiritual activity of the mind, which causes tension in the self, human person, constitutes our ontology as being rational, as agent who performs actions so that to achieve a goal. This is another level of human existential crisis, grounded deeply in human ontology as thinking agents. We call this an existential crisis because it concerns meaning, fullness of life, or plenitude.

The exclusive humanism tends to uproot (unground) the Western civilization from its Christian origin by negating all metaphysical beliefs that affirm the human beings' ineradicable bent to God or any higher entities beyond this world. Taylor gives us the picture of this civilization describing that its Christian roots run deep, and he expresses his dissatisfaction toward the exclusive humanism: *as though there were nothing beyond, more as though it weren't a crying need of human heart to open that window, gaze, and then go beyond, as though feeling this need were the result of a mistake, an erroneous worldview, bad conditioning, or, worse, some pathology*.<sup>699</sup> He

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<sup>699</sup> Idem (1999): pp. 26-27. Taylor associates this in the spiritual order.

concludes that the arguments of exclusive humanists are epistemological in a sense that they take up materialistic worldview as grounding. Indeed, Christian roots of modernity in the West is historically based on the extraordinary effort of Christian Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century even earlier in 12<sup>th</sup> century with Hildebrand reform, then the mass-mobilization campaigns in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century like the antislavery movement in England, which largely was inspired and led by the Evangelicals, and the habits of mobilizing for the redress of injustice and the relief of suffering becomes part of western political culture. In summary, the influence of Christian spirituality is evident in the defense of human rights, the impulse of solidarity beyond the frontier of Christendom itself.<sup>700</sup>

The historical evidence shows dissatisfactions with the exclusive humanism, not only from the part of believers but also from the unbelievers in the modern West. Nietzsche was the most influential proponent of the revolt against the exclusive humanism, then followed by other anti-humanist thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida and Bataille.<sup>701</sup> Nietzsche, for instance, refutes the idea that our highest goal is to preserve and increase life, to prevent suffering. The modern life-affirming humanism breeds pusillanimity and this accusation frequently occurs in the culture of Counter-Enlightenment from which emerges Fascism, and Walter Kaufman reinforces the accusation.<sup>702</sup> Taylor interprets in analogy the Nietzschean understanding of *enhanced life* in a sense taking us beyond this ordinary life and its original version emerges from Christian notion of eternal life. The distinction relies on its negation of some supreme good beyond life. This Nietzschean notion has spiritual category in a secular sense. Nietzsche was an atheist, however, his inner crisis revealed something deeper than simply physical although his arguments excluded all transcendental meaning of life, especially of suffering.

These pictures reinforce the argument that the real crisis of modern humans is moral-spiritual, immaterial. The Enlightenment gives impulse to liberate us from our existential rootedness and fragments human subjects into an instrumental reason and control. Indeed, this intellectual movement paves the way for the human progress, but

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<sup>700</sup> Ibid.: p. 26.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.: p. 27.

<sup>702</sup> Ibid.: p. 28.

it also dis-considers and overlooks certain ethical concerns. So, post-secularity is the result of dissatisfaction, or revolt, with modernism which causes a feeling of flatness, or loss, therefore, a condition of malaise.

The spiritual flatness in the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Taylor describes it from the survey of Henry Massis and Alfred de Tarde, prompted the revolt from the younger generation. A condition where most young people then considered to be overly intellectual and introspective, relativistic, incapable of energetic action, lacking faith, obsessed with decadence.<sup>703</sup> The reaction of the young people was based on the conflictual condition where faith against skepticism and science, dedication to the nation against individualism, commitment and discipline against individual choice, hierarchy against equality.<sup>704</sup> This reaction portrays the true picture of human crisis which is deeply spiritual. Indeed, the crisis had emerged from the existential ground since our genesis, our coming to be in the time out of mind. The Biblical creation narrative describes the moral-spiritual crisis in the figures of Adam and Eve who evolved from the lived experience because the crisis helped them to become aware of the distinction of good from bad. Human beings express their feelings and thoughts in various forms conditioned by their natural existence, capable of exploring the universe and yet also incapable of attaining all their dreams. Man remains fragile and vulnerable in front of the nature though he is not unsurpassable in terms of rationality and consciousness.

Human subjects are transcending the world because of their aspiration to fullness, although they partake in the cosmic world, natural body (life form) of cosmic constitution. Taylor's description of the transcendent-immanent frames not only distinguishes the secular age from the former pre-modern regime but also shows an evolution in human consciousness, epistemic changes, through conflicts. His definition of secularization as an epistemic change is in terms of the migration of ideas from the transcendence to immanence. In this condition, the emphasis is on the latter and no longer on the former, for instance, the development of an anthropocentric spirituality after the Reformation portrayed in the arts like paintings and architecture showing the

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<sup>703</sup> Idem (2007): pp- 415-416. The reference in WOHL, Robert (1979): *The Generation of 1914*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 8-9.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid.: p. 416.

divinity in real humanity. The visible and sensible image of the Divine is manifested, like the statue of *Pietá* shows Jesus and Mary as real persons who have suffered and the devotion to Sacred Heart portrays the reality of an Immanent God in the lived experience. Indeed, the immanence approach to spirituality makes us aware of the moral concern for real human suffering and thirsting for fullness of life on earth, or human flourishing. The emphasis lies on the immanence, a God who became man like us, suffered, and died like us, but this does not do away with the transcendent God, in whom are the sources of fullness, plenitude, salvation in Christian eschatology. The former regime had abandoned, not rejected, the immanent dimension of spirituality, which was connected to the human flourishing, stressing on the transcendent spirituality. In the incarnation perspective, the Reformation emphasized on immanent spirituality. These show the conflicts in dialectical turn, our evolution and identity formation are moved by the Spirit.

The intra-subject tension is natural because of the inner opposition between soul and body, reason and feeling, freedom and nature, our vital and mental functions, expanding to the external tensions in social order such as among individual and the society. Taylor discusses Hegel's notion of reason (*Vernunft*) by showing its difference from understanding (*verstand*) in which he underlines reason as the higher mode of higher cultural form, unity from division and opposition, and understanding as the vision of things as divided and opposed.<sup>705</sup> Such are the basic principles of cultural changes emerged from human reason in the identity formation.

All human crises are connected to the natural condition of the universe since its genesis in which our bodily existence partakes. This existential condition has impacted on our mind as creative and cultural agents denoting expressivity and rationality. We can see from another angle the thinking agents as spiritual beings, not just physical/material, and from the human mind good and bad things emerge. It is not the embodiment of Spirit that I am referring to, rather something analogous to this, which helps us to understand the influence of Spirit, or spirits, good and bad, in our mind and gives us life in a higher form than any other created beings. Reason and consciousness are not simply derived from matter, rather from something beyond matter, a

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<sup>705</sup> Idem (1979): pp. 14-23, concerning the embodied subject.

metaphysical origin. Christian faith gives some clues to science that our human fragility and vulnerability are bound with the Spirit of God who endowed us with freedom to choose.<sup>706</sup> We are fragile and vulnerable towards good and bad spirits, either the supernatural or cosmic forces, which the modern men deny by condemning them as superstition and magic construction. Our vulnerability to the spirits can cause mental crisis, which is spiritual, not simply a psychopathological but spiritual disorientation, or spiritual disorder, as I previously claim that humankind has a complex *spirit-soul-body* structure. This can be healed through spiritual guidance except the grave psychopathology or mental collapse (seriously disordered or sickness).

### **7.5. Condition Beyond Modernity**

The current human condition can be seen in terms of transcending humanity because of the sophisticated and advanced science and technology, and at the same time in terms of failing modernity with its anthropocentric vision which emphasizes exclusively the immanent frame. I want to analyze such a condition where the self is confronted by the alterity (*other*) in an age of highly advanced technology, which is the fruit of our evolution as conscious and intelligent agents, however, it also reduces the role of the subject. This condition challenges us to accept that to some extent we depend on other, non-conscious intelligent being, and even are controlled and overcome by it. The human subject is moved to a state of dependency on the artificial intelligence (AI), or the intelligent object (machine) programed by the subject himself.

Secularization in terms of paradigm shift implicates the expansion of our horizon to the deep space in this flowing time. Indeed, in terms of epistemic change it has brought a tremendous impact on us, helping us to reach out to the beyond, and at the same time these changes and scientific discovery, which serve as hypotheses to achieve some truths about what we aspire for, can bring us to an abyss of civilization through the deconstruction of the orthodox/traditional values of Western culture which has influence from Christian civilization. The power of ideas is self-evident in creating things, making things happen, and expanding the human world into the infinite horizon. From this evolution of subject arises the aesthetical view which in turn shapes our moral-

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<sup>706</sup> Such is the biblical notion of the image and likeness of God.

spiritual outlook. The modern humanism has moved to a posthumanism, stressing on the alterity, not the subject, in terms of highly advanced technology of information with artificial intelligence which to some extent develop and revolutionize the human society independently from human subjects. This has been done through automatization programmed by rational intelligence codified in the human brain.

Individual freedom is one of the great pictures of secularity which deeply marks modernity. Such a freedom expresses the identity of a subject as a being who thinks and expresses himself, or his personhood, without any external mediation. Taylor states that *it's perhaps not an accident that the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be read either in a perspective of progress or in one of mounting horror.*<sup>707</sup> Here the dark features of modernity, like the drive to instrumental reason and control, are also made evident. Secularization has a bipolar effect either in terms of progress or of crisis as I describe in the previous section. This results in a conflict between human progress and the collapse of transcendent values, leading us towards a deconstructed civilization, an abyss of Christendom. Scientific revolution has prompted a development in hermeneutics, which opens the way for further and in depth understanding of our origin, the macro and micro constitutions of the universe, human behavior, and society.

The change in modern cosmic imaginary has profoundly grounded in this scientific revolution through the hermeneutical approach to myths, ancient monuments, and rites, helping us to unlock some secrets of the dark genesis in the deep time. We go back to chapter 6, concerning Burnet and Vico who have scientifically illustrated how the universe and history figured in our moral and aesthetic imaginations. They become key figures in transformation of the cosmic imaginary.<sup>708</sup> Burnet portrays a new cosmic imaginary connecting to the rich images of the previous regime, which serves as inspiration for the new construal. Vico shows the weakness of modernity in the level of imaginary, which is unable to capture the essence of pre-modern outlooks.

Taylor observes that at the center of Vico's theory is kind of intra-cosmic mystery, how reason, consciousness, civilized order, come to be out of their absence (nothing). Vico introduces another kind of deep time from which ruins open us onto, a time that leads us back into darkness, the *sombre abime* prior to light as well as

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<sup>707</sup> Idem (1999): p. 37.

<sup>708</sup> Idem (2007): p.333.

consciousness.<sup>709</sup> In this reference, we see the connection of the ancient regime with the post-secularity, a state beyond secular which, according to some theorists, is a condition where subject disappears altogether with reason. The post-secular condition can be understood as an age beyond reason in other forms and higher variants, in relation to the pre-modern age, in which exclusive humanism is weakening.

Taylor singles out three themes found in these two authors Burnet and Vico: *that of ruins and deep time; that of sublime; and that of the dark genesis of humanity*.<sup>710</sup> The narrative of Biblical Genesis portrays these though in the symbolic language, expressing the evolution process that everything had come to be out of nothing, including time and space, then evolving out of a most primordial state in a certain span of time where chaos and order mingled. This has become part of our cosmic imaginary today that things are becoming, or evolving, including human beings. We cannot think of the process as coming about simply from the scientific discovery, but the evolutionary imagination emerges from a spirituality grounding in the Biblical narrative. The shift in imagination is one of the prime movers for scientific evolution. Even the Judeo-Christian belief transcends science in the narrative of human genesis, coming to be out of the soil but becoming alive and conscious due to the Spirit of God. The human condition at the time of the mythical figures of Adam and Eve, who learned to distinguish good from bad portrayed in the narrative of the fall, unveils the mystery of our genesis. Though it is unequivocal that the great success of science through research has resulted new inventions and advanced technology, however, there are limits that science is unable to answer the fundamental issues concerning our dark genesis, the process of our becoming, phenomenology of nature itself, they are unknown to reason and consciousness. Indeed, science with its development has discovered things new and amazing but inconsistent relative to time and space. What philosophy attempts to search for is something consistent, although it is apparent, with its own method to grasp the ultimate truth.

Taylor invokes Burnet of what he calls *excess*, which was aroused by the boundlessness of the heavens, or by high mountains, vast oceans, trackless desert. Now

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<sup>709</sup> Ibid.: p. 333.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.: p. 335. According to Taylor, this is against the shaft of light to very bottom of the well that Genesis 1 seemed to offer.



the cosmos idea derived from the ancient best fitted cultivated land, like wilderness and desert places, could be seen in a sense unfinished, that is, not yet fully brought into conformity with the shaping ideas. Such was an illustration of wisdom of the ancient world beyond the modern imagination, which puts everything under the scrutiny of reason. In the ancient Babylon, wild, uncultivated regions and the like are assimilated to chaos, and they still participate in the undifferentiated, formless modality of pre-creation.<sup>711</sup> Hence *settlement in a new, unknown, uncultivated country is equivalent to an act of creation*.<sup>712</sup> Wilderness reflects not just incompleteness, but the fall, not just a further agenda in God's plan, but an opposition to it. Here Taylor's Christian inspiration regarding the idea of desert resonates the Biblical portrayal of the desert which can be understood as the place where one can find God, distancing from cultivated soil and the city, and can be perceived as a place where one exposes to all the destructive forces, like the temptation narrative of Jesus. It is a place of contrast either to meet God or to meet the Devil, thus, a place of fight between two antagonist forces. Unformed and demonic are the meanings of wilderness within the frame of the cosmos idea of Christendom.<sup>713</sup> This hermeneutical account shows the picture of a world full of meanings, which is beyond reason, thus beyond modern imagination.

The development of modern science has emerged from its understanding of human epistemic predicament and generated its own ethic of disengaged reason.<sup>714</sup> Taylor concludes that this science, along with many other facets, like the buffered identity, with its discipline, modern individualism, with its reliance on instrumental reason and action in secular time, constitute the immanent frame.<sup>715</sup> Hermeneutics are needed to explore the unexplored terrain in the frontiers of our knowledge through the cosmic and aesthetic imaginations. However, this reflective humanism evolves to a higher variant where reason will not be able to survive as the only instrument for the construal rather in these frontiers is the alterity, thanks to the sophisticated technology and artificial intelligence with its advanced microchips that challenge human agents. All

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<sup>711</sup> Ibid.: pp. 335-336. Taking into possession of a new territory means starting its exploitation. In exploiting the possessed land there should perform the rites which symbolically repeat the act of creation, so the uncultivated zone is first cosmicized before being inhabited

<sup>712</sup> GLACKEN, Clarence (1967), *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, Berkley: University of California Press, p. 117.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid.: 336.

<sup>714</sup> Ibid.: p. 566.

<sup>715</sup> This can be lived in many ways, some are open to transcendence, and some move to closure.

descriptions of Taylor show the shifts in human condition, involving the condition of belief and the epistemic change, to a condition beyond modernity where porous and buffered identities will merge or else any other category of higher human condition. Though *the other* (alterity) in Taylor's reference is the community, the larger self, but it can be applied to what science and technology are creating, like artificial intelligence, in parallel to the self or the human subject.

The narrative of secularization challenges us to raise this question: *What lays beyond the actual human condition?* Prossman illustrates Habermas's description of condition saying that *a secular culture that fails to justify its own morals, but is dependent for that on other sources, like religion and tradition, is then a rather local affair and cannot be per se offer a framework for any given culture in the pluralist society.*<sup>716</sup> He unfolds the dissatisfaction towards the secular culture, which is modernity, imagining an ideal condition of post-secular. The condition of post-secularity resonates Taylor's narrative of secularization, not as the demise of religion but a historical construal. The age of post-secularity, a state of being post-secular or after secular is defined by Jürgen Habermas as:

*The expression of post-secular does not merely acknowledge publicly the functional contribution that religious communities make to the reproduction of desired motives and attitudes. Rather, the public consciousness of post-secular society reflects a normative insight that has consequences for how believing and unbelieving citizens interact with one another politically. In post-secular society, the realization that the modernization of public consciousness takes hold of and reflexively alters religious as well as secular mentalities in staggered phases is gaining acceptance. If together they understand the secularization of society to be a complementary learning process, both sides can, for cognitive reasons, then take seriously each other's contributions to controversial themes in the public sphere.*<sup>717</sup>

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<sup>716</sup> PROSSMAN, Hendricus Yohannes: "The Postmodern Condition and the Meaning of Secularity: A Study on the Religious Dynamics of Postmodernity", in *Ars Disputandi*, volume 4, p. 23. Reference in Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger and Florian Schuller, editors, *Dialektik der Sakularisierung. Über Vernunft und Religion*, Freiburg: Herder, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>717</sup> PROSSMAN, "Post-modern Condition", *Ars Disputandi*, from Jürgen Habermas, Herder, 2005, p. 16.

## 7.6. Towards an Eco-Social Deconstruction

The current human condition can be described as a transition towards an abyss in both social and ecological terms, grounded in the Enlightenment worldview from which emerges industrialization with the dramatic changes in science and technology. This phenomenal outlook has contributed to constructing a humanism based on the cosmic imaginary of instrumental reason. Its implication in science is evident in the outcomes of scientific research, which drives us to go beyond the frontier of our horizon and harm the eco-social environments through excess. The excess in instrumental reason deconstructs natural and social orders by dis-considering some higher ethical values in exploiting nature, which is prompting an eco-social deconstruction. Consequently, the catastrophe is imminent to humanity and all life-forms on the Earth, which is progressively turning towards an unsustainable condition for living beings, except perhaps for some lower life-form like bacteria but not long lasting. The solution can be found in the post-humanistic outlooks, which challenge us to redefine the nature of our humanity in relation to technology, the nonliving intelligent, and the non-living matter from which life emerged.<sup>718</sup>

Another impact involves a sense of the self that has a deep knowledge with new discoveries and sophisticated inventions while having within the subject a profound existential crisis, such as feeling of loss and meaningless. Indeed, scientists are doing their research and laboratorial experiments in pursuing knowledge and providing for better and qualified human life. However, the question is not science and technology but the human agents, the subjects, who can endanger the world and the self when they fail to predict the impact of the applications of science and technology. The scientific experiments can be a threat for our existence if we lose control of them, causing some harmful effects costly for many lives, including far-reaching economic and demographic collapses.

Taylor's outlook has theoretical reference in these arguments, especially his definition of secularity not only in terms of paradigm shift but above all historical construal, expressed in cultural changes, which constitute human condition. Modernity

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<sup>718</sup> BLAKE, Charlie, MOLLOY, Claire, and SHAKESPEAR, Steven (2012): "Beyond Human: from Animality to Transhumanism", commented by Deborah Benita Shaw in *Continuum International Publishing Group*, London, pp in pp. 1-8.

thesis claims that reason has solution to everything, but lived experience shows otherwise that our condition is moving beyond this claim because the reason cannot control the nature and even cannot fully capture all things in it, the categories beings, how they exist and relate to the existence of non-beings, how they came to be and become. The scientific fictions unveil the incapacity of reason to capture the truth, creating fictions and simple narratives to describe something deeply unknown or remain dark to reason itself. One unsolved mystery for reason is the ontology of violence, the nature of its existence and its roots.

*Is the current human condition a threat to our home planet Earth? Is it moving to an abyss of our humanity or animality?* The contemporary human condition is a move towards changes in terms of space and time, cosmic and social orders with ethical patterns, in which many lives and all other life-forms in this planet are in danger of disappearance. The moral-ethical deconstruction prompts the questions of gender and gene editing which alter the orthodox outlooks. These form the picture of our present condition and evoke some questions about what is coming after this. The shift from porous to buffered self can be understood in terms of epistemic construal that shapes a reflective human identity, questioning everything, including our faith in God. However, a construal grounded on the immanent frame that rejects the transcendence can lead us to destroy ourselves, our values, our world, ending up with auto-destruction. It brings us to the dark abyss of our humanity, for instance, the political tensions and bellicose competition with nuclear warheads are threatening civilization not just in the West but worldwide. From this emerges post-secularity because of the failing secularism.

Taylor raises some fundamental questions which can inspire us to understand the root of violence, which puts Christians and unbelief in divergent positions. *Can we understand violence in biological terms or in meta-biological terms?* He defines meta-biological as metaphysical, which means what lies after or beyond physical/biological. His preference of biological is referring to what we share with animals.<sup>719</sup> While beyond these biological needs are fundamentally the meanings, values, a sense of purpose. Taylor also examines the roots of evil involving sex and violence, in sociobiological accounts, for instance, our ancestors had developed propensities for fighting and if

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<sup>719</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2007): p. 630.

necessary, killing outside their clans or otherwise they would not have survived. He argues that even meta-biologists must be aware that we have created elaborate meta-biological matrices around love and war.<sup>720</sup> However, he sees these meta-biological matrices in cultural terms, varying from society to society, and are crucial to understand moral and religious outlooks of different societies. He adverts that we must go back to the meta-biological level so that to understand the ways in which each cultural struggle to control the powerful disruptive forces of sex and violence. But he also notices that these forces themselves could perhaps be understood in purely biological terms. This goes along with the notion of categorical violence as throwback, he argues that culture evolves and brings higher and higher standards of moral behavior.<sup>721</sup>

Taylor touches the sediment of our human nature by saying that the old drives lurk inside us waiting for certain extreme conditions to allow them to explode. Such is human inner tension between meta-biological and biological terms. In the biological term, violence remains within our bodily natural beings, our animality, even as culture advances. Violence is rooted in our natural impulses and propensity to evil even destruction because of our physical body, bodily matter suffers violence from within. But Taylor also acknowledges the decisive role of biological factors in the categorical violence in the form of war, which go deep in human history.<sup>722</sup> He argues that not only our struggle to control unchained sexual desire and violence needs to be understood in meta-biological terms rather the drive itself should be grasped through the matrices of meaning, which give them shape in our life. Christianity requires meta-biological account of our impulses to violence.

He explores various forms of framework change in meaning, like Nietzsche who presents the meaning of violence in immanent term. Nietzsche criticizes the Enlightenment view in a sense that he wants to rehabilitate our impulses to violence, destruction, and orgiastic sexuality. There is an enigma in Christian solution for the question regarding human nature prone to violence, whether it is biological or meta-biological, because of its view of man as the image of God. How can it be explained? Taylor attempts to explain it hypothetically that human beings are born out of the

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<sup>720</sup> Ibid.: p. 658.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.: p. 658.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid.: p. 660.

animal kingdom to be guided by God. Here he agrees with the evolutionary explanation but being guided by God means transformation of the drives to violence and aggression.<sup>723</sup> Christianity rejects the sensuality, its evaluation on sensuality is evil because sensuality goes for violence, and the concept of original sin has connected with sexual violence. The Augustinian concept of original sin is not only incompatible with the Romantic outlooks but also the Enlightenment views. With simple narrative we could not grasp the nature of violence, which deconstructs the orders and causes chaos from which things emerged, we came to be and to evolve.

The move towards an eco-social deconstruction somehow is profoundly grounded in our animality but also connected to our humanity. These phenomena refute modernity's thesis of individual freedom because in fact we are becoming a prey for our own freedom and, at the same time, we become slaves not only of our own nature but also of the non-living intelligence we create. All these phenomena constitute a condition beyond modernity, or beyond reason, because reason cannot capture the essence of these although it is instrumentally upheld by science.

#### **7.6.1. Cosmic Vision of Instrumental Reason**

A threat to civilization reflects the anthropocentric ethics of instrumental reason that rejects and devalues the orthodox non-anthropocentric moral perspective. The anthropocentrism upholds the demise of traditional and natural human values inherent in Western civilization, grounded deeply in Christian faith. A construal of civilization without its traditional and transcendent roots is turning to auto-destruction. I reiterate the spiritual character, either in religious (extra-nature) or secular terms (intra-nature), of the human crisis prompted by the negation of the transcendent sources of our aspiration for fullness. Individualism characterizes the modern exclusive humanism, however, community as a medium for the individuation is categorical, grounded in the moral-spiritual norms, that supports sustainability for the existence of humanity. The reduction of the transcendent values of moral-spiritual aspirations does not only affect the ecological sustainability but also the whole society with its human civilization.

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<sup>723</sup> Ibid.: 668.

The cosmic vision of instrumental reason and control has pushed to the excess in exploring and exploiting the nature and objectifies human subjects for the sake of profits. The great human achievement and self-realization denote an advanced humanism, standing out in science and technology of information with which human agents develop the world and to acquire knowledge. It is unequivocally a shift to higher and qualified human subjects, whose self-expression in nature builds a new relation with the world and whose reason makes outstanding discovery, contributing to further epistemic changes. New knowledge and modes of living reflect the identity of modern anthropocentric shift with wider and deeper horizon although the subject tends to an auto-destruction amidst this great self-realization.

In the economic sense, the instrumental reason aims to have greater profits, reshaping cosmic imaginary and objectifying scientific outlooks. Human subjects become a prey for their own inventions and are objectified for the project of scientific engineering. The emphasis lies on the inter-subject relationship and on a new relation with things in pursuing good life through the mechanization of nature aiming to have greater productions. These highly advanced societies with sophisticated technology lower manpower, undermine ecological and social costs and deconstruct orthodox values, like gene editing and in vitro fertilization, creating an excess not only in needs but also in productions and exploitation of nature. The oppositions between the economic growth and the population growth remain a big question, which pushes for the program of family planning successfully implemented in the West with a reduced population growth, even negative in some of these affluent countries. Such evolution of conflicts turns toward an eco-social abyss where everything is going to collapse because of the exploitations of nature imposed by the excess. The new individuation of modern identity and the ethics of authenticity that underlines freedom and expressive individualism contribute further to the shift in the condition of belief today.

Taylor explains further moral reflection that without periodic opportunities for heroism and dedication, civilization itself would stagnate, go flabby and decadent.<sup>724</sup> The meaning of civilization developed in Europe was to protect life from violence through order and laws after the war, which is more democratic, more egalitarian, more

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<sup>724</sup> Ibid.: p. 417. Taylor invokes Hegel and Edmund Gosse concerning the importance of war in this current page.

caring for its less affluent citizens, and definitively peaceful. According to Taylor, now the crisis of civilization played out in various ways: in cynicism and despair for some, in radical redefinition of the goals of society on both Left and Right, in internal emigration, in counter-cultural forms of art. He identifies two kinds of reaction which are relevant to expanding *nova* of both belief and unbelief: *first*, the crisis of civilization was also a crisis of a certain kind of Christian culture because the Christian faith has become married to modern civilization; *second*, the development of new unbelieving variants of the vertical idea of order.<sup>725</sup> He refers to Ernst Junger, who claims that the war offers a field for daring deeds and self-sacrifice, even more it offers an experience of companionship, which they had not had and could not recreate in civilian life. Elsewhere, the civilizational crisis of the first world war was a body blow to established faiths, from which they have never recovered. He also comments on fascism describing that it gives us the paradigm of a counter-ideal to the modern order which extolled command, leadership, dedication, obedience, over individualism, rights, and democracy, but which did so out of cult for greatness, will, action, life. There was no place for the Christian morality, and certainly not of liberalism, the ultimate goal of Fascism was to make something great out of our life.<sup>726</sup> Greatness was measured partly in the impact of power, through domination, conquest, and partly in the pitch of dedication, giving and risking of death was measured; and partly in aesthetic categories, for example in the *aestheticization of Politics* by Benjamin.<sup>727</sup> By the 1930s, even Catholic society where the counter-ideal is powerful, like Spain, Portugal, later France, not to speak Italy, see a strong influence and role of this new kind of worship of power in the face of death.

The cosmic imaginary is shifting according to the economic and political rhythms of instrumental reason based on the mechanistic view of the world. Things, even human persons, are defined in economic terms like production and profit. The explorations of natural and human resources have undermined the inherent values, which are higher than instrumental values. This ideological construal, which is purely materialistic oriented, is grounded in the cosmic vision of instrumental reason and control.

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<sup>725</sup> Ibid.: p. 418.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid.: pp. 418-419.

<sup>727</sup> Ibid.: p. 419.



Therefore, after all these crises in civilization now is emerging another crisis of a subjectless civilization because of the phenomenology of technology of information and automatization through computer programs, robotic artificial intelligence, and electronic devices, that substitute human subjects doing almost everything. This emerging human condition is affirmative to the subjectless civilization because *the other* is reducing the roles of the subject in the construal of society. It is also not fair to say that this alterity creates subjectless society, because a society without human subjects is just a mental construction or merely allegorical. The essence of a community is constituted of the subjects (men), not just artificial intelligence without consciousness, like a community of robots, except in a metaphoric sense. Subjectless civilization is somewhat possible because it becomes a lived experience, our contemporary human condition shows that most people become spectators in the productions and services, employed less manpower or skilled labors and more robotic intelligence.

#### **7.6.2. Shift in Inter-Subject Relationship**

Modernism involves intersubjectivity, in which the mode of daily personal interactions among family members and friends to some extent is eclipsed by the excess of a new way of life. The emerging human communication is mostly virtual in a sense that we engage with each other by means of the social media. The decadence of inter-human relationships is building up a strong virtual world through cyber-connections, like internet mobile, lessening the personal contact. Indeed, one of the greatest fruits of modernity is the advance in technology of communication which brings us closer to one another. However, it also distances people in their neighborhood and virtually brings closer those who are far away. In our lived experience today, most of the time we get in touch with our family and friends from distance as if they were present at the same space and time, but in fact they are not, though they exist but in a distant space, and their presence is considered virtual because of not being present physically but appear only in the screens. Social media and nets, like Facebook and WhatsApp among others, isolate us from one another in space and time due to this type of virtual presence. Scientific discoveries with technological inventions and electronic devices, like computer and cellular mobile phones, provide for us an easy communication and create this virtual

space. This mode of human interactions connects us with persons present in the screens but somehow also isolates us from those who are real in our side or in our table sharing. It is a new phenomenon of globalization which brings us closer to each other in a virtual mode. In another level, the inter-subject relation is conditioned by the inclination to turn away from the real-life experience, living in a world apart, which is in a distance, likely neglecting the physical presence of the surroundings.

The expression of human intellect in these scientific inventions and technology is ontologically great, however, it becomes an *excess* if the self is controlled by the *other* (*alterity*). This mode of inter-subject relationship is moving to the abyss of personal interaction consumed by the virtual community, which is false. In effect, human subject seems likely a mere intelligent machine that has no inner freedom and consciousness, in other words, not an expressive unity.

We can approach from another angle to perceive the existential contradictions. In his explanation on Hegel's theory of subject, Taylor argues that the becoming towards unity of Spirit and matter, thought and extension, and in the world of thinking beings face external reality, is understood in the teleological terms. In these highly evolved societies, the thinking beings lose the Spirit by affirming exclusively the matter, and the subject is likely a mere intelligent machine moving around without destiny. This is characteristic of the Enlightenment atomic understanding of human subject and the society from which emerges the expressivist protest, against its view of man as both subject and object of an objectifying scientific analysis. The objection was against a view of man as subject of egoistic desire for which nature and society provided merely the means to fulfilment.<sup>728</sup> This jeopardizes the natural inter-subject relationship not only in society but also in family, without negating that the progress in science and technology helps to prolong human life and to invent many things for human good and well-being.

In fact, this view impacts on individual and social life in a sense cutting humans off from nature for the sake of objectifying scientific engineering. The opposite was the Romantic view of man as expressive unity and considered the art as highest human activity and fulfilment, contributing to develop the contemporary civilization. The latter views humans as expressive beings belonging to a culture and this culture is sustained,

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<sup>728</sup> Idem (1979): pp. 1-2.

nourished, and handed down in a community.<sup>729</sup> Here the difference notion of community from the Enlightenment version is highlighted. However, for the Romantic view, community is not just an instrument which individuals set up to fulfill their individual goals as it was for the Enlightenment atomist and utilitarian stance. So, community is a categorical condition for inter-subject relationships although the emphasis in our day is on the individual freedom, individualism, free from any external mediation. Man as an expressive unity, a bodily being, is interchanging with the whole universe, he cannot be just a compounded body and mind as in the Enlightenment view. As cultural beings we build the world, making things change indefinitely and creating means of communication which can isolate us from those around us while effectively communicating with others at any distance. Therefore, there is an inner necessity to have community as condition *sine qua non* for our security, or where we feel secured, not to be alienated and excluded. These two outlooks constitute modern civilization in the West and open the way for the individualism and freedom, prompting the decadency of inter-subject relationship.

The basic impulse to human crisis lies in the anthropocentric perspective, in its moral philosophy, which Taylor refutes and debunks. Kantian moral freedom of self-determination gave impulse to the materialistic notion of morality which has its fountain in man alone without any reference to God or any external authority. Taylor gives two examples which orient us to understand how this immanent perspective excludes the Transcendence as moral sources: Goethe, a poetry, portrays the higher in beauty and harmony, and Fichte claims that philosophy is the fullest statement of freedom and sublimity of self.<sup>730</sup> Following the Ancient Greek, Taylor assumes that they had supposedly achieved the most perfect unity between nature and the highest human expressive form. This manifests Hegelian spiral view of history, shifting to higher variants, and Taylorian view of sediment in historical construal, the ancient outlook is embedded/imprinted in the modern worldview. Taylor explores Hegelian perspective of history saying that the beautiful synthesis had to die because man had to be inwardly divided in order to grow and modern man have to be at war with himself. The notion of

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<sup>729</sup> Ibid.: p. 2. In Taylor's understanding, community itself in its own level an expressive unity. Herder is the founder of this view which influenced Hegel.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid.: pp. 3-6.

historical construal is categorically Hegelian synthesis, from the ancient regime passes to the modernity, sacrificing previous views necessarily for the sake of man's evolution toward his full self-consciousness and free self-determination. Once man had fully developed his reason and faculties of higher synthesis in which both harmonious unity and full self-consciousness would be united. In fact, Taylor's narrative of secularization follows this spiral view of history, not just a process of separation of state from the Church and the demise of religion as society fully progressed.

Taylor sees the human nature in terms of becoming that is an evolution in self-consciousness, which results cultural changes. In his commentary on Hegel's Absolute Subject, he claims that human nature, something common to all men, is the basis or determinable which circumscribes the field for every man's original creation.<sup>731</sup> He argues that not only all human life can be seen as expression but much of what we do and what goes on in us must be understood purely in terms of our life form, just as we do with animals without power of expression and even our expressive activity is conditioned by this life form. Following Hegel's dialectical necessity, Taylor's ontological narrative shows that everything happens in history is necessarily for the sake of our full awareness of perfect self-expression.

The change in framework depends on the condition arisen from our mental construction, either intellectual or ideological. Our worldview alters indefinitely as we grow either inward or outwardly, and this depends on how we imagine ourselves and our world. Intersubjective interactions propagate and promote views through sharing in the social media and in mobilization not only by means of any kinds of transportation, including cyber-transport, but also of migration. This phenomenon of human mobilization does not only bring profits but also unconsciously, or not, propagates something prejudicial for public health, like virus.<sup>732</sup>

Exploitation of nature deconstructs ecosystem, many species are vanishing, many life forms have lost, and the modes of living have changed, leaving behind for

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<sup>731</sup> Ibid.: p. 28. This is concerning to our full awareness of self-expression which is something ultimately given. Original creation is referred to things in one's life that seems to express him/her as against other man in general, which we cannot fully fathom, much less control.

<sup>732</sup> The COVID-19 has been propagated through the human mobilization from China spread to all the world. If there were not such mobility it would not reach Europe, America, and other parts of the world. Its propagation is very fast because of the rapid movement of people by means of public transports interconnecting the peoples over all the world.

many people the sentiment of loss.<sup>733</sup> The crisis here involves two models of embodiment in the Hegelian expressivist theory of subject, like the Aristotelian-derived notion of a life form which can only be in a living body, and the expression of thought which requires a medium. Therefore, the scientific and technological development has shifted inter-human relationship. These changes are directed toward a catastrophe, not only in ecological terms but also intersubjective terms, as the consequence of putting the higher values under the lower ones or upside-downing the hierarchy of values, in which materialistic values suppress the spiritual ones, human life and ecosystem are being sacrificed for the sake of another lesser values.

The keyword of the modernity is freedom, individual freedom, and political freedom. Everyone fights or claims for his liberty as free individual and at the same he is conditioned by *the other*, community or nature or even enslaved by his own liberty. Isaiah Berlin on political freedom differentiated the negative sense of freedom from the positive sense. In the negative sense, *it pertains to the area within which the subject....should left to do, or be, what he is able to do, or be, without interference by other persons*. In the positive sense, it pertains to *the source of control ....that can determine someone to do, or be, one thing rather than the other*.<sup>734</sup> In the Christian anthropology, we are created by God with freedom but because of our being made of the soil we are fragile and vulnerable prone not only to decay but also to the malign spirits. Therefore, freedom is either a virtue or a weakness because of being misled by such spiritual forces impinged on us in various forms. So, the crisis of humanity is rooted in our existential structure of both natural and supernatural dimensions. It is natural in the sense of our bodily being and supernatural in the sense of our spiritual nature, which involves intellect and consciousness. Therefore, secularization has not only impacted on economics and politics but also on the inter-subjective relationship.

This human condition challenges us to redefine society not only constituted of human subjects but also involving a dialogue with the *other*. Although consciousness is still in the center of this construal, but it involves a dialogical self who continually interacts with the alterity. A subjectless civilization is defined in the functional terms

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<sup>733</sup>The mode of living here in the Taylorian notion based on Hegel's models of embodiment is both a way of carrying out the necessary functions of life, nourishment, reproduction, and also cultural expression which reveals and determines what we are, our identity.

<sup>734</sup> BERLIN, Isaiah (1969): *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, p. 122.

where with the invention of non-living intelligent, artificial intelligence, we reduce to employ manpower or skilled labors in the historical construal. That is the current human condition emerging from the cultural changes which motivate further reflection.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

This work is an attempt to address my analysis on Taylor's definition of secularity with its process, his refutation against the simple story of secularization and why he claims otherwise, in what base he addresses his arguments, the questions concerning his ontological phenomenology and the method he used. Hence, after elaborating the fundamental points of Charles Taylor's thinking on secularity, I attempt to make some precise conclusions.

Taylor sees secularity in terms of historical construal which intrinsically involves cultural changes, marking the human conditions over time. In this construal the human condition has been shaped, and the ideas migrate, the paradigm shift takes place, and the outlooks have evolved. As I have explored the whole range of Taylor's thinking I found out that his theory is coherent and consistent with the historical changes as manifested in social, political, and cultural phenomena, thanks to his narrative of construction as against that of loss. Thus, his narrative of secularization is not just a rhetorical rather a reality-reference based on the analyses of lived experience, or phenomenological analyses, in comparing the present human condition with those of several hundred years ago. All concepts are abstracted from the real human condition, preceding from the former construal in every stage of human evolution from archaic society, ancient regime through modern age to our contemporaneity. The farther we go back to the past the better we understand cultural changes that have made up our human conditions.

Secularity in contemporary debates has sociological trends focusing on the demise of transcendence as society evolves with its differentiations. Almost all theorists of secularization are allies of the reductionism affirming that religion, belief in God, will fade away as consequence of the disenchantment by science. By contrast, Taylor's arguments demur the subtraction narrative of secularization for two reasons: it does not tell the whole story and has no well-founded definition of the question. With some reservations, like the separation of religion from the state and to some extent religion loses the influence in the public sphere, Taylor refutes them by arguing that it is a change in the condition of belief as historical construal with complex cultural changes. All his conclusions are taken from his analyses of human condition throughout the ages and

resulted from a wider interdisciplinary range which goes deep into the epistemic analysis on our genesis and evolution. This evolution paradigm is described in analogy through several levels of understanding which catch my admiration and interest.

Taylor studies the historical patterns throughout the ages before making conclusions and evaluating certain theoretical affirmations on secularity. In the perspective of paradigm shift, he defines secularity in terms of the change in understanding of fullness. The move from porous self to buffered self is not simply a conceptual term but it has empirical reference in the reflective/critical attitude of the self by questioning everything, including the faith or belief in God. The background questions are emerging from ordinary life: *why should we be afraid of the bad spirits? How things came to be and from where we came from? What is the relationship between sickness and the sin?* Questioning things and events in daily experience is a manifestation of change in identity from childhood to adulthood. Philosophy should emerge from this lived experience before coming to speculation or abstraction. Taylor starts with simple question *why our age is a secular age?* To answer to this question, he goes back to 1500 by questioning why it was not difficult for the people to believe in God but today it is difficult? From this he attempts to answer with reference to simple phenomena in lived experience to the higher elaboration with technical frameworks abstracted from them.

From these simple observations: *why do people say that we are living in a secular age? What does it mean to be secular?* Taylor tries to answer them with arguments not just based on the current phenomena that constitute our condition now, but also to investigate the patterns of historical construal, not simply to examine the recent past and the actual condition. This method challenges me to ask: *what will be the next or after the present?* Secularity as historical construal invokes the past, the present, and the future ages, because all events are interconnected in this flowing time and space. The past was marked by *the naïve* and the present/modern is shaped by the *reflective* because of the reason upheld by science and technology, and the future will be marked by something *other* than reason. *What is something other than reason?* In my optic, we are living in a transitional age because there are things and events that reason cannot capture. *So, what is beyond reason, or the subject who owns this faculty?* These are the questions that I have tried to answer in chapter seven.



Religion does not in favor of reason, except to some extent in the theological studies, but relies so much on what is uncapturable to reason, or what is other than reason, or prior to it. Science tries to separate religion from the secular affairs, but in line with Taylor's thinking religion is fundamentally needed to provide the moral-spiritual grounding which has its ultimate sources in God, higher Entity, not exclusively human. Modernity fails because of this disconnection with wisdom of Christian inspiration and of its excess to reason. Worldly affairs must recognize the spiritual dimension of human person as his existential ground, otherwise we would lose control of our direction to fullness.

The significance I have found in Taylor's thinking is overwhelming. First, his methodology exposes the weakness of materialistic views that guide humanity to the abyss. Second, the richer narrative evokes a sense of depth either in anthropocentric terms or transcendent terms. This means that there is a close connection between spirituality and science which the modern men generally fail to discover and recognize. Thirdly, his ideas involve a wider range of interdisciplinary approaches to understand secularity and its process with all forms and variants. The transcendent and immanent frames are inseparable in the description of the human persons as both physical bodily beings and spiritual beings guided by the Spirit of God in his evolution towards self-realization and fullness, human flourishing, which inspires us to the higher level of plenitude/fullness beyond the frontier of this space and time. Taylor's elaboration orients us to accept the hypotheses of our evolutionary process from the simple nature of life-forms to the higher conscious beings. This also reveals our goal as agents designed by God for wholeness or fullness although our nature is vulnerable and fragile. Through his constructive account of secularity, he debunks the exclusive humanism which becomes modern trend that supports the materialistic arguments to the solution of all existential questions.

The contribution of my study does not only serve as a tool for further research but also an affirmation of moral-spiritual grounding of secularization rooted in the Christian faith, which has embedded in the Western civilization, while appreciating the emerging evolution of science and technology with the attitude as a dialogical *self* with *the other*. The study of secularity as historical construal is involving factors like the condition of belief, which changes over time, the epistemic change, in the context of

Western world, and this implies wider range of the horizon constituted of multi-disciplinary views consistent with Taylor's perspective.

It is fundamental to determine the moral-spiritual grounding of Western secularization, to study the relationship between secularity and post-secularity, to develop frameworks which can help us to define the current human condition in the light of Taylor's view. The evolution in science is not against the Christian faith rather challenging it to be more reflective and more progressive in a complementary relation, which means that the Biblical narratives can help scientists not to ignore the imaginary of the ancient people concerning the cosmos and its origin.

The elaboration of this work has fulfilled its objective not only to unveil the dissatisfactions of people towards the failing modernity with its mechanistic view that causes the sentiment of loss expressed in the malaise of modernity; but also to answer the reason why the Christian Reformation became crucial for the cultural changes towards modernity. Based on his historical approach, Taylor claims that Christian program of reforms then had wider range, from religious reforms expanded to the social reforms, through the efforts of elevating to the higher standard of Christian life, emancipating the Churches by levelling the life of human flourishing with the monastic and clerical vocation. This had impact on social reforms opening the way for further and greater evolution in the epistemic change. If we see secularization in the perspective of cultural changes then the axis was in the Christian Reformation, which means that the process had started before that period though it had had minor effect in the society. The effort to disenchant the world with disengaged reason had begun from the prophetic movement of the ancient Hebrew to the Christian era in the person of Jesus Christ who denounced the ridiculous religious practice of the pharisees and scribes. All efforts for changes have been always historical construal but with different forms and variants constituting the human condition. Therefore, the axis of change was the Reformation of Christianity in the Middle Ages starting with the Hildebrand reform of twelfth century, culminated in the sixteenth century with the Protestant Reformation, however, Taylor does not ignore the changes in the ancient regime. The shift from the Ancient Regime, pre-axial to post-axial period, served as background for the modern forms of secularization in both levels of outlooks and individuation.

The discussion on secularization is intrinsically connected to religion, that is the reason I do not elaborate religion in a specific section. The paradigm shift involves the change in understanding of religion and most of the arguments taken from the subtraction theories are misleading because of the narrow understanding of religion, which is simply in terms of creedal statements or doctrine. Religion in Taylor's perspective implies all movements of spirituality and in a wider sense, all tendencies to search for moral-spiritual aspirations, which he calls fullness or plenitude, emerging from all forms of conditions that provide meanings for human life. From this he defines secularization in terms of change in the condition of belief, not just a condition where religion is excluded or loses its influence, or the absence of religion in public spheres, though he does not deny them, but religion turns to be one option among other options. Thus, historical construal involves the shifts in the human condition, starting with the construal of the cosmic imaginaries to the construal of social imaginaries, and the change in human agency from porous to buffered self, which has shaped the modern identity. Taylor sees religion not just as a personal affair although its emphasis on the personal level is in accordance with a major trajectory of change through the last several centuries in Latin Christendom. This form of religion of personal commitment and devotion has increased since the high Middle Ages, which stressed on the inward form of religion.<sup>735</sup> This inward form of faith tends to radically devalue the collective ritual and external practice from which resulted the Reformation. The modern understanding of personal religion has arisen from the Biblical account, for instance, Psalm 51 which expresses the inward forms of religion rather than the offering of bulls and sheep. Taylor admits that William James's emphasis on personal religion as against collective ritual is so central to Western modernity that a variant of this is shared by highly secular people. The drive to personal religion has itself been part of impetus toward different facets of secularization. It was this drive which powerfully contributed to the disenchantment of the world of spirits and higher forces in which our ancestors lived.<sup>736</sup>

Taylor observes that religion in the modern secular age has diversified, not declined as the straight path story claims. Throughout the history of Western

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<sup>735</sup> This had been done through the preaching of the Mendicant Friars and others through devotional movements until the Protestant Reformation.

<sup>736</sup> TAYLOR, Charles (2003): pp. 13-14.

Christendom religious forms have been developed in accordance with the evolution of people's social imaginaries. There were two ways in which religious belief re-established itself after the break with the Ancient Regime: first, God's design could be understood to define the political identity of the whole society, and the religious belonging is central to political identity, a sense of providential design;<sup>737</sup> second, religious organization could serve as instruments of mutual help. Taylor addresses some fundamental contrasts between the Ancient Regime religious forms and those of the Age of Mobilization: first, the Ancient Regime forms were based on the pre-modern idea of order grounded in the cosmos, while the age of Mobilization forms are related to the modern idea of moral order based on mutual benefit; second, the world of the Ancient Regime is an enchanted one, while the Mobilization Age involves greater and greater disenchantment; third, Ancient Regime forms of society and hierarchy are pre-existing, time out of mind, while the age of mobilization forms of society are a model that requires human agency to put it into effect; fourth, Ancient Regime forms assume an alliance of clergy and state, while the age of mobilization means the loss of clerical control.

The impulse of science in prompting an anthropocentric shift, from which arose the exclusive humanism originated from Deism and Atheism, is underlined. Modern science serves as ground for the materialistic view of human agents from the Enlightenment and Romanticism which stresses on the expressive individualism. The shift fundamentally implicates time and space consciousness, which is the tendency to emphasize on secular time and the move from Biblical microcosmic world to the scientific macrocosmic universe. One interesting contribution of Taylor is the moral-spiritual groundings of secularization, and he proposes the emphasis on these key-words *fullness*, *plenitude*, and human flourishing, and becomes the goal of everyone either believer or unbeliever. The distinctions are in the alternative itineraries to attain fullness, two main options are offered, and one can opt either for transcendent or for immanent sources. For those who move toward the *Closed World Structures*, it is an eclipse of transcendence, and consequently they have immanentized the moral sources,

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<sup>737</sup> This has been strong in the United States, among the American Protestants up to the present.

either in human agents or in nature. This trend to immanence also had helped to develop an anthropocentric spirituality in the drive to reform within Christianity.

The paradigm shift or epistemic change has started with the level of imagination from which evolve the self and society. Human subject in Taylor's view is a process of becoming according to the rhythms of the development of consciousness towards self-realization. His reference to Hegel is evidently manifested in the way he articulates descriptively how ideas change, following the human evolution from a lower to the higher level, either in life forms or cultural forms. To understand the concept of man as a process of becoming Taylor discusses in depth the combination of two streams of thoughts, such as Romanticism and Enlightenment.

Taylor's arguments are contained in his work *A Secular Age*, compiled all his thinkings of other works, in which he tackles the greatness and danger that mark the modern age. The purpose of *A Secular Age* is to tell the story of the rise of modern secular society in the West and to tell the story based on the analysis of the background than the one widely offered until now, subtractions story or straight path story.

The basic contribution of Taylor in contesting the subtraction theories is that the Western civilization has changed not just from a condition where most people lived naively in a construal to one in which no one is almost capable of this construal, but all see their option as one among many. The discussion on secularity should clarify first what do we understand by religion, how was religion lived in the past with which we compare our current situation. Taylor proposes an age of mobilization, from about 1800 to 1960, where religious forms of the ancient regime-type suffered decay, but new forms that fit the age recruited and mobilized people on an impressive scale.<sup>738</sup> But with the cultural revolution of the 1960s, the age of mobilization came to an end in the North Atlantic world, as well as moral-spiritual and instrumental individualism with the widespread expressive individualism.

The progressive changes from the ancient view with its enchantment to the modern worldview with its disenchantment can be understood in dialectical form and spiral mode. Taylor begins with analyzing the conditions of lived experience, what people imagine the world and how they should organize themselves, without

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<sup>738</sup> Cf. Idem (2007): p. 471.

formulating these imaginaries. The evolution in science has disenchanted the world and gradually changed the porous to the buffered identity. The buffered self has marked the modern humanism with several facets in relation to the shift in understanding according to the respective changes in human conditions resulted from the shifts in imaginary. This reflective human agency tends to create an exclusive humanism from which changes spin in the modern age and these have undergone several phases beginning from the view of things in the perfection according to each own nature, not as locus of Divine manifestation. This was prompted by the Deism, according to which Nature is understood as God's design with its notion of Providential Design. Deism is one of the two variants of the exclusive humanism, and another variant is atheism. The autonomy of nature, independent from God, has its proper good. From this autonomy of nature came another view of the mechanization of the world picture, rewriting humanism in terms of ordering action, that is, redefinition of human agency in instrumental reason, which was derived from the Enlightenment. A new ethic emerged from this new humanism, which emphasizes on how to rich the good life. Here the tendency can be in favor of Deism or atheism, and both affirm the autonomy of nature from God, or things in nature are independent from any religious belief. This autonomy of nature is understood in terms of super-purposes.

The notion of time altered from its emphasis on the higher time, or God's eternity, to favoring the secular time. This has involved the genesis, our origin as created beings, or *ens creatum*, with the evolutionary process, time which lies behind us and hides the process of our genesis, which is dark in a sense unknown to our consciousness. Even the question of time related to our future, or time that lies beyond this one we live in. This new understanding of time also has involved another way not just turning away from Biblical notion of eternity, rather reinterpreting the eternity in infinite term of the unknown which never be known in this space and time. In other words, most of the things in this vast universe is eternally never known relative to our age, nor even until the death of the last human being.

The space paradigm has altered from the Biblical cosmos to the universe discovered by science. It is a move from the limited time-space framework of the Bible to the immense scientific time-space framework in the finite movement of cause and effect. Taylor describes it in this way:

*the things we are aware of in our daily life not only are affected and determined by an immense surrounding universe but also the nature of each one is shaped by a micro-constitution whose detailed make-up lies in the unexplored terrain of the infinitesimal.*<sup>739</sup>

This space of *macrocosmos* and *microcosmos* are hiding something that reason is unable to capture. We can explore them, but we will never know exactly what else really exists below or beyond them. Taylor does not negate the scientific efforts in helping us to reach beyond our ordinary experience and explaining causes and effects that involve the macro and micro constitutions of this world. He does not question science but materialism with its radical view of exclusive humanism.

Finally, I want to affirm that as a genuine and honest philosopher Taylor has made a great effort to uncover certain truth hidden beneath the ignorance of many thinkers under the umbrella of scientific methods and open a new horizon for the debate on secularity. Grounded in his academic experience he has pursued wisdom by choosing a path which can help to retrieve historical data and construal of the past serving background picture for the construction of current secular age. Through this path as methodic strategy, Taylor debunks all subtraction theories and finds credible hypotheses which can lead us back to our genesis, our coming to be, our evolutionary path. He is profoundly a Catholic thinker who is also critical to Christian faith and his approaches sound conciliatory between faith and science. Most of his writings implicit and explicitly show this tendency as a Christian believer who attempts to refute all mechanistic explanations of the world.

In this thesis, I have sought to contribute to an in-depth study of secularity with its forms in Taylor's thinking, implying religion, specifically Christianity in the West, in the making of modern identity. This work is meant to provide the tools for further research on the dialectical movement towards an age beyond secular, that is, beyond reason or postmodernity. As I reflected on the work, I realized that materialism dominates all spheres of societies in overt and subtle forms, even in education (formal and informal). Finally, the thesis provides challenges for further research on other

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<sup>739</sup> TAYLOR (2007): p. 326.

related issues that I have not discovered yet; and this can help to fill the lacuna in the debate.



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