PRAGMATISM AND A "CATHOLIC" PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

JAMES SWINDAL
John Carroll University

Catholic identity is often discussed in relation to institutions such as schools and hospitals. Catholic identity can also be investigated in relationship to various disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology, and psychology. This article builds a bridge to neoscholastic thought in articulating a philosophical anthropology which strives to maintain a Catholic identity and focus. The work of Charles Taylor, a leading Catholic philosopher, is presented in an effort to place the existential problem of personal agency within a Catholic framework.

The nature and identity of Catholic philosophy is much in discussion today (Dupre, 1997; Haldane, 1997; Plantinga, 1995; Swindal, 1999; Taylor, 1999). Scholars suggest a number of ways to delineate criteria that pick out the essential features of such a discipline. They range from a simple return to a scholastic holism, to a philosophical and theological explication of authoritative Catholic doctrine, to a setting forth of what generally tend to be Catholic concerns in philosophy (medieval philosophy, philosophy of the person, natural law theory, social justice, and so forth), to a simple analysis of the concerns of philosophers who happen to be Catholic or Christian (Swindal, 1999). Some philosophers who identify themselves as Catholic today follow a continental tradition in philosophy, drawing upon both its historical figures and more recent writers, such as Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas; others appeal to analytic methods of analysis. While these differences among the Catholic philosophical approaches may be somewhat disconcerting, they certainly occasion a careful inquiry into the nature of Catholic philosophy that is bound to bear fruit for our understanding of Christian faith and practice. Moreover, regardless of the approach taken, what remains undisputed is that a Catholic philosophy must cohere with the core mystery of a trinitarian Christian faith:

that God, the creator of all in the Spirit, incarnated himself in his creation through his Son in order to redeem all creation from sin and death.

The general approach to a Catholic philosophy I shall advance here is one that forges links between its recent neoscholastic heritage, manifest in the broadly unified curriculum it provided for most Catholic seminaries and universities up until Vatican II, and current concerns in both analytic and continental philosophy. This is not intended to be a retrograde move, but one that takes the development of both contemporary philosophy and Catholic philosophy as interrelated and enriching. What is required is neither a mindless return to a tradition, which probably was not as unified or as comprehensive as one might think, nor a revisiting of past thematics just for their own sakes. We need, rather, a critical engagement, one currently lacking in most Catholic intellectual circles, with many of the resources of the past Catholic tradition. By critical I mean one that can impose a certain kind of testing on that tradition. The slant I want to give this testing is that it explores the questions that specific philosophical issues raise regarding any aspect of Christian practice today. By Christian practice I mean those activities (worship, prayer, education, interpersonal relationships, scriptural study, work, recreational activities) expressive of one's sacramentally construed Christian faith. I am specifically interested here in the practice of Catholic education, particularly at the university level. Of course, my pragmatic starting point itself can be challenged. I don't intend to claim that the propriety of this approach is self-evidently, unimpeachably ascertainable. But I do hold that such a focus on Christian practice stands squarely in the spirit of Vatican II and is consistent with the Catholic tradition hitherto.

Of all the resources supplied by the neoscholastic inheritance of the Catholic philosophical tradition, the one I shall take up here is that of its philosophical anthropology. This topic was previously designated under a host of labels, such as philosophical psychology, the philosophy of man, and the philosophy of the human person or human nature. Before the Council, such courses were the cornerstone of many Catholic university curricula. In their classic form, these courses dealt with diverse issues, including the distinction between humans and animals; the relation between body and soul; the natures of sensation, knowledge and will; the problems of freedom and determinism; and even the rational possibility of an afterlife. In the wake of Vatican II's emphasis on openness to all cultures, in Catholic universities such courses broadened their scope significantly (Donceel, 1967). Catholic philosophers began to read non-Catholic and non-Christian existentialists, metaphysicians, psychologists, and pragmatists. Most notably, this tradition of philosophical anthropology in Catholic circles came under the strong sway of phenomenology, particularly under what was termed its search for the subject.

Inaugurated by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology went through signifi-

cant modifications by his pupil Heidegger, and then still further changes by Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Stephen Strassner, Paul Ricoeur, and others. All these approaches share a common methodology that in some way brackets everyday experience in order to discover grounds, or self-evidences, that settle fundamental questions about human existence. In Donceel (1967), for example, a phenomenological analysis arrives at an irreducible point of affirming and willing at which "I really coincide with myself. In that same act I also coincide with being" (p. 31). The most recent phenomenologists then apply these evidences to such issues as personhood, learning theories, evolution, psychoanalysis, love, and embodiment.

Now, however, courses in philosophical anthropology—though not courses in the phenomenological analysis that underlaid many of them—have all but disappeared in Catholic universities. Many of their hitherto philosophical arguments are now the purview of other philosophical disciplines. Epistemology, for example, deals with most aspects of personal knowledge and belief; phenomenology itself deals with the questions about the search for the subject; philosophy of mind takes up some of the psychological aspects of knowing and sensing; and metaphysics deals with questions of the immateriality and singularity of person, as well as freedom and determinism. Some other topics these courses treated are now taken up primarily in non-philosophical disciplines (e.g. psychology [theories of perception, character, personality, emotions], biology [questions of evolution], or religion [theories of the origins of life, the possibility of an afterlife]). I shall argue, however, that at least one question has been left unaccounted for by all of these other disciplines, whether philosophical or not, and is the exclusive reserve of a philosophical anthropology: the question of "who a person is" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 16). This question constitutes the problem of existential identity and forms the basis for a freestanding philosophical anthropology that would be an essential part of any curriculum informed by a Catholic philosophy of education.

The topic of who a person is, however, needs to be made more precise. It does not concern a question about who a person is psychologically or ethically, but rather the prior question of who a person is as an actor in the world of things, other persons, and ultimately God. The existential dimension of this question stems from Aquinas's principle of participation: that each finite act of existence diffuses its own goodness to the beings of the finite world through its action (McCool, 1989). This leads to specific questions regarding the constitution of personal identity: how a person is identifiable living in a world of changing time, places, things, events, and persons; how a person is both body (matter) and spirit (form); and how a person is both a creature and yet actively creative.

To narrow the focus of this unwieldy topic, I shall consider the anthropological reflections of the philosopher who is arguably the most vibrant

Catholic philosopher in the English speaking world today: Charles Taylor. While not limiting this article to Taylor's wide-ranging and scholarly synthesis about these issues alone, nevertheless his work contains a number of essential tools for a critical analysis of existential identity. Taylor has crafted an intriguing analysis of several topics generally associated with Catholic philosophy (e.g., a metaphysics of being, a realist epistemology, and an ethics of the good) with the help of several variants of contemporary philosophy, particularly continental philosophy. Taylor is, however, a Catholic thinker not only in content, but also in methodology. His methodology consists of a dialectics *cum* synthesis; it explicates dialectical tensions within an existential unity, as we shall see below. Thus, after explicating his anthropological views, I shall critique one of his fundamental views, his objection to naturalism, by means of a kind of dialectical analysis. As a result, I hope to broaden the precision and applicability of his own anthropological analysis.

My aim here is threefold. First, I shall briefly analyze the philosophical issue of who a person is, focusing primarily on the existential problem of personal agency, as adroitly summarized by Ricoeur (1992). Second, I shall take up Taylor's historical account of personal agency. His perspective suggests that persons have no fixed essence consisting in a fixed set of natural properties; a person is, rather, a developing project, though one that emerges within unchangeable structures. I shall focus in particular on the transcendental arguments he uses to uncover the structures of embodied agency. Third, to engage Taylor critically, I shall argue for a naturalized view of some features of human action derived from arguments provided by two contemporary pragmatic accounts of agency: a universalist (Habermas) and a rationalist (Brandom). Such accounts provide a more fine-grained analysis of some of the problems that afflict formulations of the relationship between human identity and human agency. I shall conclude that a pragmatic analysis of agency can augment a philosophical anthropology's analysis of the question of existential identity. Moreover, it can do so in a way that is consistent with what I take to be minimal ontological and inferential commitments of any Catholic philosophy.

WHO IS A PERSON?

Who is a person? It would be difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to the vast literature that has addressed this question of existential identity (Cassirer, 1944; Husserl, 1962; Lonergan, 1957; MacIntyre, 1999; Maritain, 1953, 1959; Ricoeur, 1986). In order to sift through this rich background of sources, the initial criteria of existential identity will be restricted to: (a) a person is the unique object of an identifying reference, and (b) as this object, a person is an embodied agent.

By identifying reference, I do not intend an instrumental view in which a

word or proposition is formed in a subject's mind that properly mirrors or represents itself, but rather an expressive view that makes explicit commitments (beliefs) and entitlements (justifications) that an agent undertakes—in the course of everyday practices—for itself (Brandom, 2000). Thus from these criteria, two existential questions arise: how do we identify ourselves as individual beings in a social world? And how do we understand the differences that our particular embodiment imposes on us relative to our rational action in that world? The first question involves broadly our self-knowledge; the second concerns the metaphysical issues of time, space, and causality relative to us as actors.

As a preliminary matter, we will take three issues relevant to our initial questions as settled, though I will not provide the explanations as to why. First, we shall assume that we can answer these questions about existential identity without any reference to a private language by which the person has inexpressible states of mind or experience. We shall thus assume a publicness to one's identity. Second, we shall characterize as incoherent the notion that a person has no intrinsic capacities, but is simply an aggregate of sensations, ideas, or external relations. The uniqueness of a rational person, we shall assume, can in some way be expressed or articulated. Third, existential questions involve commitments about the nature of being in general. These, in turn, involve certain transcendental questions about goodness, truth, etc. For our purposes, we shall assume that one can investigate these questions about identity without giving a comprehensive account of transcendental ontology per se.

The most relevant issue concerning the question (a) of identifying reference is whether it is to be answered semantically or pragmatically. For our purposes, a semantic analysis looks at attributions about what something means, while a pragmatic analysis investigates how something is used. Both will be considered.

Strawson (1959) offers an intriguing account of important aspects of a semantic view of the person. He criticizes the Cartesian dual substance view of the person derived from a notion of one "owning oneself" or being a subject. Rather, he defines persons by explicating the privileged, or basic, particulars that indicate that they belong to that type. He argues that the basic particular on the basis of which we can identify anything is that it be a perceptible spatio-temporal object: a body. But what about imperceptible "private particulars" (p. 41) such as subjective events of thinking, inquiring, feeling, asserting, and so forth? Do they refer to a body? At first, it would seem that they make no direct identifications at all. A pain does not seem to have an intrinsic reference. But Strawson (1959) argues that these "private experiences" (p. 42) in fact refer to persons. The pain, for example, is not just a pain of a body, but is *my* pain. This attribution to oneself is not without difficulties, however. A pain predicate is ascribable also to others: the "pain" in the

claim "I am in pain" can be substituted into the claim "he is in pain." Moreover, though I can also claim that a body or pain is mine, from that ascription alone it is unclear that I "should have the concept of *myself* at all, why I should ascribe my thought and experiences to *anything*" (p. 93). To avoid both of these difficulties, Strawson (1959) argues for the primitiveness of the concept of a person on the grounds that "a necessary condition of states of consciousness being ascribed at all is that they should be ascribed to the *very same things* as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation.... That is to say, states of consciousness could not be ascribed at all, *unless* they were ascribed to persons" (p. 102). Thus we look not for an entity that corresponds to the concept of a person, as Hume did, but for a fundamental condition of ascription per se. Strawson (1959) suggests thus that we embrace not Kant's view of a formal, analytic unity of a person, but Wittgenstein's (1953) notion that the subject is not a thing in the world, but its limit. Person and world are co-ascriptive, as it were. Moreover, this inter-reference forms the basis for all intersubjectivity, since other persons are part of one's world. "There is no sense in the idea of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself, or at all, unless the ascriber already knows how to ascribe at least some states of consciousness to others" (Strawson, 1959, p. 106). In Brandom's (2000) idiom, I need to grasp the circumstances of application of the concept of person first in a social context.

However, Strawson (1959) realizes that we still have a problem with this kind of intersubjective ascription of the person. Often when one ascribes personal characteristics to oneself, "one does not do so on the strength of observation of those behavior criteria on the strength of which one ascribes them to others" (p. 107). In some cases, one has an adequate basis for ascribing such a predicate to oneself, and yet these conditions differ from those on the basis of which one would ascribe the same predicate to another. Consider a pain: I can feel it without others observing it; and others can observe it in me without feeling it themselves. Thus the language of self-ascription does not always refer to observable objects. We must make these ascriptive inferences extend even further. Consider someone going for a walk. We don't identify the walker as a person until we can understand his or her movements only as schemes of action whose present course and future development we know without observation of all the relevant present movements. We infer that others are actors, and thus self-ascribers, on the basis of a whole set of nonobserved but relevant factors that would be needed to decide questions about their action. Why is he walking? Is he sleepwalking? Walking for no reason? Going somewhere specific? For Strawson (1959), this raises the question whether, thus, these contextual factors cannot be settled unless we are able to appeal indirectly but necessarily to a common nature, or a "group mind" (p. 113). The semantic view, with its emphasis on ascription of type identity, has a difficult time answering this perplexing question.

A pragmatic view is able to account for this problem of putative semantic entailment of a kind of group mind. Rather than understanding identification on the model of the ascription of a token instantiation of two basic particulars, it places personal identification within any interplay—itself a practical action—between first and second person interlocutors in an actual speech situation. Ricoeur (2000) argues that this indicates a crucial shift from a semantic inquiry about the meaning and references of a sentence to a reflexive inquiry on the factuality of an utterance. How does this reflexivity impact identifying reference? Ricoeur (1992) argues that the pragmatic anchoring of the reflexively grasped token "I"—the non-repeatable unique referential stance of an actual speaker in an interaction—correlates to the semantic substitutable character of the type "I." Combining the two, Ricoeur (1992) sees an important relationship between the referential person and the reflecting subject. The unity comes in grasping the anchoring as an activity signified by one's own body: "the body is at once a fact belonging to the world and the organ of a subject that does not belong to the object of which it speaks" (pp. 54-55). The strange otherness of one's own body arises out of a wide problematic, whose stakes are the ontological status of the being that we ourselves are, "a being that comes into the world in the mode of incarnation" (p. 55). Thus this ontologically described otherness of the acting person immediately has religious overtones for Ricoeur.

From this pragmatic view, the person is identifiable only as acting and effecting change in the world. But while a pragmatist can simply conceive of a person as a causal agent in the world acting for ends—getting what one wants, in Rorty's (1999) idiom—Ricoeur (1992) uses the phenomenological method to uncover not the causes but the motives of actions. Motives relate to actions in the same way that causes relate to events. While causes can be directly located at a spatio-temporal point, motives are dispositional, and thus are not simply discreet events. Ricoeur (1992) argues that we refer to the latter in understanding the "temporal component of delay and the reference to the agent whose intention it is" (p. 82). One can get better purchase on these phenomena of anticipation and delay in one of two ways. Davidson (1980) argues that cognitive reasons that inform an agent's action can themselves be causes of it. To account for cases in which an agent can have reasons to act, but still not act, he distinguishes prima facie value judgments that determine the desirability of an action from all-out judgments that cause the action to occur. The phenomenological point of view, on the other hand, does not distinguish sharply between the desirability of an action and its actual execution, but reveals how anticipation and delay indicate "the prospective character of the very condition of agency" (Ricoeur, 1999, p. 82). Anticipation and delay operate during the entire course of the deliberation.

Ricoeur (1992) makes this anticipation more precise by defining it as a "power to act" (p. 101). But he understands it neither as an efficient cause nor

as an original cause. Rather he argues that it can be realized only at the end of a labor of thinking, by means of a "dialectic" (p. 102). This dialectic has a disjunctive stage, in which we see the antagonism between original causality and other modes of causality, and then a conjunctive stage in which these two causalities are synergistically combined so as to give the actor not simply power but initiative. Kant (1958) had delineated the notion of human power by making the causality of freedom a transcendental idea. For him, it was a question of how far back we go in tracing the beginnings of an action. Thus he effectively saw this initiation of action as "a causality which is not appearance, although its effect is to be met with in appearance" (pp. 255-256). Ricoeur (1992) instead takes the phenomenological view of action that recognizes an "I can" that refers to the ontology of one's own body, "of a body which is also my body and which, by its double allegiance to the order of physical bodies and to that of persons, therefore lies at the point of articulation of the power to act which is ours and of the course of things which belong to the world order" (p. 111). Thus this analogical unity of the agent derives from this interrelation between act and power, expressed through the otherness of the self that concludes in attestation and conviction. This otherness is understood on the basis of the "three great experiences of passivity—the experience of one's own body, of other, and of conscience" (p. 355). The self is situated in a dialectic between its own actuality and passivity.

What Ricoeur (2000) has done is to explicate with his characteristic deftness the phenomenological conditions of embodied agency. But he makes the bodily aspect, ultimately, into a kind of otherness. He does so in order to set it up as a radical kind of irreducible potency in agency. This points to the permanent "tragic dimension of action" (p. 154). Such a notion of the body, however, seems existentially incomplete. Rather than casting the bodily potencies only in the form of dialectical passivities, one also needs to parse them privitively as existentially constitutive of who the person actually is to be. In other words, one must understand the person not only as a dialectical unity of activity and passivity, but also as possessing a basic orientation towards a transcendental unity. The latter is the dimension of personal identity with which Taylor (1999) is particularly concerned.

TAYLOR'S "STRUCTURES OF THE SELF"

Like Ricoeur, Taylor (1999) is deeply interested in who the human person is. He shares Ricoeur's concerns about personal identity, theories of action, and ethics. He also employs some of the dialectical phenomenological analysis Ricoeur finds fruitful. But Taylor gives what I take to be a more synthetic answer to the question of agency than Ricoeur does. To reconstruct Taylor's views, I shall first look at his conception of Catholic thinking in general and then examine his anthropological analysis of the person. The general purport

of his anthropology is to lay out the background certainties that are constitutive of an existential identity.

Taylor's (1999) paper, "A Catholic Modernity?," which he gave on receiving the Marianist Award in 1996, defines rather poignantly the crucial issues facing any kind of Catholic philosophy today. The title of the paper indicates the first issue: the current tensions between Catholicism and modernity. This is nothing new to anyone familiar with Taylor's overall project. In his groundbreaking work, *Sources of the Self* (Taylor, 1989), he assesses the development of the modern view of the self quite pessimistically. We will examine that argument a little later. Prior to that we need to take up his views on the question of the nature of Catholic philosophy as such.

Taylor (1999) starts with the quasi-etymological observation that the "catholic" of Catholic thinking connotes both universality and wholeness. How do these two closely related predicates differ? Taylor (1999) claims that to form solidarity, a kind of strong universality, among diverse human beings requires that each person come to see that one "cannot attain wholeness alone" (p. 14). Wholeness is a kind of identity-in-difference: the grasp of one's self-understanding as a person among diverse persons. Often this complementarity between universality and wholeness has been lost in the Church's own drive for conformity, indicating that it is possible to have a kind of weak universality without wholeness. Taylor is particularly interested in how our understanding of universality and wholeness has been influenced by the culture of modernity that has developed in the West in the last three or four centuries.

Taylor (1999) then picks out two aspects of modernity that have influenced Catholic thinking. First, modernity is a time-consciousness that individuals have by which they understand that the present has progressed over the past. Taylor thinks that this attitude makes it difficult for present-day Catholics not to think that their "vast field of spiritualities" (p. 15) renders them better off than their ancestors. Second, modernity has led inexorably to secularization. Secularization is the transformation of cultural practices into forms that are neutral with regard to religious affiliation. For example, sacred music at one time comprised almost all forms of music in the West; secularism keeps these same forms but divests them of any reference to a liturgical or religious context. But secularization is not a prima facie problem for any religious believer, since it does not preclude the possibility of religious faith or practices per se. Moreover, secularization has made possible the development of legal and governmental structures, such as human rights, that better fit pluralistic societies comprising persons of different religious faiths. Thus it has made it easier for Christians to accept full rights for atheists or violators of the Christian moral code. Ironically, secularism has in one sense given Christians the ability, as John Stuart Mill (1910) argued, to live more virtuously since they are now in societies that allow them to act contrary to their

moral code without legal coercion. Nonetheless, Taylor (1999) sees significant problems that secularism poses for the Christian faith. It can facilitate a marriage between the Christian faith and a particular form of culture. More problematically, "the very fact that freedom has been well served by a situation in which no view is in charge—that it has therefore gained from the relative weakening of Christianity and from the absence of any other strong, transcendental outlook—can be seen to accredit the view that human life is better off without transcendental vision altogether" (p. 19). I take this to be Taylor's key claim: that the Christian faith requires that personal identity requires, in some way, a transcendental vision of one's life. But what exactly is this transcendental vision secularism tends to undermine? And what are the consequences of this vision for one's existential identity?

Taylor's (1995) defense of transcendentality is in direct opposition to what he takes to be a prevailing naturalism in secularized modernism. While naturalism is a multivalent term, it has come to be closely associated, at least in North America, with the development of pragmatism. It can be argued that pragmatism is the only "native" American philosophy, though its roots are found in many European sources such as Fichte, Hegel, and Nietzsche. Moreover, there are different variants of pragmatism: classical pragmatism (C. S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey), European pragmatism (the early Heidegger, later Wittgenstein, Karl-Otto Apel, Habermas), neo-pragmatism (W. V. Quine, Davidson, Hilary Putnam, Rorty), and rationalist, or inferentialist, pragmatism (Wilfred Sellars, Brandom). Taylor (1999) finds in all naturalisms a kind of "exclusive humanism" (p. 20) that not only puts humans at the center of the universe, but also denies them any authentic aspirations to goals or states beyond the world in which they live. In the starkest of terms, naturalism negates anything "beyond life" (p. 20). From the transcendental point of view, on the contrary, the meaning of life has not exhausted its fullness or goodness. Instead, a transcendental vision can find even in suffering and death not only something that matters beyond life, but also something from which life itself originally draws. Thus, natural life is to be subordinated to the "abundant life" that Jesus advocates in his Good Shepherd discourse (John 10:10). This call of the transcendental requires, ultimately, a conversion or a change of identity (Taylor, 1999).

This change of identity prompted by the transcendental has some core features. It is a transition from self-centeredness (which presumably, for Taylor, is a natural kind of state) to God-centeredness. Traditionally, this is the path of martyrs who give up their lives so that others may live and flourish. Yet Taylor understands this transition from the martyr's to that of another person's or group's good still promotes a worldly flourishing consistent with naturalism. Realizing this, some reformers argued instead for self-renunciation for its own sake regardless of its consequences. But Taylor (1999) notes that this form of radical renunciation gained few adherents.

Instead, most self-renunciation today is understood as a kind of "practical *agape*" (p. 22). Here the Christian, under the influence of Protestant reformers such as Luther and Calvin, reduces the transcendental to the natural by understanding that one's faith is to be lived out only in the context of one's ordinary life. In *Sources of the Self* (Taylor, 1989), the author astutely traces this cultural development back to a Christian piety that focused on the centrality of work life and family. Those who exalt ordinary life reject the Aristotelian model of contemplative life for its proclivity to promote pride and self-absorption. Unable to find value in suffering and death, those who focus on ordinary life try assiduously to avoid them. But Taylor (1999) claims that, paradoxically, "clinging to the primacy of life in the second (let's call this the 'metaphysical') sense is making it harder for us to affirm it whole-heartedly in the first (or practical) sense" (pp. 24-25). The consequences of this resistance to the transcendent, found in this uncritical embrace of ordinary life, are not so much epistemic as moral and spiritual.

Ironically, Taylor (1999) finds one source for moving to a fuller transcendental understanding of existence in someone who rejected the virtues of ordinary life altogether: Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche argued that the ordinary life virtue of egalitarianism emerges from the deep resentment of the powerful by the weak. Rejecting such egalitarianism, he thought, would lead to an affirmation of an even more natural life replete with violence, domination, and power. Taylor's (1999) critique of ordinary life follows not as much from Nietzsche's critique of resentment, however, as from the way it helped to expose ordinary life's own "Janus face" (p. 32). Ordinary life virtues emphasize benevolence and solidarity. But modern individuals, trying to meet these demands, experience instead a growing sense of anger, futility, and even contempt when confronted with the disappointments of actual human performance. This is ordinary life's "dialectics" that risks "repetition" (p. 33). A transcendental vision, on the other hand, opens up a future for humans which is not a matter of guarantee, but only of faith. It is derived from "standing among others in the stream" of God's unconditional love (p. 35). In any case, self-worth stems no longer from the individual's endeavors alone.

Taylor has drawn a rather wide horizon for a Catholic philosophical anthropology. It is oriented towards a certain kind of cultural criticism that can undermine the naturalistic thinking that hampers our very capacity to strive for a transcendental goal or purpose. Taylor's (1999) Christological principle is that "Redemption happens through Incarnation" (p. 14). Yet he bestows particular importance on the redemptive aspect of the Christian mystery. The incarnational and natural "ordinary" requires always the call of a redemptive "beyond" that is the object of our endeavors inspired by faith and hope. But what remains of the incarnational in light of the redemptive? Is it merely a temporary placeholder for the work of the transcendent? What

would be its own status or value? To answer these questions, we need to examine in more detail Taylor's thorough analysis of the philosophical development of naturalism.

In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor (1989) gives a historical and an ontological account of the development of naturalism. He is particularly interested in how naturalism has tainted modernity's thinking about morality. It has profoundly undermined our ability to locate sources of morality. Taylor thinks, on the other hand, that our very capacity to identify ourselves as persons requires our grasp of the non-immediate ontological and metaphysical grounds of our moral life.

Naturalist moral philosophy tends to focus not on transcendental goods or a good life as a whole, but only on what our (minimal) rights and obligations are as individual agents. Taylor (1989) sees value in these theories of obligation. For one, they have generated theories of universal human rights and dignity. These have resulted from a modern concept of freedom tempered with self-control. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of avoiding pain and suffering. But the reasoning that the naturalist moralist uses does not differ from that needed for natural science. Ontology becomes, in turn, irrelevant for morality (Taylor 1989). Taylor accuses both Kantians and utilitarians of committing this naturalistic reduction. With utilitarians, it is rather clear: ethical action is definable simply in terms of an output of pleasure. Kant, on the other hand, rejecting the utilitarian assumption that motives are homogeneously determinable, favored the view of Augustine and Rousseau that the quality of one's will is key. On this view, moral obligations owe nothing to nature. But Taylor claims that by rejecting the link between moral obligation and an existential vision of the good, Kantianism inadvertently takes on a different kind of naturalism. Kantians still share the utilitarian's embrace of a procedural, non-substantive, conception of ethics. They both have unitary conceptions of obligation divorced from an existential human identity as a source of morality.

Taylor (1989) argues that most of our moral sources are derived not from mere accounts of obligation, but from an "objective" ontological grasp of the "intrinsic description" of who a person is (p. 7). Even a specific ethical claim about, for example, the irrelevance of race in hiring in fact presupposes such an intrinsic description. "Ontological accounts have the status of articulations of our moral instincts. They articulate the claims implicit in our reactions. We can no longer argue about them at all once we assume a neutral stance and try to describe the facts as they are independent of these reactions" (p. 8). Moreover, reductive naturalistic explanations, which rigorously exclude references to ontology, themselves implicitly take on the role of one. Their own neutrality is in fact based on a very specific, albeit unacknowledged, ontological description of the person.

Though not an explicit target of Taylor's criticisms, the pragmatist views

of Rorty (1999) can serve as an example of such a de-ontologized (yet onto-logical) moral stance. Rorty embraces an anti-essentialism on the basis of which he rejects all internal relations, or intrinsic properties, of things or persons. A number, for example, has no essence or content that is independent of its relations to other numbers. In other words, there is no intrinsic nature of 17 that differs from the number 51. We can delineate all of the differences between the two numbers—that one is greater than another, that one is divisible by certain numbers while the other is not—without reference to any internal properties of the numbers. For Rorty, all objects are like numbers in this sense. Language is simply a way we relate things to each other in this anti-essentialistic way. Though Rorty (1999) acknowledges that rock and trees existed before language, we cannot have access to them independently of our own descriptions. The same goes for moral issues: there are no objective moral properties, we simply work out whatever works for us within the various configurations of the situations in which we (naturally) find ourselves.

Taylor (1989) responds to such views of naturalistic neutrality by phenomenologically explicating the ontological "structures of the self" that reveal their error (p. 19). First, the self is oriented towards certain goods. Some of them are incomparable goods, which are not just more desirable than ordinary goods but are the "strong evaluators" on the basis of which other goods are judged. These frameworks resist naturalistic reduction: they include "strong qualitative discriminations" (p. 27). He then claims that identification of the self's action in light of these goods requires two unique kinds of structuring: one regarding spatial and the other temporal questions. The spatial involves finding a kind of fundamental orientation for one's moral space. Morality is thus not made *ex nihilo*, but is derived from a specific kind of perceptual orientation: "We couldn't conceive of a human life form where one day people came to reflect that, since they were spatial beings, they ought after all to develop a sense of up and down, right and left, and find landmarks which would enable them to get around.... We can't conceive of a form in which this question is not always already there, demanding an answer" (p. 31). Thus we can perceive the world only as embodied creatures. When we then come to ask how to act, we find that we must interpret ourselves as selves insofar as we move in a certain space of questions as we seek and find an orientation to the good. Such interpretations, though, are never fully articulable. But to interpret what is good as such requires an "absolute question" that itself frames "the context in which we ask the relative questions about how near or far we are from the good" (Taylor, 1989, p. 45). The temporal structures, on the other hand, involve our situatedness with regard to the past and future. Unlike Heidegger, Taylor (1989) claims that to make sense of my present action it is not enough merely to defer to my past and project a future. Rather, one projects not simply a momentary future state, but a "future story"

(p. 48). To do so, one must reconstruct one's life, both present and past, as a whole. No part of one's past can be left unredeemed; all experiences count in the narrative-to-come. But our ability to create this future story requires the aid of moral sources—now presently besieged by naturalism.

How do moral sources specifically aid the self's existential orientation structured in these temporal and spatial ways? Taylor (1989) notes that both Platonism and Christianity held similar moral orientations. For Plato, the ideas provided an orientation by directing the unity and self-mastery to the soul, while for Christianity, God orients creation by his own goodness and providence. Though the idea of the good and God share striking similarities (both were ultimate principles of being and knowledge; both were portrayed by the sun), Plato's Good objectively organizes the ideas toward which the subject turns, while for Augustine, God's directiveness takes the form of an inner light. Augustine develops the spatial topography of inwardness. God is found in our activity of knowing, and this cognitive activity itself grounds our morality.

For Taylor (1989), Augustine arrived at the radical reflexivity when he grasped that the created world is "for us" (p. 130). But Descartes absolutized this inwardness, and provided the edifice upon which the Enlightenment built its naturalized version of the self. Locke developed a notion of consequentialist ethics built upon a notion of liberty. But in the 18th century, Francis Hutcheson and the Earl of Shaftesbury criticized Locke's consequential ethics by appealing to noncognitive inner moral feeling. Taylor describes how this led to a new non-Cartesian conception of inwardness. Rousseau thought this moral voice was drowned by cultural influences, particularly an emphasis on pride. His genius was to develop the notion of equal dignity and equal recognition. While pride emerged from other dependence, true freedom emerges from our recognition from within. Above all, this freedom prized autonomy; it gave pride of place to self-exploration, in particular of our feelings. Its vision of the good life generally involved personal commitment. As a consequence, it formulated political immunities in terms of subjective rights. Other philosophers of this era then replaced providence or a providential order with simple utility. They justified this move by the fundamental claim that people desire happiness and the avoidance of suffering. We no longer need refer to a human nature, but only those "causal relations we have to make use of in order to produce the greatest amount of happiness" (Taylor, 1989, p. 321). Taylor argues that utilitarianism's austere disengagement from the individual's own happiness effectively neutralized the very terms in which moral motivation could be formulated and avowed. Moreover, like most enlightenment thinkers, utilitarians never really articulated their own moral sources, but only derived them negatively from attacks on their detractors. But such views of moral freedom ended up imposing a certain vision of human health and strength that effectively ignored the mentally handicapped,

the dying, and those with genetic defects (Taylor, 1989).

Taylor (1995) outlines a phenomenological way to escape from the confines of a naturalist paradigm by finding certain self-evidences from which to build bridges from epistemological and moral appearances to reality as such. He realizes that this method does not silence all skeptical objections. But it does offer an alternative to the path of those postmodernists who license the subject to form the kind of meaning or truth it wishes to invent. No conditions of intentionality can be reconstructed; Taylor thinks that a variant of Kant's transcendental deduction can reconstruct these conditions. He traces this restriction back to Nietzsche's claims about the violence of language. Nietzsche ended up making the will primary—only reinforcing modernism's predilection for mechanistic science, voluntaristic theology, and nominalism. Taylor does commend Nietzscheans for pointing out that no construal is ever completely innocent; something is always suppressed when something is taken to be privileged. But Taylor refuses to conclude, as the neo-Nietzschean Derrida does, that no talk of epistemic gain is possible through discursive argument. Taylor (1995) tartly observes that those who reject discursivity are in turn committed to a kind of "total self-transparent clarity, which would make even Hegel blush" (p. 18). By the early 20th century, shortly after Nietzsche, the phenomenological return to the priority of existential identity had already begun to emerge. This return was brought about by philosophers whose "framing epiphanies" (p. 479) showed reality to be an expression of something that is unambiguously a moral source. Husserl, for example, retrieved the lived experience and creative activity underlying our awareness of the world. This was also present in Heidegger's ready to hand (*zuhanden*) and his return to the meaning of Being. This new turn to authenticity was fruitful insofar as it took us beyond the self as usually understood, to a fragmentation of experience that calls our ordinary notions of identity into question. A decentering of the self occurs relative to others; reason is disengaged. In its emphasis on authenticity "relationships are seen as the key loci of self-discovery and self-affirmation" (Taylor, 1992, p. 36). The existential identity of phenomenology is inherently social.

What then is Taylor's own phenomenological alternative to modernist views of the self? Surprisingly, in *Sources of the Self* (Taylor, 1989) he provides little in the way of an explicit counter strategy. In his brief conclusion, he points in the direction of the need for liberation towards spiritual aspirations. They point towards hope implicit in Judeo-Christian theism's "central promise of a divine affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain unaided" (p. 521). These theological suggestions, though, fail themselves to provide sufficient grounds for a robust philosophical anthropology. But one can find a better clue for Taylor's own philosophical anthropology, I shall suggest, if one closely examines his interesting and informative reading in *Sources of the Self* (Taylor, 1989) and other recent works on

Kant and his successors.

Kant reacted strongly against naturalism, particularly in the realm of morality. He endorsed the governance of law, not natural impulse. Moreover, his affirmation, in *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (Kant, 1960), of radical evil in human nature is another indication of his rejection of naturalism. But Kant inadvertently remained distinctly modern in his principle that the ultimate source of the transformation of our wills is not God, but the demands of one's rational agency. Moreover, he failed to clarify the relationship between nature and reason—even though Taylor (1995) suggests that he had the tools for doing so. The expressivist Romantics that emerged after Kant, however, still kept to the basic idea of nature as an intrinsic moral source. Fulfilling my nature meant not dominating it, but espousing its inner *élan*, its voice or impulse. While Aristotle had spoken of the nature of a thing tending towards its complete form, Herder saw growth as the manifestation of an "inner power" striving to realize itself (Taylor, 1989, p. 375). Expressivism gave this impersonal power the possibility of individuation. Hegel completed this Romantic expressionism by arguing that spirit in nature comes to consciousness in man. Taylor takes from both Herder and Hegel the fundamental principle that any account of agency must invoke our own self-understanding.

Taylor wants to maintain the Kantian separation between reason and nature without the romanticization or moralization of the latter. He accomplishes this by arguing that reason discovers certain natural "background certainties" on the basis of which it autonomously directs our actions in the world. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein (1969) argued that many of our everyday beliefs are based upon such certainties. Thus it would be, for him, simply an error to entertain the "belief" (Taylor, 1989, p. 491) that the world started more than 5 minutes ago or that the ground will not stay solid under my feet. We rely on these matters to go about believing and doubting other things. Taylor argues that although modern thinking, particularly about values, politics, or self-realization, tends to abandon all appeals to such certainties, they remain nonetheless operative at a deeper level. Modern thinking fails to acknowledge that "some things are important beyond the self, that there are some goods or purposes the furthering of which has significance for us and which hence can provide the significance of fulfilling life needs" (p. 507). What are some of these unacknowledged yet operative background certainties? Consider what is involved in perception. Taylor (1979) endorses Merleau-Ponty's claim that "our perceptual field has the structure it has because it is experienced as a field of potential action" (p. 24). But we cannot perceive at all until we are oriented in physical space with a preconceptual certainty of what is up and down, above and below, and so on. Similarly, we possess preconceptual orientational structures for action. For example, certain gestures, such as a smile, play an "ontogenetic role" (Taylor, 1979, p.

78) in manifesting the openness that is anterior to the framing of all intentions for any action of communication. These noninferential conditions of perception and action are constitutive of our experience. They are "indispensably" (Taylor, 1995, p. 27) linked to perception and action.

Taylor further elucidates these background certainties by analyzing how a person follows a rule. Kant's moral philosophy in particular canonized the principle that morality requires rule following; rules of whose laws we have conceptions. Nietzsche and other moral skeptics rejected the value of reducing morality to rule following. Wittgenstein (1953), however, raised serious questions about the possibility of rule following itself. Following Wittgenstein's lead, Taylor (1995) analyzes the paradigm example of knowing how to follow an arrow. If the arrow is pointing left (if two angled lines meet at the left end of the horizontal line), then we visually follow horizontally beyond the left end of the arrow to locate an object. But let's say a stranger does not understand what it means to follow the rule of arrow pointing. Presumably, we who know how to follow the rule can explain it to the stranger. We figure out that perhaps in his culture, arrows point in the opposite direction from where the two angled lines meet at the end of the horizontal line. Thus, for us to understand what the proper following of the rule is, we would first have to know all of the ways it can be misapplied or not followed. For, if we did not have such knowledge, then how would we be free from the doubt that we weren't following the rule correctly ourselves? In other words, we must recognize the deviant understanding *as* deviant. But this sets the standard too high. Taylor (1995) suggests instead the moderate view that in fact we don't have to know all deviancies since we have a background certainty of "what is taken for granted" (p. 167). As Wittgenstein argued, obeying a rule is, rather, a practice (Wittgenstein, 1953). "If I have exhausted my justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'" (p. 85^e, §217). Actions thus are not fully explainable as a "rule-as-represented as somehow causally operative" (Taylor, 1995, p. 175). Rather, they are understood phronetically as part of a practice or habit. One must engage in a practice at the right time and right place, such as when one reciprocates a favor. The upshot is that "the 'rule' lies essentially *in* the practice" (p. 178). The rule animates the practice; it is not a mere formulation behind it. It is, in a sense, what the practice has made it.

But exactly what entailments, though, can we draw about ourselves from these background certainties? Taylor (1995) begins, much like Aristotle, with the claim that agents must grasp, or be aware of, the point of their own actions. What constitutes this awareness is not merely a verbal matter, as many adherents of the linguistic turn would claim. This awareness is a constitutive rule integral to the action, much as the queen rule in chess is constitutive for the game of chess. Being aware of the point of actions "is itself part

of their point" (p. 30). Yet can't I fail to be aware of these points of my action, in certain situations? Taylor (1995) contends that if such awareness were to break down, one could not think of oneself as aware in the first place. In other words, the question about failure of awareness is in a sense unaskable, since awareness is precisely "condition of grasp on things which enables me, inter alia, to formulate questions" (p. 31). This indispensable condition of the point of one's action entails, in turn, that one's body "is not just the executant of the goals we frame, nor just the locus of causal factors shaping our representations" (p. 170). Our know-how and the way we act and move are always already embodied. But since my body is in a way objective to me, so is correlatively my "sense of myself." Consider the "I" of an intersubjective expression, such as a conversation: it is not merely coordinated with the acts of another "you," it is set within a rhythm that is beyond the two agents as such. As one embodied agent among others, we are thus decentered. Our embodied identity is this dialogical self-awareness never defined simply in terms of our discreet awareness of our own ends and instrumental means.

But how exactly do we formulate these background certainties of perception, action, and embodied agency? Taylor (1995) appeals to the role transcendental arguments play in pointing to such "undeniable essential features of experience" (p. 25). Kant used such arguments to establish a unity of the experience of objects always accompanied by the "I think." For him, all experience is thus intentional; it is of an object. Once properly formulated, Taylor claims that transcendental arguments explicate a kind of self-evidence. But they do not proceed inferentially to a specific conclusion; they only move from a sketchier to richer description. They spell out further what is involved in the limiting conditions we capture in our activities. Their descriptions, though certain, are *qua* discursive, always open to debate. Thus, these background certainties are not mere social reconstructions, but are a "sense of things" that can be defended rationally when challenged. But they cannot settle all ontological arguments—nor even show that a mechanistic account of nature is impossible (Taylor, 1995).

In sum, then, the anthropological orientation that emerges from Taylor is that embodied agency is central to who we are as persons. Persons are always embedded in social practices that themselves emerge from background certainties that can be illuminated by transcendental arguments. This view radically challenges the prevailing representational and instrumental views of modern notions of the self.

A PRAGMATIC REINTERPRETATION
OF TAYLOR'S VIEWS

Though Taylor (1995) indicates how transcendental arguments discover background certainties regarding human perception and action, it is not clear

that this completely settles our existential question of who a person is. For if transcendental arguments "convince us" (p. 25), who exactly is the "us" who is convinced? What if a person is not convinced by these arguments? If one could ever in principle not be convinced by such an argument, then how is the point of the argument somehow constitutive of his or her personhood? In other words, what are we to make of the person who remains independent of the sway of the transcendent? On the other hand, if no person could in principle remain unconvinced by transcendental arguments, then it would seem that they would not be arguments at all, but mere descriptive, even natural, explications—and we would be back, at best, in a pre-Kantian impenetrable notion of transcendentality, or at worst, in a naturalism itself.

To avoid this dilemma, I submit that it is necessary to try to temper the background certainties, illuminated by transcendental arguments, in the light of some pragmatic interpretations of them. Such a pragmatic rejoinder could start from one of two stances: (1) Habermas's (1991) rejection of any privileged access to Taylor's strong evaluations in favor of a highly qualified naturalism about our ability to use certain intuitions as the basis for a proceduralist morality; and (2) Brandom's pragmatic understanding of how we use concepts in a way that would seem to dispel Taylor's misgivings about naturalistic forms of representation, specifically those involved in rule following. After considering both of these criticisms, I shall present what I would take to be Taylor's measured responses to such naturalistic counter moves.

Habermas (1991) argues that moral orientation is based in part on our intrinsic propensity to suffer injury (*Verletzbarkeit*). This existential fact renders us dependent on others with whom we must live. We escape this condition only by means of coordinated actions formed under the guidance of the idealizations involving an unlimited communication community, as Peirce envisioned (Habermas, 1971). In this context of communicative action, we are oriented towards validity claims that "can be factically raised only in the context of *our* language and our form of life," even when their solutions transcend the narrowness of our own standpoints (Habermas, 1991, p. 142). Ultimately Habermas recognizes that the totalities we project in discourse about truth and rightness, such as our idealizations of freedom and escape from vulnerability, are neither theoretical nor aesthetic. Yet neither are they the object of transcendental arguments. They can be best explicated as on par with a pragmatic understanding of sign usage in language, an idea that he also draws from Peirce. Peirce argued that signs, establishing a continuity in the flux of experience, inexorably refer both to past experience and future possibilities. No appeal "beyond" language is needed for meaning.

Responding to Habermas, Taylor (1989) commends him both for defending reason against the neo-Nietzscheans and for adopting a critical understanding of communicative action. He agrees with Habermas that the self is constituted through exchange in language. But he claims that Habermas can-

not account for "the search for moral sources *outside* the subject through languages which resonate *within* him or her, the grasping of an order which is inseparably indexed to a personal vision" (p. 510). Basically, Habermas fails to acknowledge the very hyper goods that motivate his own moral procedures. Habermas responds to these criticisms by claiming that the basic question Taylor is really posing to him is how an ethics of justice, or the ethics of the right as opposed to an ethics of the constitutive good, has anything to say about moral motivation. Habermas draws his response from Apel's claim that philosophy is overtaxed by the existential question about the meaning of being moral. Given the fact of pluralism, philosophers can no longer provide generally binding directives concerning the meaning of life. Rather, our everyday experiences of considerateness, solidarity, and fairness that shape our intuitions provide us with better instruction about morality than phenomenological arguments ever could. Thus Habermas thinks that Taylor's transcendental concerns about the good stand outside of the reach of everyday practice and thus are unnecessary for a robust communicative ethics.

Like Taylor, Brandom (2000) takes up the issue of how rational agents understand themselves. Taylor, as we have seen, strongly criticizes modernism's representational views of self-awareness. These notions stem from Locke's claim that a person has the peculiarity of essentially appearing to itself: its "being is inseparable from self-awareness" (Taylor, 1995, p. 49). But for Taylor this asserts self-consciousness without grasping its existential import. Locke's self is defined in neutral terms, outside of any essential framework of questions. Hume (1969), for example, adopted this notion and claimed that no substantial self emerges from self-awareness. From these considerations, the disengaged, and distinctly modern, subject of rational control was born.

Brandom (2000), however, takes a slightly different path out of this the Lockean/Humean neutrality than Taylor. Brandom offers a pragmatic way of re-reading these issues of self-awareness and representation. First, he notes that both Locke and Hume were preoccupied with our similarities to animals. They both considered the knowledge we have of our basic experiences of awareness, or consciousness, as the warrant and authority for all the rest of our knowledge. They understood knowledge as "what is represent*ed* by some represent*ing* states or episode" (p. 25). Their followers developed linguistic concepts of reference, denotation, and connotation, and then worked out a pattern of extensional semantics for the language of first-order predicate logic. Brandom rejects this empiricist methodology and analyzes instead at what counts as a reason for one's own beliefs and actions. He develops a kind of rationalism that, unlike many naturalist strategies, distinguishes both between concept using and non-concept using creatures and between the natural and social sciences. For Brandom, "Products of *social* interactions ... are not studied by the *natural* sciences – though they are not for that reason to be

treated as spooky and *super*natural" (p. 26). He claims that the specifically rational practice of conferring conceptual concepts on performances institutes a realm of culture that goes beyond the ken of mere reliable differential responsive dispositions and their exercise. His ultimate background is unabashedly Hegelian: normative stances are social stances. Thus "all transcendental constitution is social institution" (p. 34). Thus we inquire not into empirically representable subjective desires or awarenesses that cause beliefs and actions, but into the inferential articulation of the reasons socially used to give normative reasons for them.

So far, Brandom's and Taylor's claims about the social aspect of self-awareness are remarkably similar. But they differ significantly in their understanding of the background assumptions for their views. Brandom offers not a transcendental, but an expressive deduction of the background conditions of truth and meaning. It is based on the principle that all the contents of intentional states are to be understood relative to the role they play in reasoning. Essentially he shifts from what was previously understood on the level of representing consciousness to the way discursive reasoning itself works. Reasoning can make explicit its own dynamics—such as how beliefs are originated, how we create novel sentences about the work, how we formulate actions, and how we gain an objective stance about the truth of claims. The upshot is that we can abandon pre-reasoning certainty, as Taylor does, and move to a paradigm of rational necessity reconstructed by an expressive logic. While certainty focuses on our grip on concepts employed in thought and action, necessity focuses on the grip of concepts on us (p. 164). The latter takes as the primitives from which we act, not perceptions or awareness, but actual judgments or commitments to claims. A commitment is a propositionally formulated and conceptually contentful belief either about the world or about how to act in it. It then reconstructs the normative rules by which we attribute commitments (and entitlement to them) to others and the ways we acknowledge them for ourselves. But attribution to others and acknowledgement for oneself remain irrevocably intersubjectively distinct. The self is decentered thus not existentially or empirically, but rationally and conceptually by a naturalism of social proprieties. Objectivity is no longer what is presented to the self in representations it makes of reality, but in a specifiable "attitude transcendence" (p. 191) which one takes in rationally altering one's own commitments and inheriting them from others. This grounds a kind of moral objectivity for the self: "one can know what follows from the claim that someone is responsible for a particular action, that an action is immoral or sinful, that a remark is true or in bad taste, without for that reason counting as understanding the claims involved, if one has no idea when it is appropriate to make those claims or apply those concepts" (Brandom, 2000, p. 66). Thus Brandom's notion of the self is not phenomenologically grounded, as Taylor's is, but is based on the semantic analysis of an irrevocable difference

of linguistic perspective and a pragmatic analysis of normative necessities, or rules, that restrain one's action.

How would Taylor respond to these critiques? I can only briefly suggest how his reasoning might go. It should be clear that Taylor rejects Habermas's thesis that the limits of rational argumentation are coextensive with the limits of morality. To make such a naturalistic equation, as Habermas does, would certainly deflate the complexity of human goodness. Taylor would instead emphasize the fact that the questions that impel our drive for inter-subjective moral verification, as Habermas construes it, themselves emerge from a non-naturalized background certainty. In fact, he would argue that Habermas's "intuition" into vulnerability is itself just such a certainty. Moreover, Taylor might think that using vulnerability as the key existential point of the identity is too negative; he favors the positive stance of striving towards constitutive goods. Taylor would probably argue that Brandom's vast inferential web of practical reasoning never quite gets to the heart of the moti-vational problem of practical reasoning. Brandom (2000) explicates vast inferential chains of reasons. But what (or who) stands at the origin of these chains? In other words, what are the sources of the initial commitments that get the whole normative system off the ground? Brandom himself refers to perception as the noninferential point of inferential articulation. Yet he also claims that perception itself is subjected to the correction of reliabilist infer-ences parsed within an already functioning interpersonal set of practices. What Taylor is doing is precisely articulating the noninferential originary points that make interpersonal distinguishability understandable. Transcendental arguments reveal these points not simply as the terms of ratio-nal commitments, but as themselves background certainties to which we are existentially oriented.

Despite these and other responses Taylor could make, I hope that these naturalistic critiques of his anthropological claims do give us pause. We obvi-ously cannot settle these issues here. But they do serve to illuminate the rad-icality of Taylor's position against modernity. He takes a strong stand against its widely accepted notions of justification, pluralism, and reference. As rad-ical, his analysis almost explicitly demands counterargument. But, from the side of a Catholic philosophical anthropology, one needs to take naturalistic arguments seriously, particularly in light of the incarnational dimension of the Christian faith. What Habermas forces us to confront is whether indeed the individual's sense of vulnerability is indeed incarnational. He pairs it with its opposite: freedom from this vulnerability through coordinated human actions. Indeed redemption in the Christian mystery requires a kind of incar-national condition from which we need redemption. But how "natural" is either the incarnational condition needing redemption or the redemption itself? We cannot take up the protological issues associated with this here. But suffice it to say that the pragmatic arguments I have presented here can

be construed as consistent with the claims that the weakness of human nature, into which Christ was incarnated, is continuous with an openness to its very redemption. In the classic scholastic idiom: *omne quod recipitur in aliquo recipito in eo per modem recipientis* (whatever is received into another, is received into it according to its own capacity to receive). The capacity for redemption itself must in some way be natural to us, even if its properties can be described only in non-natural terms, such as forgiveness and grace, that have no observable correlates. Nature is indeed transformed by grace, but only in ways intrinsic to the former. Such a view of nature always challenges a Catholic or Christian anthropology to open itself up beyond its transcendental underpinnings. Brandom's (2000) inferentialism, for its part, provides a way to criticize the same Humean notions of morality that Taylor rejects without giving up on a rationalized, intellectualized notion of rule following. It holds for a priority of justification over truth, but not of a replacement of the latter by the former. The questions about meaning and identity with which Taylor is so rightly concerned are, as questions, in fact phenomena associated with justification, not truth (Tugendhat, 1986). Processes of justification themselves are always, at least in a weak sense, transcendental. So the real question is to what extent we ought to understand the naturalistic aspects of truth, not justification. Brandom understands truth, relative to either what I think or how I should act, as a property only of what actual commitments I undertake and assume both the conditions and consequences of. The "use" of his pragmatic view here is not a simple behavioral use, but proprietary use (Brandom, 2000). But Taylor seems to place his transcendental move in a phenomenological realm, one that seems to lie somehow prior to both truth and justification. So, it is not obvious that he would reject a naturalized notion of truth, or even of justification for that matter. Taylor, in fact, does mention the possibility of a kind of "liberating naturalism," emerging from Wittgenstein's (1953) philosophy, that can serve as the basis of a new humanism. Taylor is right to criticize the simplistic naturalism of the affirmation of ordinary life, but he needs to clarify his view of the naturalism of truth per se, particularly the truth that guides human action.

In sum, a Catholic philosophical anthropological question of who a person is inevitably runs up against what the Christian faith understands as the unique interplay between the Redemption and Incarnation. Taylor's (1999) "Redemption happens through Incarnation" (p. 14) expresses this clearly. I have tried only to move his thinking even further in the Incarnational direction he himself sees as originary. My question to him is whether modernity's naturalism itself can be redeemed. For naturalism can be understood, in one sense, as the philosophical equivalent of the bold, specifically Scriptural proclamation of the Incarnation: that Jesus Christ has taken on human flesh. Only a naturalism, for example, can make philosophical sense either of the words of Isaiah on the lips of John the Baptist, "all flesh shall see the salva-

tion of God" (Luke 3:6), or St. Paul's stunning proclamation that "no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Thus, it is the prerogative, and indeed the responsibility, of a Catholic philosophical anthropology to explicate those aspects of Christian existential identity incisive for those of us in modern flesh.

REFERENCES

Brandom, R. (2000). *Articulating reasons*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Cassirer, E. (1944). *Essay on man*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Davidson, D. (1980). *Actions, reasons, and causes*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.

Donceel, J. F. (1967). *Philosophical anthropology*. New York: Sheed and Ward.

Dupre, L. (1997). Christian philosophy: What is it? What could it be? *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (*71*), 25-29.

Habermas, J. (1971). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. Shapiro, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1991). *Texte und kontexte* [Texts and contexts]. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp.

Haldane, J. (1997). What future has Catholic philosophy? *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (*71*), 79-90.

Hume, D. (1969). *A treatise of human nature*. Baltimore: Penguin.

Husserl, E. (1962). *Phänomenologische psychologie* [Phenomenological psychology] (M. Niijhoff, Trans.). The Hague.

Kant, I. (1958). *Critique of pure reason* (N. Smith, Trans.). New York: The Modern Library. (Original work published 1780)

Kant, I. (1960). *Religion within the boundaries of reason alone* (T. Greene & H. Hudson, Trans.). New York: Harper and Row.

Lonergan, B. (1957). *Insight: A study of human understanding*. New York: Longmans.

MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent rational animals: Why human beings need the virtues*. LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

Maritain, J. (1953). *Creative intuition in art and poetry*. New York: Pantheon.

Maritain, J. (1959). *Degrees of knowledge*. New York: Scribner.

McCool, G. (1989). *From unity to pluralism: The internal evolution of Thomism*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Mill, J. S. (1910). *Utilitarianism, liberty, and representative government*. London: Dent.

Plantinga, A. (1995). Christian philosophy at the end of the 20th century. In S. Griffen & B. Balk (Eds.), *Christian philosophy at the close of the twentieth century* (pp. 29-53). Kampen, Netherlands: Kok.

Ricoeur, P. (1986). *Fallible man* (C. Kelbley, Trans.). New York: Fordham University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as another* (K. Blamey, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2000). *The just*. (D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rorty, R. (1999). *Philosophy and social hope*. New York: Penguin Books.

Strawson, P. (1959). *Individuals*. London: Methuen.

Swindal, J. (1999). Ought there be a Catholic philosophy? *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, *73*(3), 449-473.

Taylor, C. (1979). Action as expression. In C. Diamond & J. Teichman. (Eds.), *Intention and intentionality: Essays in honor of G.E.M. Anscombe* (pp. 73-90). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1992). The politics of recognition. In A. Gutman (Ed.), *Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition* (pp. 25-73). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, C. (1995). *Philosophical arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1999). A Catholic modernity? In J. Heft (Ed.), *A Catholic modernity* (pp. 13-37). New York: Oxford University Press.

Tugendhat, E. (1986). *Self-consciousness and self-determination* (P. Stern, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). New York: Macmillan.

Wittgenstein, L. (1969). *On certainty* (G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright, Eds.) (D. Paul & G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford, England: Blackwell.

James Swindal is an associate professor in the department of philosophy at John Carroll University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. James Swindal, Department of Philosophy, John Carroll University, 20700 North Park Blvd., University Heights, OH 44118-4581.