

Charles Taylor

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1. Introduction

Charles Taylor is one of the leading philosophers in the contemporary world. His works range from reflections on artificial intelligence to analyses of contemporary multicultural societies (Ruth Abbey, 2000:1). He contributes to wide spectrum of philosophical areas: moral theory, theories of subjectivity, political theory, epistemology, hermeneutics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, aesthetics and religion (Ruth Abbey, 2004:1).

However, despite of the variety of the areas and topics of his interest, there is certain intrinsic connection between them.

This paper aims at illustrating this intrinsic connection through scrutinizing his epistemology, moral ontology and political philosophy about multiculturalism, which leads up to his understanding of multiple modernities.

In this connection, it is worth noting at the very outset that it is not Taylor's position that modernity is a single process of which European model is the paradigm. He holds rather that even though European modernity is the first one in history and has been object of some imitation for the other parts of the world, it is, after all, one of many. From this understanding, Taylor insists that the more they understand own path to modernity in the West, the better equipped they can understand the difference with other cultures (MSI:xii).

No society can develop a modern state and a market economy without some important change. And what come out depends partly on what went into the change. From this point of view, we should speak instead of "alternative modernities", different way of living the political and economic structures that the contemporary age makes mandatory. How these are worked out in India will not be the same as in Japan, which is in turn different from the North Atlantic region- which in its turn again has much inner diversity (PA:xi-xii).

2. Taylor's anti-Epistemology

Epistemology is, in Taylor's account, a discipline which sees knowledge as correct representation of an independent reality. Epistemology in this sense has been facing

intensive critical scrutiny not only in the Anglo-Saxon world, but also in the Continent these days. This understanding of epistemology is bound up with specific notions about science and about the nature of human agency, which are, in Taylor's account, very influential but often not fully articulated, and connected with certain central moral and spiritual ideas of the modern age(PA:3).

For Taylor, challenging the primacy of epistemology is to challenge these ideas. The epistemological construal, which sees human perception as process of passive reception of impressions from the external world, fits well with modern mechanistic science and applies to the latest artificial-intelligence models of thinking. In this construal, the congruence between ideas in mind and the reality outside comes about through a reliable method and this reliability, namely certainty is what the mind has to generate for itself through reflective turn(PA:4).

The epistemology is based on this reflective and self-given certainty. The ideal of self-responsibility, foundational to modern culture, is closely linked with the modern ideal of freedom as self-autonomy through this reflective and self-given certainty because to be free in the modern sense is to be self-responsible, relying on your own judgment. This notion of freedom involves certain key theses about the nature of the human agent, which are historically connected with the epistemological construal. The first one is the picture of the subject as ideally disengaged from the natural and social worlds. The second one is a punctual view of the self as free and rational to treat these worlds. The third one is an atomistic construal of society as constituted by individuals(PA:7-8).

Against these theses, Hegel, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein offer the new construal of knowledge, sharing a same form of argument, originated in Kant, called "the argument from transcendental conditions"(PA:8-9). In Taylor's account, they intend to argue the inadequacy of the epistemological construal in the traditional sense and the necessity of a new conception from the point of the indispensable conditions that make experience or awareness of the world possible. For instance, the Heideggerian formulation implies that in order for anything to appear or come to light, there should be a being to whom it appears. The common intuition shared by these four philosophers is that the epistemological construal offers an account of stages of the knower consisting of an ultimately incoherent amalgam of two features. The first feature is that the states and/or the ideas can be accurately identified and described in abstraction from the outside world and the second one is that they nevertheless point toward and represent things in the outside world. The second feature came to be called "intentionality" by Brentano and Husserl. This is another way of characterizing the

central condition of experience. In Taylor's account, it can be rephrased that firstly, we wouldn't have what we recognize as experience at all unless it were construable as of an object and secondly, their being of an object entails a certain relatedness among our representations.(PA:9-12)

In other words, there are certain conditions without which our perception and knowledge would fall apart into incoherence when we engage in the activities of getting to perceive and know the world. Taylor holds, referring to Heidegger, that the condition of our forming disengaged representations of reality is that we must be already engaged in coping with our world, dealing with the things in it, at grips with them(PA:11).

Exploration of conditions of intentionality that requires a more fundamental break with the epistemological tradition finally undermines the three key theses about the nature of the human agent, disengaged subject, the punctual self and atomism. Taylor illustrates this by the example that we can draw a neat line between my picture of an object and that object, but not between my dealing with the object and that object(PA:12)

Since being agents engaged in the world is the condition of perception and knowledge, the conceptions of disengaged subject and punctual self turn out to be impossible. Being agents engaged in the world as the condition of human perception and knowledge also means that we need certain background against which we think into an object for us. Taylor holds that this insight put in question the third thesis of the nature of human agent, atomism(PA:13).

Through clarification of the conditions of intentionality, in Taylor's account, we come to a better understanding of what we are as knowing agent. This reflection entails the view of seeing reason differently as the ability of critical reasoning to articulate the background of our lives perspicuously. It also includes a repudiation of moralities based purely on instrumental reason and a critical distance from those based on a punctual self. It also rejects atomistic social theories, reductive causal theories and the theories that cannot accommodate inter-subjective meaning. Taylor believes that this new conception of human agent, which stresses situated freedom and the roots of our identity in community, is hostile to certain forms of contemporary conservatism as well as to radical doctrines of nonsituated freedom and has a natural affinity with the civic humanism(PA:14-15).

Dreyfus calls Taylor's position anti-epistemology, meaning that we are in direct contact with everyday reality and make sense of the world through our bodily skills and taken-for-granted background practices(R.Abbey,2004:52). Taylor's goal is, in Dreyfus' understanding, to reveal the inner/outer structure of all epistemologies, even recent

would-be anti-epistemology, and to present and defend an opposed view that denies that the inner/outer dichotomy in any form correctly describes our basic relation to reality(HD:53).

Taylor's position can be best illustrated in his following correspondence addressed to Dreyfus..

These relevances, which J.J.Gibson calls affordances – that the ground affords walking, water affords drinking, holes afford hiding, and so forth – are clearly meaningful relative to one's interests and the structure of one's body, yet they do not have to be experienced conceptually, i.e. our response to them need not be based on beliefs. We can, on reflection, note that boulders are obstacles, but we can just as well respond to their current relevance like non-linguistic animals (HD:56).

However, in Dreyfus' account, Taylor's originality consists in his controversial claim that the mediational view he is attacking is still taken for granted by those who, in opposition to functionalism, defend qualia, and even those like Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty, who claim to oppose all forms of subject/object, mind/world dichotomies.

Taylor holds, in Dreyfus' view, that against the dogmatic claim that the mind's relation to the world must be mediated by belief, perception provides reliable pre-propositional bases for action and for accepting beliefs. In this connection, it might be worth recalling that in "*Explanation of Behaviour*", Taylor makes reservation whether animal behaviour can only be accounted for by laws governing action or whether it is amenable to explanation of a more mechanistic type. Taylor admits that there is a wide range of routine human action which seems to be on the same level (of animals) (EB:69).

In Taylor's account, our pre-propositionally formed beliefs can only arise on the basis of a more basic skilful contact with the world that is pre-propositional and in part even pre-conceptual(HD:58).

Then, Dreyfus raises the fundamental question around Taylor's position, referring to the fantasy of the brain in the vat that people whose brains are getting virtual reality inputs correlated with their action outputs are directly coping with perceived reality.

In responding to it, Dreyfus refers to Taylor's account in "Foundationalism and the inner-outer distinction" in *Reading McDowell*.

We are able to form conceptual beliefs guided by our surroundings, because we live in a pre-conceptual engagement with these which involves understanding. Transactions in this space are not causal processes among neutral elements, but

the sensing of and response to relevance. The very idea of an inner zone with an external boundary can't get started here, because our living things in a certain relevance can't be situated "within" the agent; it is in the interaction itself(Charles Taylor,2002:114).

Dreyfus concludes that the question whether the world is as we believe to be is Cartesian doubt and that Taylor's phenomenological account sustains because our direct contact with the perceptual world is more basic than belief such as the fantasy of the brain in vat(HD:62-63).

Then, Dreyfus moves on to the much deeper scrutiny of Taylor's position, which he calls pluralistic robust realism. Dreyfus illustrates Taylor's position by contrasting it with Rorty's one, which Dreyfus calls deflationary realism. In Dreyfus' account, Rorty holds that we are confined to what can be encountered on the basis of our coping practices and hence we should not think of science as a way of discovering propositions that correspond to an independent reality and that the objects of science are only intelligible on the background of our embedded coping and hence the idea of a view from nowhere is literally unintelligible(HD:64).

On the contrary, Taylor holds we can make sense of a science of the components of the universe as they are in themselves, utterly independent of any relation to our embodiment and that there is evidence that our current science has been progressively getting it right about, at least some aspects of the universe. Taylor's reasoning is in the following correspondence.

Our humanity consists in our ability to decenter ourselves from our original mode of absorbed coping; to learn to see things in a disengaged fashion, in universal terms, or from an alien or "higher" point of view. The peculiar form that this takes in Western scientific culture is the attempt to achieve, at least notionally, a "view from nowhere", or to describe things from the "absolute standpoint". Only we have to see that this decentered mode, whatever form it takes, is in an important sense derivative. The absorbed, engaged one is prior and pervasive(HD:64-65).

Dreyfus poses the question to Taylor, if the engaged experience is primordial and the disengaged mode is derivative from the engaged one, what sort of view from nowhere can we hope to achieve or even approach?(HD:65)

In order to clarify Taylor's position, Dreyfus introduces the idea of supersession. In Dreyfus' account, scientific revolutions are cases of supersession in that once one understands the new overall way of looking at things in science, he or she can not go back and accept the preceding understanding. Taylor contends that our direct coping

with everyday world, which also gives a sense of an independent nature that sets limits to what we can do unless we get in sync with it, puts us on a path that leads to theories that correspond more and more adequately to the structure of the universe(HD:68-71)

Then, Taylor holds, in Dreyfus' account, that in the process of gaining a more and more clairvoyant grip on our everyday world, we have discovered that we can leave behind all body-relative properties such as accessibility, color, size, and even the sort of our embodied coping. This is how we achieve the theoretical perception of physical reality that is alien to our everyday embodied mode of perception of space, time, objects, and causality, that could claim to correspond to the universe as it is in itself(HD:74). However, Taylor also insists that a view from nowhere of things in science is only one limited way of disclosing them and that there are many languages each correctly describing the different aspect of the universe(HD:79).

This is the reason why Dreyfus characterizes Taylor's position as pluralistic robust realism.

3. Taylor's Moral ontology

For Taylor, to be a human agent, a person, or a self in the modern sense is inextricably intertwined with the good, morality (SS:3). On the contrary, much contemporary moral philosophy has tended to focus on what is right to do rather than on what it is good to do. Taylor takes a view much broader than what is normally described as the "moral" and looks at what makes our lives meaningful or fulfilling as the moral issues(SS:4).

Taylor holds that our moral reactions involve not only 'gut' feelings but also claims about the nature and status of human beings. In the latter sense, a moral reaction is an assent to, an affirmation of, a given ontology of human (SS:5).

It is a role of this moral ontology to articulate the claims implicit in our moral reactions.

However, Taylor also admits that moderns can't be completely convinced by any particular definition of moral ontology even though they acknowledge that there are some grounds in human nature or the human predicament which makes human being fit object of respect. In Taylor's account, this is essentially modern predicament (SS:10).

So, more precisely speaking, the articulation of moral ontology is not to formulate what people already implicitly but unproblematically acknowledge, but to show that one or another ontology is the only adequate basis for our moral responses, whether we recognize or not.

Then, Taylor moves on to describe the picture of the moral world of the modern West. The moral world in the modern West is significantly different from that of previous

civilizations. What is peculiar in the modern West is that its formation for this principle of respect has come to be in terms of rights and it takes a form of subjective rights(SS:11). The notion of a “subjective right” is that the possessor can and ought to act on to put it into effect while law in the other civilizations was what I am under and conferred.

To accord you an immunity, formerly given you by natural law, in the form of a natural rights is to give you a role in establishing and enforcing this immunity. Your concurrence is now necessary, and your degrees of freedom are correspondingly greater.

To talk of universal, natural, or human rights is to connect respect for human life and integrity with the notion of autonomy. It is to conceive people as active cooperators in establishing and ensuring the respect which is due them.

This change of form naturally goes along with one in content, with the conception of what it is to respect someone. Autonomy is now central to this.

For us respecting personality involves as a crucial feature respecting the person’s moral autonomy. With the development of the post-Romantic notion of individual difference, this expands to the demand that we give people the freedom to develop their personality in their own way(SS:11-12).

In addition to the moral beliefs which underlie our sense of respect for others as described above, there are the other two axes of moral thinking, which are our understanding of what makes a full life and the notions concerned with dignity that we think of ourselves as commanding the respect of those around us(SS:15). Taylor holds that one of the most important ways in which our age stands out from earlier ones concerns the second axis, namely the meaning of life(SS:16).

The framework, in which people make sense of their own meaning of life, is a crucial set of qualitative distinctions(SS:19).

However, Taylor also points out that today, we share no common framework and each one of us needs to develop own framework. In finding meaningful framework for each one of us, articulation takes a vital role and finding a sense to life depends on framing meaningful expressions which are adequate(SS:17-18).

The fact that a framework is a set of qualitative distinctions means that there are certain higher goods, which represent standards by which our desires and inclinations are judged objectively. Contradiction between this fact and the modern tendency of trying to ignore or repudiate such higher goods is rooted in one of the modern moral notions, called “affirmation of ordinary life”, that the life of production and reproduction,

of work and the family, is the main locus of good life. Affirmation of ordinary life tends to oppose to the distinction between higher activity like contemplation, war, active citizenship or heroic asceticism and forms of ordinary life. Taylor, however, claims that there is confusion, which is that even the ethics of affirmation of ordinary life presumes something higher as its basis, that is the notion that the higher value is to be found not outside of but as a manner of living ordinary life(SS:23).

Qualitative distinctions, a framework, are essentially linked with the three axes of our moral thinking, our belief that humans are fit objects of respect, our understanding of what makes a full life and the notions concerned with dignity that we think of ourselves as commanding the respect of those around us. To articulate a framework is to know where we stand in the moral horizon, which is to define a moral space which is ontologically basic for a person(SS:25-26,29).

However, since moderns share no common framework and we have to develop own frameworks, expressions take a vital role in discovering own frameworks. This is the reason why the modern notion of respecting human dignity also means that of protecting their expressive freedom.

Modern identity is essentially defined by the way things have significance for individual and to be self is partly constituted by its self-interpretation or self-articulation, but this self's articulation can never be fully explicit(SS:34).

This last feature of modern identity is connected with another inescapable feature of human life, which is that we grasp our lives in narratives. In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going(SS:47).

As mentioned above, qualitative distinctions give the reason for our moral and ethical beliefs(SS:53).

However, it does not mean that goods or values, the evaluative terms are optional or relative, contrary to the descriptive terms in natural sciences, which are neutral and objective.

Firstly, the evaluative terms or the value terms should be grasped against the background of the social interchange characteristic of a given society and in the light of qualitative discrimination that the people make of what the good means for them. Secondly, the evaluative terms can make sense of what it is to live as a human being and it is completely different from what natural science such as physics claims to reveal and explain(SS:54,59).

Taylor calls what makes the most clairvoyant explanation in the above sense the Best Account (SS:58). The Best Account is in such value terms which make best sense of

us, which sustain until they are replaced with more clairvoyant substitutes and cannot be figured in a physical theory of the universe.

To grasp the world in the value terms is inseparable from participating in the way of living which such value terms request us to do (SS:67).

Taylor also holds that to offer reasons for moral views does not mean offering an external reason for them. The external reason is a reason B which proves that the act picked out by the A-description is only enjoined because it also bears the B-description. In nature, it works asymmetrically, meaning that B makes A and not vice versa(SS:76).

To offer reasons for moral views is rather to articulate what underlies our ethical choices, leanings, intuitions. It is not offering an external reason(SS:77).

Our qualitative distinctions, as definitions of the good, rather offer reasons in this sense.

So, we can see the place that qualitative discriminations have in our ethical life. Prearticulately, they function as an orienting sense of what is important, valuable, or commanding, which emerges in our particular intuitions about how we should act, feel, respond on different occasions, and on which we draw when we deliberate about ethical matters. Articulating these discriminations is setting out the moral point of the actions and feelings our intuitions enjoin on us, or invite us to, or present as admirable. They have this place as much in the broader domain of goods that we pursue across the whole range of our lives, as in the more special domain of higher goods, which claim a status of incomparably greater importance or urgency(SS:77-78).

As it is mentioned, articulation plays a vital role in Taylor's moral theory.

In a broader sense, it is because a vision of the good becomes available for the people of a given culture through articulation. In this sense, the notions of language and articulation mean not only linguistic description but also other speech acts such as the gesture of ritual, its music, its display of visual symbols(SS:91).

In a narrow sense, however, articulation is needed to retrieve a moral source which has been deeply suppressed in the mainstream of modern moral thinking.

Taylor admits that he shares the particular ethical view, a Socratic one, which sees reason, in the sense of the logos, of linguistic articulacy, as the telos of human beings. Articulation brings us to closer to the good as a moral source (SS:92).

In order to highlight this dimension, Taylor introduces a concept of the constitutive good. Taylor calls the goods which are components of a good life as 'life goods' and the feature in virtue of which these life goods are goods as 'constitutive goods'. The

constitutive good includes injunctions not only to act in certain ways and to exhibit certain moral qualities but also to love what is good(SS:93).

The mainstream modern moral theories such as the one of obligatory action have no place for the constitutive good even though they were grounded on an unadmitted adherence to certain life goods, such as freedom, altruism, universal justice (SS:93).

However, Taylor insists that we can't repudiate the constitutive good, which defines certain actions and motives as higher and thinking of which can inspire a motive which empower us to live up to what is higher (SS:95). We can't deny a role of articulation just because there are so many dead articulations(SS:96).

In Taylor's account, the silence of modern philosophy about the constitutive good is unhealthy because it is powered by metaphysical and epistemological reasons such as the affirmation of ordinary life and the modern conception of freedom, which Taylor believes invalid. The reason is that this version is deeply confused. It reads the affirmation of ordinary life and freedom as involving a repudiation of qualitative distinctions, a rejection of constitutive goods as such, while there are themselves reflections of qualitative distinctions and presuppose some conception of qualitative goods(SS:98).

Taylor also criticizes the neo-Nietzschean moral theories, which aim at revealing how visions of good may be connected to certain forms of domination.

But as with the theories of obligatory action, it is a confusion to infer from this either that views of the good are all simply enterprises of domination or that we can consider them all arbitrarily chosen. This would be to fail to recognize the manner in which one's own position or, indeed, that of any human being, is powered by a vision of the good(SS:100).

For Taylor, a framework, a set of qualitative distinctions, is something we can't escape from and it is constitutive in the sense that it would motivate us to take certain actions to realize higher good. Articulation brings us to the better understanding of this moral ontology. In other words, for Taylor, the good or the moral is something real and objective, in the sense that we can not put on and off freely.

Our modern senses of the self not only are linked to and made possible by new understanding of good but also are accompanied by (i) new forms of narrativity and (ii) new understanding of social bonds and relations(SS:105).

Our modern sense of the self is bound up with and depends on what one can call a 'moral topography'(SS:106).

4. Taylor's political philosophy about multiculturalism

The need for recognition is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements and politics of multiculturalism. As our identity is partly shaped by recognition, the others' understanding of who we are, non-recognition or misrecognition of the others can inflict real damage upon us. As an example, Taylor takes up the argument of some feminists that women in particular societies have been induced to adopt a depreciatory image of themselves and have internalized a picture of their own inferiority and hence they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities even when some of objective obstacles to their advancement fall away(MPR:25).

Taylor holds that due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people, but a vital human need(MPR:26).

There are two changes that made the discourse of recognition and identity a central issue in the modern world. The first is the collapse of social hierarchies. Contrary to the ethics of honor, which was based on inequalities among the people, the modern notion of dignity is based on everybody's equality, compatible with and essential to democratic culture. The second change is the notion of individualized identity, which emerged at the end of 18th century along with an ideal of "authenticity", being true to myself and my own particular way of being(MPR:26-28).

The second change reflects the massive subjective turn of modern culture, viewing ourselves as being with inner depth. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Herder played a vital role in this turn. Rousseau presented the morality as following a voice of nature within us and Herder put forward the idea that each of us has an original way of being. These ideas jointly increased the importance of self-contact through original way, namely finding yourself on your own way. This is how the modern ideal of authenticity, being true to yourself, has developed. In this understanding, identity is what I can articulate and discover, contrary to the hierarchical society, in which what we would call identity now was largely defined by one's social position(MPR:29-31).

However, Taylor also points out that we become full human agents only through interaction with others and in this sense, the genesis and development of the human mind is not monological, but dialogical. This is the reason why recognition is so important for formation of identity and the self(MPR:32-33).

The discourse of recognition and identity takes the two levels. The first one is in the intimate sphere and the second one is in the public sphere, in which a politics of equal recognition has increasingly taken a bigger role. In the public sphere, a politics of equal recognition contains two different things, the equalization of rights and entitlements and a politics of difference. While both are based on a principle of universal equality, there are some conflicts between them. The politics of difference often criticizes the

principle of nondiscrimination as being blind to the ways in which citizens differ and redefines it as requiring that we make these distinctions the basis of differential treatment. Under this redefinition of nondiscrimination, certain affirmative actions are justified as a temporary measure that will eventually level the historical discrimination. the politics of difference demands that we recognize and foster particularity while equalization of rights and entitlements, the politics of equal dignity, requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion(MPR:37-43).

The most radical attack by the politics of difference against the politics of equal dignity is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equality or “blind” liberalism is a reflection of one hegemonic culture and highly discriminatory, meaning that liberalism may be a kind of a particularism masquerading as the universal(MPR:43-44).

Taylor tries to look at this issue through tracing historical development of these two politics. The politics of equal dignity has emerged in Western civilization in two ways, which Taylor associates with Kant and Rousseau. Taylor holds that the underlying presumption of Rousseau’s attitude of placing a condition of freedom-in-equality as opposed to other-dependence and hierarchy as inseparable things is that, in Rousseau’s mind-setting, other-dependence is to seek esteem as a positional good, which presumes the hierarchical society. Hence, for Rousseau, only the balanced reciprocity between the citizens without any differentiation and distinction can underpin equality. This is the reason why Rousseau insists that freedom(nondomination), the absence of differentiated roles and a very tight common purpose seem to be inseparable(MPR:44-51). Taylor points out that we must all be dependent on the general will, lest there arise bilateral forms of dependence(MPR:51).

Taylor apparently does not endorse the Rousseauian model of equal dignity.

Taylor, then, turns on to another model, based on the idea of Kant, which has nothing to do with a general will, but acknowledges very restrictedly distinct cultural identities of citizens.

Following the formation of Dworkin, Taylor describes this model as follows. There are two kinds of moral commitments. The first one is the view that each one of us has own ends of life, which we strive for, called “substantive”, and the second is the one that we have to deal with each other fairly and equally, regardless of how we conceive our ends, called “procedural”. Dworkin’s claim is that a liberal society adopts society adopts no particular substantive view about the ends of he ends of life and is united based on the strong procedural commitment to treat people equally(MPR:56-57). In Taylor’s account, this procedural liberalism is rooted in the thought of Immanuel Kant, viewing

autonomy, the ability of each person to determine a view of the good life on his/her own as basis of human dignity(MPR:57).

However, referring to Quebec's language legislations, of which the first regulates who can send their children to English-language school, the second requires the businesses with more than fifty employees be run in French and the third outlaws commercial signage in any language other than French, Taylor presents a different model of a liberal society(MPR:52-53).

In this model, one has to distinguish the fundamental liberties, those that should never be infringed and therefore ought to be unassailably entrenched, on one hand, from privileges and immunities that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy on the other provided there is a strong reason to do it.(p.59) As an example, Taylor raised the collective will of the French speaking community in Quebec who want to make the opportunity available for the future generation to use the French language so that the future generations continue to identify as French-speakers. (pp.58-59)

In Taylor's account, this model of a liberal society is based on judgments about what make a good life, in which the integrity of culture has an important place. Taylor holds that this model can be liberal as long as it can offer adequate safeguards for fundamental rights and that the rigid procedural liberalism may rapidly become impractical in tomorrow's world(MPR:59,61).

There is another argument supporting the procedural liberalism, claiming that what this model of a liberal society can offer is a neutral ground on which people of all cultures can meet and coexist and we only have to make some distinctions between what is public and what is private or between religion and politics so that the contentious differences can be removed to where we don't need to discuss politically(MPR:62). Taylor contends as follows.

Liberalism is not a possible meeting ground for all cultures, but is the political expression of one range of cultures, incompatible with other ranges.

Liberalism can't and shouldn't claim complete cultural neutrality. Liberalism is also a fighting creed(MPR:62).

Another issue around multiculturalism is the demand that we should not only let different cultures survive but also acknowledge their equal worth. Underlying argument of this demand is that colonizers used to impose the image of inferiority on the subjugated and for the oppressed people, to be free from such a depreciating self-image means to liberate themselves from this subtly implanted image. The

background premise of these demands is that recognition forges identity. In this connection, it is to be noted that the people publicly admit that they are moved by the demand for recognition only after the idea that we are formed by recognition has widely spread(MPR:64-65).

The actors themselves are often the first to deny that they are moved by such considerations, and plead other factors, like inequality, exploitation, and injustice as their motives.

Very few Quebec independentists, for instance, can accept that what is mainly winning them their fight is a lack of recognition on the part of English Canada (MPR:64).

However, Taylor contends that the preemptory demand for favorable judgments of worth for certain culture as a right can not be justified because such a demand implicitly presupposes that there are already the standards to make judgment, which are of North Atlantic civilization. For Taylor, we need the transformation of our own horizon through comparative cultural studies before making real judgments(MPR:66-67,71-73).

5. Conclusion

In my understanding, his position in epistemology is anti-Cartesian, against the visions of the inner/outer pictures of our epistemic situation. In other words, Taylor's epistemology is closely connected to his anti-Cartesian ontology, the world view of subject/object division. In Dreyfus' account, the ontology that Taylor opposes sees the subject as a self-sufficient mind related to the objects in the world by way of internal mental states that in some way represent those objects but in no essential way depend on them(HD:52). Dreyfus describes Taylor's position as pluralist robust realism.

Taylor's epistemology is interlinked with his linguistic theory, viewing the language as the expression of human activities within the language community, in contrast with the view of language as a set of designative signs. The latter view sees language as an instrument, which constructs representation of the outer world by assembling ideas and signs. The view was developed through Hobbes-Locke-Condillac and still persists as the mainstream theory of language in the more refined forms.

On the contrary, Taylor's linguistic theory, which he calls the triple-H theory, representing Herder, Humboldt and Heidegger, sees the language as *energeia*, not just *ergon*(PP1:256). In other words, Taylor holds that language is not an objective instrument with which we can construct the proper representation of the outer world, but activities in which distinction of subject/object and inner/outer world would come

out in the ex post manner.

This linguistic theory shares the same perception with Taylor's epistemology, "plural robust realism". Taylor supports the usefulness of natural science in certain fields of human life while he contends that a subjective insight of human agency is an indispensable part of human life and human science has to take up the subjectivity such as value and purpose in order to understand the human being. Taylor's plural linguistic theory enables his plural epistemological theory. In my understanding, language is human activity from which human knowledge emerges as the product of human agent engaged and embodied in the world and hence the knowledge of technology and scientific theory as ex post perception is made possible exactly because we are embedded within and ultimately dependent on the world as bodily agent.

Taylor's linguistic theory is also closely interlinked with his moral ontology.

For Taylor, to be a human agent, a person, or a self in the modern sense is inextricably intertwined with the good and to understand the human world morally is completely different from grasping the picture of humans as objects of natural science. In his very early work, "*Explanation of behavior*", Taylor contends that our faith that we can discover what men should do and how they should behave through a study of human nature and its fundamental goals, will collapse once it is shown that human behavior cannot be accounted for in terms of goals or purposes(EB:4).

Taylor repeats that to offer reasons for moral view does not mean offering an external reason, but rather articulating what underlies our ethical frameworks, a set of qualitative distinctions(SS.76). This moral framework, or the vision of the good is a human language in a broader sense, including not only linguistic description but also other acts of communication such as drawing, dance, music and body movement. So, based on his plural linguistic theory, it is certain that the moral language of humans is not relative or optional, but as independent as the language of natural science.

Taylor's conception of moral ontology is based on his linguistic theory and his epistemology, which supports our direct contact with everyday world and constitutes the basis of certainty of the moral world.

Lastly, Taylor's moral ontology is the foundation of his position about multiculturalism, which reflects his nonprocedural liberalism(MPR:63). Taylor is contesting the instrumental view of language that considers the difference between languages as tractable and converging in the long-run and thus overlooking the deep-lying differences between multiple modernities. Taylor holds that it was the Romantic theory of language which brought out such a deep-lying differences(PA:xii).

Taylor contends that identity, to be a self in the modern sense, is partly shaped by

recognition and through social interaction. In this sense, formation of identity is not monological, but dialogical. Taylor's dialogical notion of identity is closely connected with his linguistic theory, which sees language not as product of the disengaged, atomistic subject, but as activities within certain language community in which humans are embedded.

In Taylor's account, human is the agent embedded in everyday world, certain community characterized and defined through its history and culture, the morality can take variable shapes in different cultures(SS:5).

I believe that Taylor's linguistic theory, his epistemology and moral ontology, is intrinsically connected with his political philosophy about multiculturalism.

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- PP1** *Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Papers, 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979
- PP2** *Philosophy and the Human Sciences, Philosophical Papers, 2*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985
- SS** *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989
- MPR** Charles Taylor, Amy Gutmann ed., *Multiculturalism and "the Politics of Recognition"*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992
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