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In Malaise of Modernity, Charles Taylor focuses on the key modern concept of self-fulfillment, often attacked as the central support of what Christopher Lasch has called the culture of narcissism. To Taylor, self-fulfillment, although often expressed in self-centered ways, isn't necessarily a rejection of traditional values and social commitment; it also reflects something authentic and valuable in modern culture. Only by distinguishing what is good in this modern striving from what is socially and politically dangerous, Taylor says, can our age be made to deliver its promise.

The Malaise Of Modernity Details

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From Reader Review The Malaise Of Modernity for online ebook

Daniel Supimpa says

A brilliant introduction to Taylor's thought on the inconsistencies of Modernity. He is focused upon 3 features: Individualism, Instrumental Reasoning & Political Alienation towards "soft despotism". Taylor gives special attention to the first of the three. Contrary to many of his interpreters, Taylor does not discard authenticity as a whole, but the most self-centred versions of it. His point is exactly to suggest an alternative to the modes he was perceiving in 1991.

As a whole, this is an easier book to grasp—when compared to other of Taylor's writings—, so it's a good entry point to reading Taylor. In my view, the chief weakness of the book is well-known, and recognized by the author himself: he didn't have time/space to develop his argument, so the flow of thought tends to look elusive or shallow.

A summary of each chapter's argument:

In chapter 1, Taylor's introduces his discussion by setting out that individualism, instrumental reason and political alienation towards "soft despotism" are three characteristics of our society that people experience as a loss or a decline, even as our civilization develops." (p.1) Off the beginning, Taylor emphasizes his interest in the first characteristic and suggests that it is the source of the other two.

In chapter 2, Taylor argue that the modern ideal of authenticity—being true to oneself as means for self-fulfilment—is based on a valid principle of individualism. However, in Taylor's interpretation, authenticity has sinked towards being an axion in a context of (supposed) neutrality, which renders an extraordinary inarticulacy about any discussion on alternative modes of individualism.

In chapter 3, the author proposes that being true to oneself and to one's originality—the idea that the voice within has something of its own to say in order to make me fully human— is a well-established culture that developed from social changes since the end of the 18th century (see esp. Taylor's take on Rousseau).

In chapter 4, Taylor argues that, considering the dialogical character of human life, the ideal of self-fulfilment and self-definition based on human desires alone is completely self-defeating. Things and actions can only take on importance and significance against a background of intelligibility—what he calls a "horizon" (p. 37)—which is formed in dialogue. Extreme subjectivism, thus, is unreasonable.

Chapter 5 concludes that the need for recognition becomes essential for modern identity-shaping with the collapse of hierarchical attributions of value in previous societies. This tends to make relationships—both broader social and strictly intimate—instrumental for self-definition.

In chapter 6, Taylor affirms that the culture of authenticity is reinforced by social factors—e.g. the heritage of 19th century individualism, as described in previous chapters—and the forces of both high and popular culture—e.g. switch towards expressionism in art in the early 20th century.

Chapter 7 brings forth that the worth of authenticity as an ideal—and Taylor is quite positive about it—should move one away from both blind critique (the "knockers" attitude) and deaf support (the "boosters" attitude), in order to see the tension/struggle in current self-centred modes of authenticity.

In chapter 8, Taylor argues that an analysis of "subjectivation" as exemplified in modern art indicates a shift in refentiality from objective reality to self and its sensibilities. However, there is still a search for exploring an order beyond the self—something Taylor falls short of demonstrating. For the author, it is from this search that a legitimate form of authenticity can spring.

In chapter 9, Taylor shifts the focal point from the first malaise—individualism—to the second, technological (or instrumental) reason. After describing its rise from the last three centuries, Taylor exhorts for a rescue of technology from a merely rationalist framework in order to put it "in the service of an ethic of benevolence towards real flesh and blood people." (p. 107)

Finally, chapter 10 outlines the political implications of the attitudes described thus far. For Taylor, the modern tendency to "self-despotism"—the idea that people in modern democracies feel alienated from large-scale political powers—is to reduce large, centralized and bureaucratic states to more federal models, in which powerlessness is amended and greater identification is possible. Although the idea seems interesting, Taylor is limited by space to propose or illustrate his point—his example of Canada is insufficient for different political contexts such as, say, a Latin-American country like Brazil.

Intoxicatedcake says

This work of examining the origin of the modern moral framework encourages a difficult piece of introspective thought on the subject of self. The author works to convey his view of how morality has shifted, not from some "good" to "bad", but simply to something different than our grandparents, or even parents, had experienced during their formative years. To this end, it allows the opportunity of self-evaluation for the audience as Taylor describes the his view of self-realization and its consequences. It is a good inducement to introspection and self-awareness, as, whether or not you agree with his thesis, it provides good challenge to the reader without asserting a "good/bad" binary that might prevent the audience from placing themselves in the argument.

While the general thrust of this lecture is strong, Taylor readily admits that he doesn't have all the answers, and is also aware that his arguments resemble sketches and outlines in the latter sections. Consequently, while I found myself enjoying the early sections of the book, as it went on I found myself less enthralled with the subject. Additionally, the specialized language involved with the subject meant that as the book went on I found myself with a slimmer grasp upon the subject as the pool of these terms grew.

I have little doubt that there is more to this lecture than I have absorbed. The specialized language and the difficult nature of the subject matter suggest this book as a work of more serious study than my fairly casual reading provided. I certainly found it interesting, and it provided me some good food for thought, but has also revealed itself as somewhat inaccessible to a general reader.

Harperac says

This book is definitely very 1991. It's not that it's dated badly - I think most of what Taylor says is applicable today - but it's very much responding to the climate of the times and the "culture wars" that were going on. For instance, one of Taylor's first references is to "The Closing of the American Mind", a book which essentially criticized the way students were thinking at the time. Camille Paglia called this book, by Allan Bloom, "the first shot of the culture wars." As I gather from Charles Taylor, "American Mind" takes aim at the principle that students were espousing that all values are equal, all life-styles are equal, and that

criticizing someone's lifestyle was taboo - in the sense that one shouldn't argue that homosexuality is immoral, because it's someone's lifestyle. Bloom considered this to be a narcissistic and self-serving way of being in the universe, apparently; Taylor describes it as concerned with an individualism "centring on the self and a concomitant shutting out, or even unawareness, of the greater issues and concerns which transcend the self, be they religious, political, historical."

So that is Bloom's perspective, and others', and Taylor calls them the "knockers" of individualism because they condemn the very ideal of being authentic to oneself. He contrasts them with the "boosters" of it, which would be the other side in the culture wars: many but not all 80s/90s feminists, multiculturalists, postmodernists, and the rest. What it is that makes them boosters of individualism is that they support what Taylor calls "the liberalism of neutrality. One of its basic tenets is that a liberal society must be neutral on questions of what constitutes a good life." That's because even if the government said that every person must seek the good life in their own way, that itself would be taking sides.

After outlining all this, Taylor goes on to argue that there is a greatness in individualism, which he sees as the ideal of authenticity as outlined by Rousseau, Schiller, and others. The knockers of individualism are dismissing one of modernity's greatest assets as narcissistic self-involvement, which he takes issue with. That is one of his big criticisms of Bloom's book. However, the boosters who support individualism in this way are not living up to the ideal themselves, either. His main argument on this is that if every choice is equal, every choice is meaningless - the old thing about picking whether to go to MacDonald's or Dairy Queen, a meaningless choice. He argues that the only thing that gives any meaning to choice is a moral horizon, something to mark the significance of things. So, it's not that it doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman, it's that it does matter, but both things share in common what makes each of them significant: empathy, strength, love, etc etc.

Now, this is something that I'm sure tumblr would have a hard time with. I can't count how many times I've seen arguments about sexuality that say, more or less, "I'm a guy who likes guys. I'm also a guy who likes people with curly hair. What's YOUR problem with it????" The gist of the argument is that I make my choices, or I find myself in my situation, and that's what makes it significant - taking issue with someone's sexuality is like taking issue with someone's taste in pop. Taylor says otherwise: the moral horizon stuff I mentioned earlier.

The things that Taylor criticizes here, although directed towards "modernity," are clearly the issues of the late 80s and the early 90s; yet they hit home as central to the issues of today as well. The knockers and boosters of individualism have waxed and waned, but neither has disappeared from the scene, and neither has resolved the internal conflicts described by Taylor (although I don't take it for granted that he was right.)

"The Malaise of Modernity" has a lot in common with the thought of John Ralston Saul, another Canadian writing around the same time. I wonder how much of their congruity is Saul taking from Taylor? That's a good question for someone to answer. As it is, this is an intellectual stimulating and rigorous book that still speaks today.

Adam Marischuk says

I first encountered Charles Taylor (the political scientist and philosopher from McGill, not the Liberian Dictator) at University through his book *Sources of the Self* and found his writing style ratherdense verging on inscrutable but with underlying value (rare in assigned University readings).

But much like the 1990s cover, much inside the book has aged rather poorly. The ideas remain important (perhaps now more than ever) but a serious update would be beneficial as the world grapples with new attacks on identity, from trangenderism to neo-marxist identity politics.

The Malaise of Modernity grew from the 1991 Massey Lectures and reads much lighter and is only a taste of the previously mentioned *Sources of the Self*. In the United States the lectures are published under the title *The Ethics of Authenticity* and I think that this title is much more illuminating than the Massey lecture title *The Malaise of Modernity* because the book discusses how "modern western man" (can I still say that in this PC world?) views the self.

The book aims to deal, or at least outline three areas of tension in modern society: "These, then, are the three malaises about modernity that I want to deal with in this book. The first fear is about what we might call a loss of meaning, the fading of moral horizons. The second concerns the eclipse of the ends, in face of rampant instrumental reason. And the third is about a loss of freedom." (p. 10)

Taylor notes that "Modern freedom was won by our breaking loose from older moral horizons...But at the same time as they restricted us, these orders gave meaning to the world and to the activities of social life." (p. 3)

This leads into "instrumental reason" which I take to be something akin to Aristotle's practical reason, separated from theoretical reason. Instrumental reason does not have the truth as the ends but whatever is useful. And the highest usefulness in this relativistic culture is the pursuit of authenticity, which Taylor notes has an internal tension. The heavy emphasis on subjectivism leads people to speak in the same breath of discovering their true identity while maintaining that your true identity is something you (or society, but better you if you are to be free) freely build. How this tension is resolved in our society is not fully addressed in the book because it isn't fully addressed in society. I am reminded of the Chesterton quote about people today all believing in soulmates and no one believing in souls.

Of course building a self-indentity (for the modern man) needs to be done in opposition to *something*. And modern education has perpetuated the lie that it is against conservativism. As if conservativism has had a monopoly on society since the 1960s! We are left with a group of progressives insisting on progressing from a position which was already a rebellion from conservativism, furthering and furthering society from its roots in each generation. Take the highschool stapple *Animal Farm* which holds (and so did Orwell) that the major problem with the animal rebellion was not the circular nature of revolution, but that the revolution did not go far enough and a Trotsky figure is the true hero.

Taylor tries to avoid the twin pitfalls of either blind opposition to this new culture or blind adherence to progress for progress and the shallow narcissism of the "authenticity" movement (tied to Romantic art) by stepping back. He calls these "knockers" and "boosters", two terms which might be good for radio but are a serious come-down from much of the high diction. The alternative Taylor attemps is intentionally not a middle ground but a step back, and I am reminded of Alasdair McIntyre's return to virtue ethics in *After Virtue*. Taylor does not go so far in the short book to examine the Greek concept of eudaimonia though I feel that that would be the general thrust of an expansion on the book.

The book closes with a discussion of the capitalism, democracy and atomism which is producing a fragmentation in society and is also a symptom of such fragmentation. The serpent eats its tail again here.

The closing section on Canadian federalism and the Meech Lake accords reads as an interesting historical period insight but desperately in need of modernisation.

Brad says

To Charles Taylor's credit, he recognizes that his Massey Lecture "The Malaise of Modernity" is rendered deficient by its own constraints. He has neither the time nor the space to fully develop his argument, and even the first premise , that the search for individual "authenticity" in Western civilization is a malaise, doesn't move beyond a skeletal outline.

It seems almost disingenuous, therefore, to criticize his work, but Taylor himself would not likely want to shut down discourse, for any reason, and I feel compelled to make a few observations.

The first is about Taylor's seeming criticism of the inherent anthropocentrism of individual self-actualization or personal authenticity. He implies that the focus on humanity as the end goal of the universe is a great weakness in our culture's drive to authenticity, then suggests that this anthropocentrism is unique to the postmodern world. Perhaps there is a subtlety missing in Taylor's lecture because of its constraints, but every viewpoint Taylor discusses has anthropocentrism at its core, yet he only seems to see it as a weakness in the one.

The second is the way Taylor sees the tension between the two extremes of the authenticity debate. His position is that these two poles are the debate, implying that the two sides of the debate are populated by nearly equal sized groups. One side is filled with those who believe in and practice self-actualization, and the other side is filled with those who are opposed to the "narcissism" of self-fulfillment. Because these two sides are the debate, they cancel each other out, making the key to overcoming the malaise of self-actualization the retrieval of a supposedly hidden middle ground.

What Taylor's book fails to address (and I suspect this is a genuine constraint of the book and not a downfall of Taylor's) is that this "middle ground" doesn't need to be retrieved because it already exists, although their population is minimal. In fact, there are really very few people who are capable of true authenticity, and even fewer are capable of authenticity devoid of anthropocentrism (and they are those who make up the pole of anthropocentric self-actualization). So those few who are truly engaged in self-actualization, those in touch with the "authentic" ideal, are not of the pole but the equator. They DO exist, and they are acted on upon by the poles on a regular basis. Which suggests that Taylor is not dealing with the real issue involved in his first malaise. He calls for a "retrieval" of this equatorial situation, but since it already exists one needs to ask how and why it is ineffective. What does that say about Western humanity? What does that say about the first malaise? How do we overthrow the malaise and make this equatorial "ideal" a potent rather than impotent element of the debate? How do we stop the poles from silencing the equator?

The Malaise of Modernity is a fine starting point, as Taylor himself suggests, and it does much to generate thought (particularly in the final chapter, "Against Fragmentation"), making it a book well worth reading. But if you are looking to Taylor for answers you will be disappointed. The Malaise of Modernity should generate questions. Use as directed and you will be just fine.

Paul Gosselin says

If you're looking to get your fix of pompous high-sounding postmodern mumbo-jumbo, look no further. If you're looking for logically developed argument with clear definitions of terms used, look elsewhere...

Kyle van Oosterum says

This is a very insightful book diagnosing (correctly) the issues of modern society. It looks in particular at individualism, instrumentalism and techno-bureaucracy's hold on us and attempts to reframe the critiques that many levy at contemporary culture. While many sociologists, philosophers and cultural critics grasp at low-hanging fruit, Taylor decides to change the way we think of individualism as narcissistic, of pure instrumentalism as abusive and self-centered and, of technology as our supposed "iron cage". In a certain way, Taylor has alleviated my cynicism and my "temptation to discern irreversible trends" where actually: "we see that there is a struggle here, whose outcome is continually up for grabs".

We've got the diagnosis, now we just we need the right prescription.

Arash Kamangir says

??? ??? ?? ???? ????.

Philippe-Antoine says

Originally devised as a five-part Massey Lecture for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and delivered in 1991 at the height of the 'Culture Wars', Charles Taylor's *The Malaise of Modernity* has the rare virtue of entertaining questions of philosophical and social relevance in a lucid and highly accessible manner. The book addresses three sources of worry - or 'malaises' - concerning the modernized and rationalized culture of the late-20th Century: individualization, instrumentalization, and loss of democratic freedom.

The first of these, individualization, occupies Taylor for the better part of the book. In his view, both sides of the debate about this are wrong. The unapologetic defenders of individualistic self-fulfilment are wrong because it does, in fact, have a tendency to devolve into deeply problematic modes. But its uncompromising detractors are also wrong when they paint it as little more than a sign of self-indulgence and egoism.

Taylor's key insight is that the culture of self-fulfilment is the locus of a powerful moral ideal, that of *authenticity*, i.e. of being true to oneself. What he proposes, therefore, is not a middle-ground between the proponents and opponents of modernity, but a work of retrieval meant to identify and to articulate the ideal that underlies it in order to subject its deviant or debased modes - e.g. relativism - to a kind of immanent critique. His hope is to lay bare the necessary conditions for an ethics of authenticity and so to rehabilitate the possibility of moral reasoning.

In the first place, Taylor draws attention to the dialogical character of identity-formation. We become human agents capable of defining an identity through language, and this lends our identity an inescapably intersubjective character. We define ourselves through and against our relationships with others. This does away with "narcissistic" modes of authenticity that would hold individualistic self-fulfilment over and against life in common and take a merely instrumental view of human relationships.

In the second place, he stresses the dependence of self-definition upon previously established "horizons of significance", which render our personal choices intelligible. In the absence of such a shared horizon, it would be impossible to confer any value to our choices and so to distinguish them from those arbitrary activities that in no way affect our identity (R.M. Hare's example of picking a stamp from the stamp sheet comes to mind here). This does away with "relativistic" modes of authenticity that would hold up choice as the single criterion of value.

The upshot of this discussion is that authenticity, properly understood, requires us to foster meaningful, i.e. non-instrumental, interpersonal relationships and to acknowledge a shared reservoir of meanings that transcends us as individuals. So far so good, and if Taylor had stopped there, I would hail this as a must-read for every member of my generation. As it stands, though, I cannot follow him past this point. My reservations follow both from philosophical/sociological considerations and from political ones.

In the first place, Taylor seems to take his "horizons of significance" argument for a refutation of anthropocentric ethics, which clearly does not follow. It is perfectly plausible to say that my capacity for self-fulfilment depends upon my identifying with publicly accessible values. It is not plausible to hold that these require some transcendent reference. On a related note, Taylor insists on the need to preserve horizons of significance, but does not seem to take into account that the threat to these is not merely external (encroachment of instrumental reason, growth of relativistic individualism), but is rather internal to these horizons themselves.

It has always been my view that philosophy is born from the encounter with otherness. This is true of the first stirrings of Western philosophy in ancient Greece, and it is true of critical thought in our age of diversity and globalization. The encounter with other forms of life and with other systems of meaning gives rise to cognitive dissonances and to the search for justifications. Where no justification of a traditional horizon of significance can be found, it tends to be replaced with new meanings that do stand the test of justification. Calling for a preservation of traditional horizons of significance in the absence of justification simply seems to push relativism to a different level, from individual decisions to broader cultural orientations.

In the second place, Taylor's treatment of the questions of instrumentalization and loss of democratic freedom in the final two chapters of the book seem to me hopelessly optimistic to the point of delusion. Admittedly, *The Malaise of Modernity* was written before the dawn of the internet age, but the permeation of nearly all facets of human life (work, relationships, entertainment, sex, transportation, etc.) by online media attests to the hold exercised on us by modern technologies. *Pace* Taylor, I do not think that this hold - at times borders on the pathological - can be countered simply by retrieving the "lost moral ideals" that undergirded the development of these technologies in the first place.

A similar point holds for his facile treatment of the question of democratic fragmentation in the final chapter. The idea that we could regain the kind of solidarity and political culture needed for meaningful democratic action in a world governed by instrumental reasoning in accordance with economic imperatives seems impossibly naive. Since Taylor wrote the book in 1991, we have seen nothing but an amplification of the divisive party politics and rhetoric that he deplores, which perhaps reached never-before-seen heights in the recent American presidential election. If anything, the political culture necessary to democratic will-formation looks much more unattainable now than it did then. Perhaps the only thing I agree with in his treatment of political questions is his call for decentralization as the only manner to combat the cynicism and loss of political participation that have marked North American politics for the last quarter century.

Rambox says

Based on a series of lectures delivered in 1991, there is a significant difference between the text and the audio. Oscillating between dense inacessibility and plain speech, between profundidty and glib naive generalisations, this is a fantastic example of Canadian Idealism. It would be unfair and simplistic to describe this as a book in favour of reformism, or to characterise the book as saying "for the left to win it must sound like or entertain the arguments of the right." And yet there is something very Canadian about arguing that "all sides" are valid, striking a balance between all positions, and and seeking to muddle through. Of course Taylor insists he is not advocating balance, but rather going back to the original ideas of, in this case, primarily authenticity, and re-emphasising the good parts of those ideas. Reframing the argument away from 'is the quest for authenticity good or bad' to 'how can we produce good authenticity.' This is similar to the way Alain de Botton argues for good porn, instead of for or against porn, etc etc. And yet. What are the limits of this style of argument? Will we find ourselves arguing for better facism instead of being simplistically for or against facism? I remove from context, simplify and exagerrate. I know. But. There is much to be said both for and against Canadian Idealism. This book can serve as a useful place to start such a discussion.

Blair says

A very good book - actually part of lectures Taylor gave. But if you're familiar with his work, this is just an abbreviated account of it, tweaked to fit the cultural context within which is originated. If you're good with intricate philosophy I'd recommend his other, longer work. But I've you're more of a general reader, this is a good Taylor primer.

Brett Williams says

Balanced perspective on an uphill battle

Taylor seeks to counter pronouncements of the death of Man by the likes of Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*. He seeks to do this with practical reality and a genealogy of "authenticity" at the root of individualism's latest quest for identity. Taylor argues that origins of authenticity have moral foundations in Enlightenment that all moderns, including Bloom, would see as indispensable. However, Taylor agrees with Bloom that the current state of this authenticity is a narrowed and flattened individual. Individuals self-defined, without community, by the exercise of free choice alone. Where choice trumps substance based on the hollowness of "moral subjectivity," mere difference, and the predictable disconnection from others and a higher calling (the very conditions for significance) that individualism is bound to foster. All "deviant products of the ideal of authenticity," he writes.

But excess individualism is only half the problem. Maximized efficiency, what Taylor calls "instrumental reason" is seen as the other half. Together these form Max Weber's disenchantment of the world where sacred structure is dead, relations with men and nature are lost to utility, and "creatures that surround us lose significance in the chain of being, open to treatment as raw materials," writes Taylor. His goal is to show while our social structure tilts strongly in these directions (dehumanization of over population, mega cities, capitalistic urge, etc.), we can fight uphill against them. But to do that we'll have to reject moral subjectivity, realizing some ways are superior, built on values substantiated by reason.

Taylor submits that "authenticity" was born around 1800 based on Descartes earlier individualist ideal of "dispassionate rationality." A kind of self-responsible thought for oneself, and the root of scientific investigation. Locke's political individualism prior to social obligations, authorities, and creeds also played a role. It was around this time that authenticity was part of an evolution in morality. That humans come with an internal moral sense as opposed to calculating the consequences of divine reward and punishment. Modernity takes us from St. Augustine to Rousseau. It says our moral sensibility is in us, not external (inklings of humanism, secularity, and agnosticism). But at the same time, authenticity gets mixed in with the passions of Rousseau's Romanticism, critical of disengaged rationality, atomized community, and death of awe.

As a practical matter, Taylor says we don't want to lose the benefits of individualism or efficiencies that make life easier to tolerate. Marxism demonstrated what happens when trying to force modern individuals back into the commune. Which is not to say we shouldn't file off modernity's sharp edges, and if we don't the West will continue its path to big trouble of another sort. But free societies will never be monolithic unless we fancy tyranny again. Rational argument can revive authenticity by what it was based on, but not everyone's going to come along. What's needed is what's in shortest supply: leaders with a clue of what's going on. With echoes of Toynbee, Taylor writes, "Governing a contemporary society is continually recreating a balance between requirements that tend to undercut each other, constantly finding new solutions as the old equilibria become stultifying. There can never be…a definitive solution."

Anne says

I love the mission Taylor hands to us: "restoring the ideal of authenticity" to modern culture.

It's too easy to dismiss liberals as a lost cause. More often than not, a left-wing millenial strikes a thinking traditionalist as nonsensical, and one can easily conclude these kids are idiots and not worth bothering with. It's easy to sympathize with this conclusion, I think. The modern ideal of "authenticity", as Taylor puts it, too often manifests itself as "my right to do whatever I want without morality being forced upon me" (cough, Planned Parenthood, cough). It takes a discerning, patient, and benevolent mind to rummage through the crap our culture glamorizes and find the best in it. Taylor does this beautifully. Despite the intellectual rigor usually associated with emotionless academia, I sensed that what Taylor wanted to do here, more than make an insightful point or put forward a cogent argument, was give us *hope*.

"Authenticity is a valid ideal," he writes: the liberals and sentimental millenials aren't entirely driven by more than irrational self-indulgence. "You can argue in reason about ideals and about the conformity of practices to these ideals," he goes on: relativism and subjective definitions of "self-fulfillment" can be ostensibly proven nonsense; and finally, "these arguments can make a difference." He's writing for a reason. He wants to help our culture. The liberal millenials aren't a lost cause, and it's time to sit down and have a real conversation about how to live our lives.

"Articulacy here has a moral point, not just in correcting what may be wrong views but also in making the force of an ideal that people are already living by more palpable, more vivid for them; and by making it more vivid, empowering them to live up to it in a fuller and more integral fashion."

Mauberley says

The perfect introduction to the great man's magisterial works (Sources of the Self or A Secular Age). Good news! We are not cultural orphans drifting aimlessly on the waves of history. In fact, our present condition has an admirable philosophical heritage and Taylor means to introduce us to our cultural family tree. Things are not all bad although they are somewhat confused. This book brings new hope for the wretched.

Jimmy says

A novel and perspicacious approach to establishing meaningful and authentic dialogue (on both the personal and political level) between seemingly rival factions of individualism and social responsibility. A brief yet inspiring and empowering work.