

## **A Catholic Modernity Charles Taylors Marianist Award Lecture With Responses By William M Shea Rosemary Luling Haughton George Marsden And Jean Bethke Elshtain**

Presents a dialogue between Bernard Lonergan and Charles Taylor, thinkers who placed a high value on the search for human authenticity, both of whom maintain that there is a normative conception of authentic human life that overcomes moral relativism, narcissism, privatism, and the collapse of the public self.

Charles Taylor is currently one the most renowned and influential contemporary philosophers. He is also widely quoted and discussed both in the social sciences and humanities. Taylor earns this attention through his remarkable capacity for presenting his conceptions in the broadest possible intellectual and cultural context. His philosophical intuition is fundamentally antinaturalistic, and tends toward developing broad syntheses without a trace of systematizing thinking, or any anarchic postmodernist methodology. His thought unites the past with the present, while culture is treated as a broad mosaic of discourses. Religion, art, science, philosophy, politics and ethics are all fields through which the Canadian philosopher deftly moves about in his search for their hidden structures and deepest sense. Taylor's philosophical output is prodigious. Recently, as his monumental study *A Secular Age* (2007) indicates, he has been concentrating much of his attention on the problem of secularization.. The selection of contributions in the current volume proffer a penetrating cross section of Taylor's thought. They are derived from a conference held in October 2008 in Lublin, Poland Although some of the articles are focused on a reconstruction of the philosopher's concepts, most either engage in a polemic with elements of his thought or find inspiration in it for their own reflections. The contributions are grouped in four parts: 1) philosophy and the modern self; 2) the problem of secularization; 3) between liberalism and communitarianism; and 4) language, literature, and culture.

Over the past four decades, Charles Taylor's work as an intellectual historian, epistemologist, and normative political theorist has made him a leading figure in contemporary social philosophy. In *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*, Mark Redhead examines the problem of political fragmentation, the problem of how to accommodate narrowly defined groups while promoting allegiance to a larger polity, through an analysis of Taylor's thought and politics. Redhead argues that Taylor's work evinces a gallant, though unsuccessful confrontation with fragmentation that dramatically illuminates the political, moral and epistemological tensions at play in a problem of political fragmentation. Charles Taylor is both a major contribution to contemporary debates about liberalism, group rights, and multiculturalism as well as a path breaking study of

the politics, life, and thought of Charles Taylor.

Probably no book published in the last decade has been so ambitious as Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*. He seeks nothing less than to account for the spread of secularism and decline of faith in the last 500 years. Now a remarkable roster of writers—including Carl Trueman, Michael Horton, and Jen Pollock Michel—considers Taylor's insights for the church's life and mission, covering everything from healthcare to liturgy to pop culture and politics. Nothing is easy about faith today. But endurance produces character, and character produces hope, even in our secular age.

*How (Not) to Be Secular* is what Jamie Smith calls "your hitchhiker's guide to the present" -- it is both a reading guide to Charles Taylor's monumental work *A Secular Age* and philosophical guidance on how we might learn to live in our times. Taylor's landmark book *A Secular Age* (2007) provides a monumental, incisive analysis of what it means to live in the post-Christian present -- a pluralist world of competing beliefs and growing unbelief. Jamie Smith's book is a compact field guide to Taylor's insightful study of the secular, making that very significant but daunting work accessible to a wide array of readers. Even more, though, Smith's *How (Not) to Be Secular* is a practical philosophical guidebook, a kind of how-to manual on how to live in our secular age. It ultimately offers us an adventure in self-understanding and maps out a way to get our bearings in today's secular culture, no matter who "we" are -- whether believers or skeptics, devout or doubting, self-assured or puzzled and confused. This is a book for any thinking person to chew on.

Charles Taylor is one of the most important English-language philosophers at work today; he is also unique in the philosophical community in applying his ideas on language and epistemology to social theory and political problems. In this book Taylor brings together some of his best essays, including "Overcoming Epistemology," "The Validity of Transcendental Argument," "Irreducibly Social Goods," and "The Politics of Recognition." As usual, his arguments are trenchant, straddling the length and breadth of contemporary philosophy and public discourse. The strongest theme running through the book is Taylor's critique of disengagement, instrumental reason, and atomism: that individual instances of knowledge, judgment, discourse, or action cannot be intelligible in abstraction from the outside world. By developing his arguments about the importance of "engaged agency," Taylor simultaneously addresses themes in philosophical debate and in a broader discourse of political theory and cultural studies. The thirteen essays in this collection reflect most of the concerns with which he has been involved throughout his career—language, ideas of the self, political participation, the nature of modernity. His intellectual range is extraordinary, as is his ability to clarify what is at stake in difficult philosophical disputes. Taylor's analyses of liberal democracy, welfare economics, and multiculturalism have real political significance, and his voice is distinctive and wise.

There are, always, more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in one's philosophy—and in these essays Charles Taylor turns to those things not fully imagined or avenues not wholly explored in his epochal *A Secular Age*. Here Taylor talks in detail about thinkers who are his allies and interlocutors, such as Iris Murdoch, Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Brandom, and Paul Celan. He offers major contributions to social theory, expanding on the issues of nationalism, democratic exclusionism, religious mobilizations, and modernity. And he delves even more deeply into themes taken up in *A Secular Age*: the continuity of religion from the past into the future; the nature of the secular; the folly of hoping to live by "reason alone"; and the perils of moralism. He also speculates on how irrationality emerges from the heart of rationality itself, and why violence breaks out again and again. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor more evidently foregrounded his Catholic faith, and there are several essays here that further explore that faith. Overall, this is a hopeful book, showing how, while acknowledging the force of religion and the persistence of violence and folly, we nonetheless have the power to move forward once we have given up the brittle pretensions of a narrow rationalism.

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor is a key figure in contemporary debates about the self and the problems of modernity. This book provides a comprehensive, critical account of Taylor's work. It succinctly reconstructs the ambitious philosophical project that unifies Taylor's diverse writings. And it examines in detail Taylor's specific claims about the structure of the human sciences; the link between identity, language, and moral values; democracy and multiculturalism; and the conflict between secular and non-secular spirituality. The book also includes the first sustained account of Taylor's career as a social critic and political activist. Clearly written and authoritative, this book will be welcomed by students and researchers in a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, politics, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and theology.

Eugene McCarragher challenges the conventional view of capitalism as a force for disenchantment. From Puritan and evangelical valorizations of profit to the heavenly Fordist city, the mystically animated corporation, and the deification of the market, capitalism has hijacked our intrinsic longing for divinity, laying hold to our souls.

"After many years of scholarship, administrative experience and leadership in Catholic higher education, James Heft has written a book that draws upon many academic disciplines to paint a picture of the past, the current situation (challenges, strengths and weaknesses) of Catholic universities, and after identifying its foundational pillars, points the way to a future that is open to modern culture without capitulating to it, embraces Catholic intellectual traditions without fossilizing them, and presents a vision of its relationship to the hierarchy that is respectful, independent, faithful and dynamic"--

DIVAn accounting of the varying forms of social imaginary that have underpinned the rise of Western modernity./div

A hundred years after William James delivered the celebrated lectures that became *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, one of the foremost thinkers in the English-speaking world returns to the questions posed in James's masterpiece to clarify the circumstances and

conditions of religion in our day. An elegant mix of the philosophy and sociology of religion, Charles Taylor's powerful book maintains a clear perspective on James's work in its historical and cultural contexts, while casting a new and revealing light upon the present. Lucid, readable, and dense with ideas that promise to transform current debates about religion and secularism, *Varieties of Religion Today* is much more than a revisiting of James's classic. Rather, it places James's analysis of religious experience and the dilemmas of doubt and belief in an unfamiliar but illuminating context, namely the social horizon in which questions of religion come to be presented to individuals in the first place. Taylor begins with questions about the way in which James conceives his subject, and shows how these questions arise out of different ways of understanding religion that confronted one another in James's time and continue to do so today. Evaluating James's treatment of the ethics of belief, he goes on to develop an innovative and provocative reading of the public and cultural conditions in which questions of belief or unbelief are perceived to be individual questions. What emerges is a remarkable and penetrating view of the relation between religion and social order and, ultimately, of what "religion" means.

"What does it mean to say that we live in a secular age?" This apparently simple question opens into the massive, provocative, and complex *A Secular Age*, where Charles Taylor positions secularism as a defining feature of the modern world, not the mere absence of religion, and casts light on the experience of transcendence that scientific explanations of the world tend to neglect. In *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, a prominent and varied group of scholars chart the conversations in which *A Secular Age* intervenes and address wider questions of secularism and secularity. The distinguished contributors include Robert Bellah, José Casanova, Nilüfer Göle, William E. Connolly, Wendy Brown, Simon During, Colin Jager, Jon Butler, Jonathan Sheehan, Akeel Bilgrami, John Milbank, and Saba Mahmood. *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* succeeds in conveying to readers the complexity of secularism while serving as an invaluable guide to a landmark book.

Is Christian mission even possible today? In "a secular age," is it possible to talk about the goodness of God in a compelling way? How should the church proceed? Carolyn Chau explores the question of Catholic mission in a secular age through a constructive interpretation of the work of two celebrated Catholic thinkers, philosopher Charles Taylor and theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, arguing that Taylor and Balthasar together offer a promising path for mission today. Chau attends to Taylor's account of the conditions of belief today, and the genesis of the sociohistorical limits on contemporary "God-talk," as well as his affirmation of certain aspects of Western modernity's "culture." From Balthasar, Chau sifts out the distinctiveness of his view of the human person as defined by mission, and his encouragement of a kenotic self-understanding of the church. In the end, Chau claims that if modern persons in secular Western societies are seeking fulfillment and integrity, Christian spirituality remains a rich resource on offer.

Exposing the religious roots of our ostensibly godless age, Michael Allen Gillespie reveals in this landmark study that modernity is much less secular than conventional wisdom suggests. Taking as his starting point the collapse of the medieval world, Gillespie argues that from the very beginning moderns sought not to eliminate religion but to support a new view of religion and its place in human life. He goes on to explore the ideas of such figures as William of Ockham, Petrarch, Erasmus, Luther, Descartes, and Hobbes, showing that modernity is best understood as a series of attempts to formulate a new and coherent metaphysics or theology. "Bringing the history of political thought up to date and situating it against the backdrop of contemporary events, Gillespie's analyses provide us a way to begin to have conversations with the Islamic world about what is perhaps the central question within each of the three monotheistic religions: if God is omnipotent, then what is the place of human freedom?" With a questioning spirit not unlike that of Socrates, Thaddeus Kozinski examines modernity



through many lenses-historical, cultural, philosophical, theological, anthropological, psychological, political, pedagogical-casting light on the Logos that the sacred nihilism of liberalism has so obscured, and unmasking its myriad counterfeits.

How do Catholic intellectuals draw on faith in their work? And how does their work as scholars influence their lives as people of faith? For more than a generation, the University of Dayton has invited a prominent Catholic intellectual to present the annual Marianist Award Lecture on the general theme of the encounter of faith and profession. Over the years, the lectures have become central to the Catholic conversation about church, culture, and society. In this book, ten leading figures explore the connections in their own lives between the private realms of faith and their public calling as teachers, scholars, and intellectuals. This last decade of Marianist Lectures brings together theologians and philosophers, historians, anthropologists, academic scholars, and lay intellectuals and critics. Here are Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., on the tensions between faith and theology in his career; Jill Ker Conway on the spiritual dimensions of memory and personal narrative; Mary Ann Glendon on the roots of human rights in Catholic social teaching; Mary Douglas on the fruitful dialogue between religion and anthropology in her own life; Peter Steinfels on what it really means to be a "liberal Catholic"; and Margaret O'Brien Steinfels on the complicated history of women in today's church. From Charles Taylor and David Tracy on the fractured relationship between Catholicism and modernity to Gustavo Gutiérrez on the enduring call of the poor and Marcia Colish on the historic links between the church and intellectual freedom, these essays track a decade of provocative, illuminating, and essential thought. James L. Heft, S.M., is President and Founding Director of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies and University Professor of Faith and Culture and Chancellor, University of Dayton. He has edited *Beyond Violence: Religious Sources for Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Fordham). One deep problem facing the Catholic church is the question of how its teaching authority is understood today. It is fairly clear that, while Rome continues to teach as if its authority were unchanged from the days before Vatican II (1962-65), the majority of Catholics - within the first-world church, at least - take a far more independent line, and increasingly understand themselves (rather than the church) as the final arbiters of decision-making, especially on ethical questions. This collection of essays explores the historical background and present ecclesial situation, explaining the dramatic shift in attitude on the part of contemporary Catholics in the U.S. and Europe. The overall purpose is neither to justify nor to repudiate the authority of the church's hierarchy, but to cast some light on: the context within which it operates, the complexities and ambiguities of the historical tradition of belief and behavior it speaks for, and the kinds of limits it confronts - consciously or otherwise. The authors do not hope to fix problems, although some of the essays make suggestions, but to contribute to a badly needed intra-Catholic dialogue without which, they believe, problems will continue to fester and solutions will remain elusive.

Everywhere we hear of decline, of a world that was better before the influence of modernity. While some lament Western culture's slide into relativism and nihilism and others celebrate the trend as a liberating sort of progress, Taylor calls on us to face the moral and political crises of our time, and to make the most of modernity's challenges.

Charles Taylor is a philosopher concerned with morality and the nature of the identity of individuals and groups in the West. This book offers an evaluation of Taylor's conception of self, and its moral and political possibilities.

*Selfhood and Sacrifice* is an original exploration of the ideas of two major contemporary thinkers.

- David Martin's last great contribution--or, at least, one of his last great contributions--on religion before his passing away in 2019. - Charles Taylor's marvelous synthesis of his work on religion and modernity in the last 25 years in 10,000 words. - The further elaboration and

extension of Taylor's idea of a Catholic modernity into a perspective involving all the great religious traditions.

Here, Henri de Lubac gathers from throughout the breadth and length of Catholic tradition elements which he synthesizes to show the essentially social and historical character of the Catholic Church and how this worldwide and age-long dimension of the Church is the only adequate matrix for the fulfillment of the person within society and the transcendence of the person towards God.

Charles Taylor's monumental book *A Secular Age* has been extensively discussed, criticized, and worked on. This volume, by contrast, explores ways of working with Taylor's book, especially its potentials and limits for individual research projects. Due to its wide reception, it has initiated a truly interdisciplinary object of study; with essays drawn from various research fields, this volume fosters substantial conversation across disciplines.

In this extensive inquiry into the sources of modern selfhood, Charles Taylor demonstrates just how rich and precious those resources are. The modern turn to subjectivity, with its attendant rejection of an objective order of reason, has led—it seems to many—to mere subjectivism at the mildest and to sheer nihilism at the worst. Many critics believe that the modern order has no moral backbone and has proved corrosive to all that might foster human good. Taylor rejects this view. He argues that, properly understood, our modern notion of the self provides a framework that more than compensates for the abandonment of substantive notions of rationality. The major insight of *Sources of the Self* is that modern subjectivity, in all its epistemological, aesthetic, and political ramifications, has its roots in ideas of human good. After first arguing that contemporary philosophers have ignored how self and good connect, the author defines the modern identity by describing its genesis. His effort to uncover and map our moral sources leads to novel interpretations of most of the figures and movements in the modern tradition. Taylor shows that the modern turn inward is not disastrous but is in fact the result of our long efforts to define and reach the good. At the heart of this definition he finds what he calls the affirmation of ordinary life, a value which has decisively if not completely replaced an older conception of reason as connected to a hierarchy based on birth and wealth. In telling the story of a revolution whose proponents have been Augustine, Montaigne, Luther, and a host of others, Taylor's goal is in part to make sure we do not lose sight of their goal and endanger all that has been achieved. *Sources of the Self* provides a decisive defense of the modern order and a sharp rebuff to its critics.

This book provides a timely, compelling, multidisciplinary critique of the largely tacit set of assumptions funding Modernity in the West. A partnership between Michael Polanyi and Charles Taylor's thought promises to cast the errors of the past in a new light, to graciously show how these errors can be amended, and to provide a specific cartography of how we can responsibly and meaningfully explore new possibilities for ethics, political society, and religion in a post-modern modernity.

There was racism in the ancient world, after all. This groundbreaking book refutes the common belief that the ancient Greeks and Romans harbored "ethnic

and cultural," but not racial, prejudice. It does so by comprehensively tracing the intellectual origins of racism back to classical antiquity. Benjamin Isaac's systematic analysis of ancient social prejudices and stereotypes reveals that some of those represent prototypes of racism--or proto-racism--which in turn inspired the early modern authors who developed the more familiar racist ideas. He considers the literature from classical Greece to late antiquity in a quest for the various forms of the discriminatory stereotypes and social hatred that have played such an important role in recent history and continue to do so in modern society. Magisterial in scope and scholarship, and engagingly written, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* further suggests that an understanding of ancient attitudes toward other peoples sheds light not only on Greco-Roman imperialism and the ideology of enslavement (and the concomitant integration or non-integration) of foreigners in those societies, but also on the disintegration of the Roman Empire and on more recent imperialism as well. The first part considers general themes in the history of discrimination; the second provides a detailed analysis of proto-racism and prejudices toward particular groups of foreigners in the Greco-Roman world. The last chapter concerns Jews in the ancient world, thus placing anti-Semitism in a broader context.

Public and intellectual debates have long struggled with the concept of values and the difficulties of defining them. With *The Genesis of Values*, renowned theorist Hans Joas explores the nature of these difficulties in relation to some of the leading figures of twentieth-century philosophy and social theory: Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Max Scheler, John Dewey, Georg Simmel, Charles Taylor, and Jürgen Habermas. Joas traces how these thinkers came to terms with the idea of values, and then extends beyond them with his own comprehensive theory. Values, Joas suggests, arise in experiences in self-formation and self-transcendence. Only by appreciating the creative nature of human action can we understand how our values arise.

From *Sources of the Self to A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor has shown how we create ways of being, as individuals and as a society. Here, he demonstrates that language is at the center of this generative process. Language does not merely describe; it constitutes meaning, and the shared practice of speech shapes human experience.

The place of religion in society has changed profoundly in the last few centuries, particularly in the West. In what will be a defining book for our time, Taylor takes up the question of what these changes mean, and what, precisely, happens when a society becomes one in which faith is only one human possibility among others.

This book offers a series of reflections on the state of Christianity, and especially Catholicism, in the world today. The centerpiece of the volume is a lecture by the renowned philosopher Charles Taylor, from which the title of the book is taken. The lecture, delivered at Dayton University in January of 1996, offered Taylor the opportunity to speak about the religious dimensions of his intellectual

commitment--dimensions left implicit in his philosophical writing. In fact, this is the only place where Taylor, a Roman Catholic, spells out his theological views and his sense of the cultural placement of Catholicism, its history and trajectory. He uses the occasion to argue against the common claim that obstacles to religious belief in modern culture are epistemic--that they have to do with the triumph of the scientific worldview. The real obstacles, says Taylor, are moral and spiritual, having to do with the historic failures of religious institutions. Four well-known commentators on religion and society, two Protestant, two Catholic, were invited to respond to Taylor's lecture: William M. Shea, George Marsden, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Rosemary Luling-Haughton. Their chapters offer a variety of astute reflections on the tensions between religion and modernity, and in particular on the role that Catholicism can and should play in contemporary society. The volume concludes with Taylor's perceptive and thoughtful response to his interlocutors. *A Catholic Modernity* provides one of the most thoughtful conversations to date about the place of the Catholic Church in the modern world, and more generally, about the role of religion in democratic liberal societies.

The Taylor Effect presents an original and diverse collection of essays addressing Charles Taylor's magisterial *A Secular Age*. Ranging from close and critical readings of Taylor's formulations and suppositions; to comparative studies of Taylor and various 'interlocutors'; to applied approaches utilizing Taylor's concepts; to explorations launched from a Taylorian foundation; the 13 chapters comprise a multifaceted exploration of Taylor's multifaceted achievement. Given the vast, synoptic sweep of Taylor's magnum opus, the contributors represent a suitably diverse range of interests, backgrounds and expertise—members of departments of philosophy, literature, philosophical theology, systematic theology, moral theology, education, and political science, whose interests stretch from Plato to Girard, phronesis to pedagogy, Deism to dogmatics, medical ethics to aesthetics... Accordingly, *The Taylor Effect* is not only one of the first major responses to *A Secular Age*: the astonishing breadth as well as the quality of contributions will ensure that it remains a central reference point in any future discussion of Taylor's work.

In an age of terrorism and other forms of violence committed in the name of religion, how can religion become a vehicle for peace, justice, and reconciliation? And in a world of bitter conflicts-many rooted in religious difference-how can communities of faith understand one another? The essays in this important book take bold steps forward to answering these questions. The fruit of a historic conference of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars and community leaders, the essays address a fundamental question: how the three monotheistic traditions can provide the resources needed in the work of justice and reconciliation. Two distinguished scholars represent each tradition. Rabbis Irving Greenberg and Reuven Firestone each examine the relationship of Judaism to violence, exploring key sources and the history of power, repentance, and



reconciliation. From Christianity, philosopher Charles Taylor explores the religious dimensions of "categorical" violence against other faiths, other groups, while Scott Appleby traces the emergence since Vatican II of nonviolence as a foundation of Catholic theology and practice. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia, discusses Muslim support of pluralism and human rights, and Mohamed Fathi Osman examines the relationship between political violence and sacred sources in contemporary Islam. By focusing on transformative powers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the essays in this book provide new beginnings for people of faith committed to restoring peace among nations through peace among religions.

Dimensions of his intellectual commitment - dimensions left implicit in his philosophical writing.

Marcel Gauchet has launched one of the most ambitious and controversial works of speculative history recently to appear, based on the contention that Christianity is "the religion of the end of religion." In *The Disenchantment of the World*, Gauchet reinterprets the development of the modern west, with all its political and psychological complexities, in terms of mankind's changing relation to religion. He views Western history as a movement away from religious society, beginning with prophetic Judaism, gaining tremendous momentum in Christianity, and eventually leading to the rise of the political state. Gauchet's view that monotheistic religion itself was a form of social revolution is rich with implications for readers in fields across the humanities and social sciences. Life in religious society, Gauchet reminds us, involves a very different way of being than we know in our secular age: we must imagine prehistoric times where ever-present gods controlled every aspect of daily reality, and where ancestor worship grounded life's meaning in a far-off past. As prophecy-oriented religions shaped the concept of a single omnipotent God, one removed from the world and yet potentially knowable through prayer and reflection, human beings became increasingly free. Gauchet's paradoxical argument is that the development of human political and psychological autonomy must be understood against the backdrop of this double movement in religious consciousness--the growth of divine power and its increasing distance from human activity. In a fitting tribute to this passionate and brilliantly argued book, Charles Taylor offers an equally provocative foreword. Offering interpretations of key concepts proposed by Gauchet, Taylor also explores an important question: Does religion have a place in the future of Western society? The book does not close the door on religion but rather invites us to explore its socially constructive powers, which continue to shape Western politics and conceptions of the state.

A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture, with Responses by William M. Shea, Rosemary Luling Haughton, George Marsden, and Jean Bethke Elshtain Oxford University Press on Demand

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