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PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11153-015-9508-3>

PUBLISHER

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht

VERSION

AM (Accepted Manuscript)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

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REPOSITORY RECORD

Fraser, Ian. 2015. "Charles Taylor, Mikhail Epstein and 'minimal Religion'". Loughborough University.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2134/16844>.

Accepted for Publication in the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 26 January 2015.

Dr Ian Fraser
 Senior Lecturer in Politics
 Department of Politics, History and International Relations
 School of Social, Political and Geographical Sciences
 Loughborough University
 Loughborough
 Leicestershire
 LE11 3TU
 Phone: 01509 222979
 Fax: 01509 223917

Charles Taylor, Mikhail Epstein and 'Minimal Religion'

Abstract In *A Secular Age* Charles Taylor endorses Mikhail Epstein's notion of 'minimal religion' as his preferred orientation to the good for Western secular society. This article examines the basis of Epstein's 'minimal religion' which rests on the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. It is shown that Freud's theories are incompatible with Taylor's own thought, and in the case of Jung, Epstein fails to develop the latter's contribution to our understanding of religion. Moreover, although Taylor endorses Epstein's work he makes no reference to Jung. To this end, the importance of Jung's theories in relation to religion are elucidated and offered as a way to forge a dialogue between a nuanced humanist position and the theistic vision offered by Taylor.

Keywords: Taylor; Epstein; Freud; Jung; religion; consciousness

Charles Taylor, Mikhail Epstein and 'Minimal Religion'

Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) is a monumental attempt to map out the rise of secularism in the West over the past 500 years. One interesting aspect of the book is that Taylor reminds us of the religious origins and aspects of a range of issues that may still be grasped by humanists as 'spiritual' today. He draws attention to the commonalities and points of difference between humanist and religious perspectives, and does so from a theistic position. Towards the end of the book he considers this issue further by engaging in speculation on what the future may hold in a secular world for religious belief (Taylor, 2007, 767-768). He contends that there are two possible alternative futures that stand before us, both of which 'depend on two fundamental assumptions about the place of the spiritual in human life' (Taylor, 2007, 768). One future is the further development of secularism that sees religion receding in influence and importance. The fundamental assumption for this vision is that 'religious transcendent views are erroneous' or implausible (Taylor, 2007, 768). The other future, and Taylor's preferred option, is based on a different assumption, which maintains that 'in our religious lives we are responding to a transcendent reality' through our search for 'fullness' (Taylor, 2007, 768). Taylor freely admits that we do not know which of these competing futures will prevail, but mentions that the 'intimations' in the work of the cultural theorist Mikhail Epstein 'may turn out to be prescient' (Taylor, 2007, 770), especially through his notion of 'minimal religion' (Taylor, 2007,

533). However, commentators on Taylor's speculations have been silent on his endorsement of Epstein's work on minimal religion (See for example, Sheehan, 2010, 232; Mahmood, 2009, 295-296 and Knight, 2009, 81). So what follows is a critical consideration of a missing dimension to our understanding of Taylor's thought, and an attempt to deepen the dialogue on spiritual matters between theistic and humanist perspectives. This is not to deny that there must ultimately be a divide between humanist and theistic viewpoints, but it is an attempt to push to the edge of the boundaries of that divide in the search for fullness. Taylor can make the fair point that for exclusive humanism the 'door is barred against further discovery', but it can also be proposed that perhaps a more open humanism, as I will portray here, may suggest that the door may not be barred at all (Taylor, 2007, 769).

Through his discussion of fullness and spiritual conversions, Taylor raises important issues that rely on an understanding of human consciousness that is shown to be incompatible with Epstein's account of how 'minimal religion' has and can emerge. For Epstein, the spiritual itinerary that comes from within originates from the theory of the unconscious in the work of Sigmund Freud. However, Taylor rules out this source because it remains tied to the immanent realm of an insulated self that does not attain true fullness. To expose this more clearly, I will outline Epstein's positive reading of Freud and his inclusion of Jung whom Taylor does not mention or consider, and then contrast this with Taylor's more qualified understanding of Freud's position.

The contention is that Taylor's desire to endorse Epstein's vision for his alternative future must fail, given the importance Epstein attaches to using Freud's theory of the unconscious. Epstein's use of Freud is also shown to be problematic given Freud's hostility to religion, and even though the more nuanced position of Jung is noted by Epstein it is only in a limited way. In contrast, I will develop Jung's position much further to show that he can be an efficacious source for striking up a dialogue between a humanist perspective and Taylor's theism and explore this through the examples of the conversion of St. Paul and the atheism of Richard Dawkins.

Taylor on Epstein

Taylor's discussion of Epstein occurs in two places in *A Secular Age*. Both concern Taylor's thoughts on the role of religion in the present and in the future. The first is at the end of his chapter on 'Religion Today' just prior to part five on 'Conditions of Belief' (Taylor, 2007, 533-535). The second is at the end of the book in the chapter on 'Conversions' (Taylor, 2007, 770 referring to Epstein, 1999a and 199b via Sutton, 2006). In the first discussion Taylor observes that Western modernity has seen an obvious decline in belief and practice, with the 'unchallengeable status that belief enjoyed in earlier centuries' now being 'lost' (Taylor, 2007, 530). However, he contends that due to this development we now live in a 'pluralist world' where both belief and unbelief 'jostle, and hence fragilise each other' (Taylor, 2007, 531).

It is in this context that he then introduces Mikhail Epstein to suggest that his descriptions of what have occurred in post-Soviet Russia could be a useful way to understand what is occurring in the West (Taylor, 2007, 533). Following Epstein, Taylor describes how 'minimal religion' is typified by immediacy in that it is a spirituality 'lived out within family and friends rather than in churches', and as such it is more concerned with actual human beings in the places that surround us. On this view, these people are looking for the image of God in those around them, in response to and a rejection of the Marxist communist desire for showing compassion for the "'distant one'", in Epstein's words, to the detriment of feeling towards one's neighbours (Taylor, 2007, 534, quoting Epstein, 1999a, 167-168). Moreover, as they have emerged from the atheist "'void'" this means that they are involved in "'a striving for fullness of spirit, and transcending the boundaries of historical denominations'" (Taylor, 2007, 534, quoting Epstein, 1999b, 386). Epstein sees this development as a new "'religious reformation [that] will dominate the spirit of twenty-first century Russia'" (Taylor, 2007, 534, quoting Epstein, 1999b, 386).

Taylor detects a similar move in 'post-secular' Europe, that is, post-secular in the sense that the dominant secularisation thesis that religion is in major decline becomes challenged more and more (Taylor, 2007, 534). Indeed, as such dominance has aided the decline, its overcoming offers new possibilities (Taylor, 2007, 535). 'Minimal religion' in the West takes the form of being

spiritual but not religious in that the spiritual life remains at a distance from the 'disciplines and authority of religious confessions'. The distance is due to the weariness of the claims to religious authority and confessional leadership, whereas in Russia it was in response to the "'wasteland'" left by militant atheism, and the unavailability of confessions (Taylor, 2007, 535, quoting Epstein, 1999b, 386).

At the end of *A Secular Age*, Taylor admits that although he has resisted the temptation to lay out his own vision of the future, ultimately he cannot stop himself from speculating, and in doing so he again refers to Epstein (Taylor, 2007, 767-768). He posits two alternative futures, one that is typified by modern secularisation theory, which sees religion on a downward spiral into a minority pastime (Taylor, 2007, 768). Another possible future against this mainstream view is where we are responding to a transcendent reality in our religious lives. Taylor says we all have a sense of this because it emerges in our identifying, recognising and attempting to attain fullness. For example, those who remain within the immanent frame such as exclusive humanists are responding to a transcendent reality but they are 'misrecognising' it and ignoring its crucial features. Taylor recognises that this attempt to shut out features of the transcendent is understandable, because breaking out would remind us how much we have always shut out in the first place (Taylor, 2007, 769). Nevertheless, break out we must if we are to achieve true fullness in Taylor's terms.

So what of Taylor's future then? He argues that its general structure would be typified by two opposing positions (Taylor, 2007, 770). On one side will be those who want to move inward to a more immanent position and on the other side will be those who find this general equilibrium stifling and will want to move outward. Taylor argues that in those societies where the general equilibrium point is strongly within immanence and where people would not be able to comprehend how a sane person could believe in God, the main secularisation thesis that blames religion for all the ills in the world will become less plausible over time. People will realise that other societies are not following this path, that this master narrative is not about universal humanity, and that many of the ills that religion was apparently responsible for will not disappear. He recognises that there might be an attempt to stigmatise these other societies as being hostile to Western values, as is now done by many Europeans in relation to the United States and Islam, but he thinks that this way of lending plausibility to the secularisation thesis will wane eventually. Within the dominance of this immanent equilibrium, Taylor suggests that subsequent generations will feel as though they are living in a "'waste land'", and that 'many young people will again begin to explore beyond the boundaries'. He does not predict how this might happen, but he does give the example of Mikhail Epstein's analysis of religion in post-Soviet Russia that we have just outlined and whose 'intimations', Taylor suggests, 'may turn out to be prescient' (Taylor, 2007, 770).

So Epstein's notion of minimal religion in a post-atheist world assumes an important part of Taylor's understanding of the current predicament of belief and unbelief in the West, and a pointer to a possible alternative future. However, Taylor does not inform us on what basis Epstein makes his argument, but it is far more than simply saying it was due to the collapse of Soviet Communism. As we shall now see, Epstein roots his account in a psychological understanding of the self through his notion of a 'religious unconscious' by utilising the theories of Freud and Jung. Taylor does not mention this in his account of Epstein, and he also does not mention that Epstein sees these psychological transformations of the religious self as occurring through conversions. In fact it is not just that Taylor forgets to mention the role of conversions in this process for Epstein, he actually cuts it out of the long quotation he uses. This does seem odd given that Taylor himself puts a great emphasis on conversions, but as we shall see, the omission becomes understandable once we realise how Taylor views Freud, although it is difficult to understand why he offers no mention of Jung. To grasp this means elucidating the role of consciousness in relation to conversions for both Epstein and Taylor.

Epstein: Consciousness and Conversions

In explaining the basis to his notion of 'minimal religion', Epstein uses the term 'religious unconscious' to refer to the 'state of Russian spirituality in the

Soviet epoch and in particular to its latest phases when the official atheism is succeeded by various forms of post-atheist mentality' (Epstein, 1999b, 345). He draws on Freud's discussion of religious feeling in the latter's 1929 text, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, in which Freud 'establishes a close connection between religious feeling and the unconscious' (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Freud, 2001a). Freud is discussing a letter from his friend, Romain Rolland, who in response to reading Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* (Freud, 2001b) encapsulates this relationship through his notion of "'oceanic feeling'", which is "'something limitless, unbounded'" and a "'purely subjective fact, not an article of faith'" (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Freud, 2001a, 64). Rolland, who is paraphrased by Freud, sees this feeling as a "'source of religious energy'" even though it does not offer a "'personal immortality'", and it is therefore possible to "'call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion'" (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Freud, 2001a, 64). Rolland posits that this feeling is seized on by different "'Churches and religious systems'" and then "'directed by them into particular channels, and doubtless also exhausted by them'" (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Freud, 2001a, 64). Rolland then maintains that one can "'rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and illusion'" (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Freud, 2001a, 64). Epstein notes how Freud then elucidates this oceanic feeling by contending that the conscious Ego and the unconscious Id penetrate each other, where the

Ego is, in Epstein's words a 'façade of the unconscious', like an island surrounded by an ocean (Epstein, 1999b, 346).

What Epstein fails to mention here is that Freud quickly rejects these arguments that he is reporting from Rolland. Freud admits that although he cannot find such a feeling in himself, he does not deny that it can occur in other people (Freud, 2001a, 65). However, the crucial point for him is whether it is being interpreted correctly and whether it is the source and origin of the whole need for religion. He argues that he can trace such a feeling back to an 'early phase of ego-feeling' but the question then is whether this feeling can be seen as the source of religious needs (Freud, 2001a, 72). Freud thinks not, and instead derives religious need from the 'infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it' as a form of protection. He contends that the oceanic feeling became connected with religion later on, and that being at one with the universe sounds like a 'first attempt at religious consolation' where the ego is protecting itself from the harsh realities of the real world. As such, religion is a form of infantilism, a neurosis, in which God as an object of worship is like an 'exalted father' who watches over his subjects and will compensate them in an afterlife for their sufferings on earth (Palmer, 1999, 37). Epstein's use of such a theory of the unconscious as a model for a 'religious unconscious' as the basis of 'minimal religion' seems, therefore, somewhat suspect.

Epstein is on firmer ground when he then compares the ego as an island imagery to that found in the work of Carl Jung in his discussion of psychology and religion. Epstein notes how Jung sees the psyche as going so far beyond the limits of consciousness that consciousness itself can be seen as an “‘island in the ocean’” (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Jung, 1958, 84). Consciousness, as an imagined island is for Jung “‘small and narrow’” whereas the psyche as the ocean is “‘immensely wide and deep and contains a life infinitely surpassing, in kind and degree, anything known on the island’” (Epstein, 1999b, 346; Jung, 1958, 84). Epstein takes this metaphor to show how the ‘atheization’ of Russian society in the Soviet era was similar to the sinking of the ancient island of Atlantis. Various forms of religiosity were banned rather than destroyed, plunged into the inner recesses of the unconscious, and downgraded to ‘the bottom of that ocean from which they were once raised by the consciousness of many generations of religious believers’ (Epstein, 1999b, 346-347). Epstein states that he understands the notion of the unconscious as a ‘general cultural paradigm’ that operates on many different levels from the psychological, the historical, social, aesthetic and theological (Epstein, 1999b, 347). The unconscious, residing in either the psychic, the social or cultural life of the human subject, therefore lies beyond the boundaries of consciousness and exists as a conflicting ‘other’. So Epstein is rooting his understanding of ‘minimal religion’ in the theories of Freud and Jung and the notion of a religious unconscious acting as an ‘other’ on an individual’s path to ‘fullness’ (Epstein, 1999b, 386).

Epstein then considers the role of conversions in this process and he identifies two different ways this can occur. One way is a conversion to God through 'the church', which he depicts as the normal understating of the experience as it has occurred throughout the world with the established religions. The other way is a conversion to 'the church' through God as happened in the times of Moses, Christ and Luther, and he considers this form to be the way conversions occur in late-atheist and post-atheist Russia. So for Epstein, the personal experience through the engagement with an 'other' in terms of the emanation of a religious consciousness from the unconscious is how he grounds this experience of a conversion.

However, there are weaknesses with Epstein's attempt to elide Freud and Jung, especially given their dispute with each other, which has been described as 'one of the most significant moments in the history of psychoanalysis' (Palmer, 1999, 89). Epstein ignores the major differences between them in relation to both the unconscious and their understanding of religion. The fundamental disagreement stemmed from Freud's 'positivistic and deterministic approach', manifest in his biological preoccupation with the sexual origin of neurosis, which offers a 'reductive account of mental phenomena like religious belief' (Palmer, 1999, 91). In contrast, Jung is far more open and less reductive as he contends that there is more to the world than can be accounted for by scientific materialism. For Jung, psychic reality is unique and not a secondary product (Palmer, 1999, 91-92). Consequently,

ancient ideas, such as the idea of God, contain an aspect of psychological truth as an empirically evident psychic reality. Religion, as part of this psychic reality, should therefore not be treated as abnormal because reducible to a father complex (Palmer, 1999, 92). Freud and Jung both believed in the capacity of humans to heal themselves through the discovery of their unconscious but for Freud this could only be achieved by eliminating the religious neurosis. In contrast, for Jung, this process involves a reorientation of consciousness towards psychic processes such as religion, given they are deep expressions of the innermost workings of the mind. For Freud, the presence of religion is a symptom of neurosis, but for Jung it is religion's absence that is indicative of a neurosis. Such a difference between them had profound implications over what they saw as psychological data and how it was to be assessed, and what constitutes the therapeutic ideal and how it can be achieved. This led to the development of Jung's thinking on religion and his movement away from Freud's theories. I will explore the efficacious nature of Jung's understanding of religion in relation to Taylor's theistic orientation to the good later. What is important now is that Taylor's endorsement of Epstein's 'minimal religion' is undermined because as we shall now see, Taylor ultimately rejects Freud's theory of the self and unconscious for his own religious vision, and he does not discuss or utilise the more amenable theories of Jung.

Taylor: Consciousness and Conversions

Taylor considers the relation of belief and unbelief not as rival theories, but as different types of lived experience in the way we understand our lives, both morally and spiritually, in our pursuit of what he calls 'fullness' (Taylor, 2007, 4-5 & 780n.8). Despite its admittedly terminological difficulties, Taylor explains the notion of fullness as existing in an activity or condition where life is 'fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be', which we can aspire to or achieve ourselves (Taylor, 2007, 5). Taylor relates an illustrative example from the autobiography of Bede Griffiths, the British-born Benedictine monk who, on the last term at school, walks into the evening and hears the birds singing in a way never experienced before leading him to surmise eventually that he was coming into contact with God. Taylor notes how the fullness here emerges from an experience which disturbs our everyday sense of being in the world and allows the 'other' to shine through by overcoming negativity and pursuing our fullest aspirations through Schiller's notion of "'play'" (Taylor, 2007, 5-6; Schiller, 1967, Ch. 15). For Taylor, such experiences allow us to posit a place of fullness to which we orient ourselves both spiritually and morally, and they bring us into the presence of God, or the voice of nature or the 'alignment in us of desire and the drive to form' (Taylor, 2007, 6). We may not be clear where they have come from and may face difficulties in trying to articulate such experiences, but if we can, then we feel a sense of release when we do so,

which itself intensifies the experience even more, giving a sense of meaning and purpose to our lives.

Taylor considers further those who have broken out of the immanent frame and have gone through some kind of conversion (Taylor, 2007, 728). He also notes that most people who have a conversion may not have experienced this type of epiphany and may instead take on an understanding of religion from others such as saints, prophets or charismatic leaders 'who have radiated some sense of more direct contact' (Taylor, 2007, 729). He lists St Francis of Assisi, Saint Theresa, Jonathan Edwards or John Wesley as paradigms in this regard for allowing ordinary people to have confidence in a shared religious language or a way of articulating fullness. Alternatively, they may even be unknown as saints to ordinary people, but in either case, and sometimes these are intertwined, such a shared language gives a meaning to 'what it means to belong to a church' by realising that others have lived this fullness 'in a more complete and direct and powerful manner'.

Taylor then argues for an expansion in the scope of examples involved in this direct contact because the examples of Bede and even the more powerful mysticism of Theresa are a confinement on the closeness to the place of fullness. The important form of contact in the Christian tradition, Taylor informs us, is not simply the vision of God's power out there as in the epiphany of Bede, but in a 'heightened power of love' that God opens up in

people, not subjectively in terms of personal power, 'but as a participation in God's love'. St Francis is the paradigm for this more direct form of contact. Consequently, points of contact with fullness need to be widened to stop us from seeing such experience simply subjectively or as part of our feelings, and so separated from the object experienced, which is typified in the case of Bede (Taylor, 2007, 729-730). However, in the case of St Francis there is a more life-changing moment where he is "'surprised by love'", even though the same event could provoke both responses (Taylor, 2007, 730). Taylor contends that such a range is not exhaustive and whereas the latter involves individuals, there is also a collective transformation that has been noted by Durkheim, and which has declined somewhat since the dawn of religion, but takes place through a festive ritual or celebration which brings people together and opens them to fullness. In contemporary society many conversions or what he also calls 'founding moves of a new spiritual direction in history', involve a paradigm change similar to that in science, which alters the frame within which people think and even takes them beyond such a frame (Taylor, 2007, 730-731). In the past, examples of this are encapsulated in figures such as Jesus who changed the notion of the Messiah in his time, the Buddha who altered the perception of what it meant to go beyond the chain of rebirth, and in the case of St Francis there was a transformation of what it meant to respond to God's love (Taylor, 2007, 731). So conversions are an important moment on the path to fullness. They are experienced subjectively but they

must relate to an external object, which for Taylor is God. On that basis, how does Taylor consider the role of Freud's theories in this process?

In his discussion of fullness, Taylor includes Freud as part of the naturalist tradition that understands humans as being driven on one side by instinct and on the other side by the need for survival. As part of this movement, Freud understands fullness as being approximated through the 'power of reason' that is ours alone, and which we develop through our own 'heroic' actions (Taylor, 2007, 9). Taylor sees this form of fullness as 'rejoicing' in one of the 'modes of self-sufficient reason' within the realm of unbelief. Here, there is an 'admiration for the power of cool, disengaged reason, capable of contemplating the world and human life without illusion, and of acting lucidly for the best in the interest of human flourishing'. Reason is respected with a degree of 'awe' due to its critical acumen that allows us to break free from the 'illusion and blind forces of instinct, as well as the phantasies bred of our fear and narrowness and pusillanimity'. Within this Freudian view of fullness humans recognise themselves as both frail and brave as they face the challenge of a meaningless universe and attempt to devise their own rules of life to combat it. Taylor contends that this gives us a great degree of empowerment, and a sense of our own greatness as we aspire to this condition of fullness, albeit, he suggests, if we 'only rarely, if ever, achieve' it.

Freud is endorsing what Taylor calls the 'buffered self' that engages in a 'disengaged', 'disciplined stance to self and society', and is a defining characteristic of modern identity (Taylor, 2007, 136-137). The 'buffered self' also suffers 'disenchantment' and brings 'an end to porousness in relation to the world of spirits' (Taylor, 2007, 137). In its place is a 'new experience of the self as having a telos of autarky', and Taylor posits 'Freud's sense of the proud loneliness of the ego' as an example of this, where humans focus their emotions within rather than without in relation to other people (Taylor, 2007, 138). On that basis, Freud is also part of the tradition that developed from the nineteenth century and produced the very deep forms of unbelief that are prevalent today (Taylor, 2007, 369). Freud used science to make the break with religion through his 'depth psychology', which exposed an uncovering reality beneath the surface of appearances (Taylor, 2007, 501 & 369). Taylor maintains that we are still living with the fallout from this shift to depth, whether we believe in these theories or not.

Taylor then considers how the disenchanted world of the 'buffered self' needs a theory to account for events such as rock concerts or raves that give us common feelings that take us out of the everyday (Taylor, 2007, 518). He asks how we can explain such an experience and he recognises that Freud's theory offers one possibility. However, Taylor maintains that the participants in these activities are actually far removed from these disengaged subjects that he sees as typical of the 'immanent, naturalistic world-view' that Freud's

theories are part of. Taylor sees these festivities as allowing a transcendent moment to erupt in our lives, no matter how 'well we have organised them around immanent understandings of order'. He suggests that such moments can offer us a 'strong feeling of spiritual affinity' or 'blinding insight' that can continue through some 'demanding spiritual discipline', and that may then lead into meditation, prayer and a religious life. 'Arguably', Taylor proposes, this development is becoming 'more prominent and widespread' in our age, because people are becoming less satisfied with a 'momentary sense of wow!' So a move from a Freudian therapeutic to a spiritual perspective is possible, but Taylor concludes that as the psychical account of a person's desires and fears becomes disrupted, the more potent path to fullness instead charts a path to something transcendent.

Similarly, in his discussion of the inter-war years of the twentieth century, Taylor detects a further retreat from belief through the 'subtler languages of Continental Modernism' of which Freud plays a prominent part (Taylor, 2007, 409). Taylor depicts Freud as being an important figure in one of the "'master narratives'" that forged the rise of modern secularity and courageously resisted the 'blandishments of comforting meaning' (Taylor, 2007, 573 & 596). As such, this standpoint is 'ethically driven' and supported by the ethical 'aura surrounding engagement'. Consequently, Taylor states that he takes it as given that all philosophical positions accept some definition of human greatness and fullness in human life, and so concedes that materialists do not

deny ethics as some critics contend (Taylor, 2007, 597). However, he contends that the materialist position offers an inferior understanding of fullness because, along with all those positions that remain within the realm of immanence, they account for the 'specific force of creative agency, or ethical demands, or for the power of artistic experience' without recourse to 'some transcendent being'. What distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever is the believer's adherence to, and personal relation with, a loving God, which manifests itself in devotion, prayer and giving (Taylor, 2007, 8). However, this is a form of empowerment that still has to be further 'opened, transformed, brought out of self'. Analogous to this largely Christian account, Taylor momentarily considers Buddhism, which although rejecting the personal as being central, is still concerned with 'transcending the self' and 'receiving a power that goes beyond us'. In contrast, unbelievers are trying to attain fullness from within, rather than from without, and this can take many different forms of which Freud is one. For Taylor, then, without transcendence there cannot be fullness and as Freud remains within a 'purely immanent outlook' he cannot serve as a basis for Taylor's psychological account of religious experience. His endorsement of Epstein's 'minimal religion' is therefore severely undermined (Taylor, 2007, 360 & 400).

In contrast to Freud, Taylor draws on the 'very suggestive' work of Marcel Gauchet, who shows how this understanding of the unconscious within us has 'multiple sources' (Taylor, 2007, 348; Gauchet, 1992). These emanate from

a Romanticism that acknowledges our 'unsaid depths' along with the 'idea of the continuity of all living forms', which also builds on the notion of a "'cerebral unconscious'" that develops in the nineteenth century and sees our highest functions of thinking and willing as the 'product of neuro-physiological functions' such as the 'reflex arc and sensori-motor scheme' (Taylor, 2007, 348-349). So a 'psycho-physiological outlook' that puts 'consciousness, thinking and will within its bodily realisation' becomes predominant from the mid-nineteenth century (Taylor, 2007, 349).

Taylor then mentions his own preferred position, which is to understand these meanings theistically in an 'orthodox Christian frame' (Taylor, 2007, 351). However, he maintains that the 'modern cosmic imaginary' is important not for fostering any one position, but for creating a 'space in which people can wander between and around all these options without having to land clearly and definitively in any one'. In the war between belief and unbelief a no-man's-land is therefore created that is neutral and a place where people can escape the war altogether. Taylor suggests this is one reason why the war is dissipating in modernity despite the efforts of radical minorities.

Taylor does not expand further on how this theistic experience operates in the move from immanence to transcendence and thereby a response to God's calling. Nor does he show how Gauchet's theories would help us in doing so. Incidentally, it has also been suggested that Gauchet is not a viable source for

Taylor because Gauchet is suspicious of reducing the experience of an 'other' to a religious experience (Smith, 2009, 20; Gauchet, 2002, 17). However, as we have just seen, Taylor is not denying a non-religious experience here, but is instead saying that his own preferred way to understand such an experience on our psyche is in religious terms (See Taylor, 2009, 93). Gauchet is therefore valuable for Taylor by showing us that there are these multiple sources for experiences through the notion of the unconscious. It is just that Taylor fails to expand on the ways in which this can be achieved in his own religious framework in *A Secular Age*.

Three years later, in an explanation of what Taylor was trying to do in *A Secular Age* in response to some critical essays, he was most concerned not about putting forward an opinion but in creating a conversation (Taylor, 2010, 318). In terms of trying to speak out to everybody wherever they are, in Russia, Europe or the United States with different religious and non-religious traditions, Taylor says that he wants to cross all the divides. He wants a 'host of different positions, religious, nonreligious, antireligious, humanistic, antihumanistic, and so on, in which we eschew mutual caricature and try to understand what "fullness" means for the other'. What annoys Taylor are the 'conversation-stoppers' who have a tendency to 'project evil' onto other positions in order to have them eliminated resulting in the barbarisms in the name of religious faith throughout the world with no basis for dialogue (Taylor, 2010, 318-9).

To overcome this, Taylor begins to outline his own Catholicism as follows (Taylor, 2010, 319). First, he argues that the starting point is to have a 'calling to understand very different positions, particularly very different understandings of fullness'. He observes that not doing so means considering your own position is right by caricaturing the alternative and rejecting it. For Taylor, this is only hobbling around on crutches. Instead, he proclaims that we need to 'experience the power and attraction of quite different understandings of the world, atheist and theist'. As such, you must not live by what is 'powerful in your own faith unless you throw away the crutches that keep you from facing that, and the crutches are depreciating stories about others'.

The second reason is that you can learn things from these other positions but the third, and most 'decisive' for Taylor, is that it allows friendship to be built 'across these boundaries based on a real mutual sense, a powerful sense, of what moves the other person'. Such relationships are 'agonistic' in the sense that they are not about compromise or synthesis but rather to 'incorporate the kind of understanding where each can come to be moved by what moves the other' (Taylor, 2010, 320). Taylor then relates this to Christianity, and suggests that it is all to do with 'reconciliation between human beings' in general and not simply by 'being within the Church'. This is why Taylor can say that he is a hopeless German romantic of the 1790s who, along with Herder, sees

'humanity as the orchestra, in which all the differences between human beings could ultimately sound together in harmony'.

Taylor himself is motivated by his faith and is 'offering reasons for a certain kind of Christian position'. His starting point is to get a 'conversation going across as many differences as he can' even though he recognises that his sympathies are narrow and he does not go as broad as he should. He is therefore critical of other ways of being a Catholic and other forms of Catholicism that 'come from relatively high places'. Overall, his main aim in the book is to explain modern secularity and the various positions within it that allows us to have a conversation that 'bridges these differences'.

Taylor also notes a practical side to this as part of his work on the Quebec commission on the practices of reasonable accommodation, which considered issues of religious difference, especially in relation to Islam and Islamophobia. Taylor explains how the meetings were organised not with major dignitaries or people from relevant organisations but with ordinary people coming in off the street to air their views (Taylor, 2010, 320-1). Some opinions were xenophobic but these were challenged by others present and undermined the caricatures that were being expressed causing people to change their viewpoint.

On that basis, Taylor argues that this 'gut sense' that there is something really valuable in another person or view that should be engaged with is just as important as having rules and principles to ensure that diversity can produce a decent society (Taylor, 2010, 321). Taylor thinks this is essential when things become difficult and especially when the media behaves irresponsibly by creating scare stories to manipulate public opinion. In this way, the 'small battalions really count' in opening ourselves to the views of the other and so 'stand like firebreaks in a forest fire'. For Taylor, the commission was trying to increase these firebreaks and such a political action complemented the conversations he was trying to create in *A Secular Age*. He concludes that this is the 'kind of thing we have to be doing' now and in the future.

Previously, Taylor has not always been as open as this in the acceptance of non-theistic views (See Taylor, 1999 and my critique in Fraser 2007, Ch. 2) and his admission of narrowness in his own Catholicism above seems to recognise this. What I now want to suggest is that the theories of Carl Jung can be a fertile source for opening up a dialogue between a nuanced humanism and Taylor's own theism around the issue of fullness.

As was shown earlier, Jung rejects Freud's theory of religion and I now want to use Jung's theories to flesh out the religious experience that Taylor has been describing. In this way, I will be trying to create a dialogue between a humanist position and Taylor's articulation of his religious vision. The

justification for doing so arises from Taylor's endorsement of Epstein, who does use classical psychoanalytical theory, but in a way that does scant justice to Jung.

As we have seen, Taylor states that he understands the complex processes of what constitutes consciousness and the unconscious through his own preferred framework of theism. Part of this process of a change in consciousness is achieved through a conversion where an individual is put into contact with God. The mechanisms for achieving this, what is actually involved, are not explained or explored by Taylor, and this leaves a gap in his account of fullness and thereby his own vision of the good. To that end, I will explore Jung's theories on religion in an attempt to open the door that Taylor assumes is shut, between the nuanced humanism of Jung and his own theism.

Jung on Religion

Jung understands the psyche as having three different but interacting dimensions: consciousness, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious (Jung, 1998, 67; Cf. Palmer, 99-100). The function of consciousness is to 'recognise and assimilate the external world' through the senses and 'to translate into visible reality the world within us' (Jung, 1969, 158). The personal unconscious relates to the individual and houses moments of psychic material that have not reached the level of consciousness because

they were not intense enough experiences to do so, and either became forgotten or have been repressed (Jung, 1998, 67). The collective unconscious is common to all people and perhaps even all animals. Jung sees it as the 'true basis of the individual psyche' and as an 'ancestral heritage of possibilities of representation'. The collective unconscious therefore contains primordial images that reside in all people across all generations, and can come to consciousness under certain conditions (Jung, 1998, 69). Jung states that these images are the 'deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity' and contain fantasies, dreams, myths and religious thought (Jung, 1998, 69-70). He refers to them as 'archetypes' or 'recurrent impressions made by subjective reactions' that produce a 'numinous or a fascinating effect, or impels to action' (Jung, 1998, 71). The 'numinous' nature of this religious experience, what Jung refers to as the '*numinosum*', refers to a 'dynamic agency or effect' that 'seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator' and is independent of a person's will (Jung, 1958, 7). Such an experience is therefore external to the individual and belongs to a 'visible object or the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness'. Religion itself, then, 'designates the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been changed by experience of the "*numinosum*"' and Jung cites the conversion of Paul as a 'striking example' of this (Jung, 1958, 8), which I will explore in more detail later.

In a discussion of a psychological approach to the trinity, Jung considers this further and notes how such transformations are not everyday occurrences, given they 'usually have a numinous character' and 'can take the form of conversions' (Jung, 1958, 183). He characterises these transformations as: 'illuminations, emotional shocks, blows of fate, religious or mystical experiences, or their equivalents' (Jung, 1958, 183-184). Jung then bemoans how modern people have such 'hopelessly muddled ideas about anything "mystical"' or they fear it, so that they are bound to 'misunderstand its true character and will deny or repress its numinosity' (Jung, 1958, 184). It will then wrongly be seen as 'inexplicable, irrational and even pathological', but this misinterpretation is due to a lack of insight and a poor understanding of the complex relationships operating in the background. These relationships can only be clarified by supplementing the conscious data with material from the unconscious, and in this way the gaps in a person's experience of life can be filled in and understood. Jung maintains that the numinous character of these experiences is evinced by their overwhelming nature, which goes against both our pride and our deep-rooted fear, given pride is a reaction to covering up a secret fear, that consciousness is losing its ascendancy to the unconscious. For Jung then, we should allow ourselves to be open to this transcendent moment and overcome our fear, and this strikes a strong resonance with Taylor's edict that we should stop shutting out these experiences. Moreover, Jung's more elucidatory account of this religious

understanding of these experiences through the psyche opens up the door to a dialogue with Taylor's theistic assertions from a nuanced humanist position.

It is therefore also interesting to also compare Jung's own speculations on the future when he was writing in the late 1950s a few years before his death in 1961. He declared then that he was neither 'spurred on by excessive optimism nor in love with high ideals', but was instead 'concerned with the fate of the individual human being' (Jung, 1998, 403). He reflected that there appeared to be a wide disposition to unbelief and this was forcing believers onto the defensive and to catechize themselves on the basis of their own religious convictions (Jung, 1998, 391). Jung notes how such a situation, combined with the 'weakening of the Church and the precariousness of its dogmatic assumptions', leads the latter to offer more faith as the antidote. However, Jung counters that the gift of grace does not depend on a person's goodwill and pleasure through consciousness, but is instead based on 'spontaneous religious experience, which brings the individual's faith into immediate relation with God'. The question to answer for all of us, according to Jung, is whether as individuals we have any 'religious experience and immediate relation to God, and hence that certainty', which will preserve our individuality and stop us from 'dissolving in the crowd'. Jung infers that the religious person has a 'great advantage' in answering this question, because he or she understands how their subjective existence is 'grounded' in their relation to "'God'" (Jung, 1998, 392). Jung explains that he puts the word God

in quotes to signify that he is dealing with an 'anthropomorphic idea whose dynamism and symbolism are filtered through the medium of an unconscious psyche'. Jung contends that even unbelievers can get close to the source of this experience, but concludes that without this approach the 'prototype' of such an experience is the rare case of a 'miraculous' conversions as in Paul's epiphany on the road to Damascus. Jung declares therefore that religious experience does not need any proof given the 'subjectively overwhelming numinosity' that accompanies it, but says it is a misfortune that it has occurred through religion and psychology given the prejudices against them (Jung, 1998, 392-393). This leads him to rhetorically ask whether people realise that they could be on the verge of losing the 'life-preserving myth' of the inner self that Christianity has conjured up for them, but rests his hope that they have not (Jung, 1998, 403). After all, the whole world depends on the 'infinitesimal unit' of the human being, and 'in whom, if we read the meaning of the Christian message aright, even God seeks his goal'. As Jung argues, the greatest limitation for all individuals is as a self that is 'manifested in the experience: "'I am *only* that!'" (Jung, 1995, 357). This has become widespread, according to Jung, due to the emphasis on the 'here and now' that has resulted in the 'daimonisation' of humans and their world' where they have been 'robbed of transcendence' (Jung, 1995, 358). Instead, we need to search for meaning 'both without and within' (Jung, 1995, 349).

The Conversion of St Paul

Taylor has stressed the importance of conversions for achieving fullness and what I want to argue here is that the theistic understanding Taylor gives to this experience can be shared with a non-theistic understanding via a Jungian framework. Taylor discusses St. Paul in a consideration of Erasmus' exploration of the use of the sacrament (Taylor, 2007, 72). Taylor argues that Erasmus endorsed the use of the sacrament for good ends such as bringing us into contact with grace but maintained that this still 'diverts us from true piety'. For Erasmus, Taylor contends, the goal of praying to saints should be our own spiritual development. He quotes Erasmus as stipulating that the "true way to worship saints is to imitate their virtues" and they would appreciate this far more than lighting a myriad of candles. Veneration of the bones of Paul in a shrine, for example, is one thing, but you cannot venerate the mind of Paul that is enshrined in his works. Taylor states that the crucial point here is the 'end we have in view' rather than the practice to that end and adds that it is inevitable that following this end will result in the dissipation of many practices. Taylor argues that if the 'aim is to become more inwardly like Paul', then touching a relic is not the right course of action not because the relic did not make you spiritually better but because the relic existed in a world where the boundaries between the spiritual and the material benefit 'went usually unremarked'.

Taylor also mentions St. Paul as part of a 'powerful moral attraction of a new, less cluttered, more universal and fraternal space' that has 'wide resonances in human history' (Taylor 2007, p. 576). Taylor lists as examples, the followers of the Buddha entering the 'new space of the Sangha' from the 'caste dharma'; the followers of Christ based on the parable of the Good Samaritan, 'until Paul can say: "in Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, man nor woman"' and finally the 'new space of Islam' that was created by the followers of Muhammad' that transcends 'all tribes and nations'. For Taylor, the power that these types of events have for humankind could offer a more enlightened understanding of ourselves if only we could define it (Taylor, 2007, 577). He admits that he cannot do that himself but contends that explaining this power in negative terms as a movement away from restraint is not a feasible one. Instead, we need to see this as a 'steady sense of reaching something higher' as a 'positive attraction of the space we are released into' such as the 'search for Enlightenment, of salvation, or of submission to God, or the cosmopolis of Gods'. It is to this 'something higher' on the path to fullness that I suggest Jung can aid Taylor's articulation of this process.

As was mentioned above, for Jung, the conversion of Paul was a 'striking example' of how the experience of the *numinosum* causes a change in consciousness. As Jung argues, in Paul's case he did not know the Lord and received his gospel through revelation rather than through the apostles (Jung, 1958, 433). The conversion he experienced was therefore via the revelation of

the Holy Ghost who in its own activity dwells and works in human beings producing an alteration in consciousness, 'revelatory ecstasies', and by reminding people of Christ's teaching leads them into the light.

The effects of the Holy Ghost both confirm the things we all know while transcending them (Jung, 1958, 433-4). Indeed, Jung detects that in Christ's sayings there are already indications of ideas that go beyond traditional Christian morality as is evinced in the parable of the unjust steward which 'betrays an ethical standard very different from what is expected' (Jung, 1958, 434). For Jung, the 'moral criterion here is *consciousness*, and not law or convention'. Paul had the capacity for self-reflection when confronted with this experience, (Jung, 1958, 435) and such a religious transformation along with the development of a new state of consciousness, as Jung indicates, is encapsulated in Paul's declaration in Galatians 2:20, where he pronounces that "'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'" (Jung, 1958, 546 & 546n.28).

This turning inward means that St. Paul, or anyone who has experienced a conversion in this way, begins to feel the inner workings and words of God in their heart (Jung, 1958, 545-6). Jung describes this as a 'new state of consciousness born of religious practice' that is 'empty' and open to 'another influence', a 'non-ego' which takes over the ego in a process of 'religious transformation' and often with the occurrence of 'violent psychic convulsions'

(Jung, 1958, 546). This experience is not simply replacing one way of seeing with another, *'it is not that something different is seen, but that one sees differently'*, and this depends on the development of the personality and 'nature of the perceiving subject' in a 'process of religious transformation' (Jung, 1958, 546-7). For St. Paul, this was part of his 'split consciousness' which housed 'the apostle directly called and enlightened by God' but also the 'sinful man who could not pluck out the "thorn in the flesh" and rid himself of the satanic angel who plagued him' (Jung, 1958, 470). So even the 'enlightened person...is never more than his own limited ego before the One who dwells within' and is as 'fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky'.

This psychoanalytical understanding of the conversion of St. Paul on the path to fullness is a useful way to help Taylor articulate this experience. It operates on the terrain of his own theism while still opening the door that Taylor presumes is shut to a more enlightened rather than exclusive humanism. As Jung indicates, the basis of Paul's conversion was even more remarkable because it was not through love or faith but through hatred of the Christians which is why he set off on his trip to Damascus (Jung, 1958, 332). This shutting out and barring of the door is what Taylor repudiates in much of modern unbelief as represented by the aptly termed 'aggressive atheism' (Wilde, 2010) of Richard Dawkins that I examine next in an attempt to create a conversation across the atheist/theist divide.

Dawkins

Interestingly, Dawkins uses Jung in his seven-scale classification of the probabilistic belief in the existence of God (Dawkins, 2006, 51). 1 indicates a 'strong theist', a '100 per cent probability of God' and, in the unreferenced words of Jung, the edict that: "I do not believe, I *know*". 7 is typified as a 'strong atheist' where someone knows there is no God with the 'same conviction that Jung "knows" there is one'. Dawkins puts himself in 6, which denotes someone who cannot know for certain that God does not exist but thinks it improbable and lives his life on the assumption that he is not there. Dawkins explains that he only included category 7 for symmetry with category 1 which he contends is far more populated than the former. So already he is conceding the possibility of the existence of God.

He continues that it is in the 'nature of faith that one is capable, like Jung, of holding a belief without adequate reason to do so'. Dawkins also mocks Jung for believing that 'particular books on his shelf exploded with a loud bang'. Dawkins asserts that 'atheists do not have faith; and reason alone could not propel one to total conviction that anything definitely does not exist'. He further explains that although he puts himself in category 6 on this basis, he still leans toward 7 because he is 'agnostic' only to the extent that he is agnostic about fairies at the bottom of the garden.

Dawkins' interpretation of Jung here needs to be questioned. For Jung, religion must be treated seriously because it is 'incontestably one of the earliest and most universal expressions of the human mind' (Jung, 1958, 5). In relation to God, Jung does not know that God exists but rather, from his psychological approach, takes seriously that the idea of God exists in terms of the 'primitive unconscious psyche' (Jung, 1995, 381). Whereas the assumption, for example, that 'man was created on the sixth day of Creation' can be seen as 'too simple and archaic to satisfy us nowadays', this is not true in relation to the psyche that has an 'anatomical pre-history of millions of years'. Jung even asserts that this is why believers have declared him an 'atheist' despite his embracing of the psychological understanding of the existence of God.

To explain this further, Jung discusses the virgin birth which he says is understood within psychology not in terms of whether it is true or not but with the fact that such an idea exists (Jung, 1958, 6). Consequently, 'psychological existence is subjective in so far as an idea occurs in only one individual. But it is objective in so far as it is shared by a society – by a *consensus gentium*'. Jung even makes the comparison here with natural science in that psychology deals with ideas and mental contents just as zoology deals with different species of animals (Jung, 1958, 6-7). For Jung, an elephant is as 'true' a phenomenon as is the existence of ideas that penetrate the psyche and our consciousness as is the case with religion (Jung, 1958, 7). Jung argues that religion is a 'peculiar attitude of mind' that engages in 'careful consideration

and observation of certain dynamic factors that are conceived as “powers” (Jung, 1958, 8). These are ‘spirits, daemons, gods, laws, ideas, ideals’, that people have taken on to be considered carefully and or ‘grand, beautiful, and meaningful enough to be devoutly worshipped and loved’. Ironically, Jung states that in colloquial language a person who is obsessed by a particular pursuit is “‘religiously devoted”” to the relevant cause and such an epithet can be applied to scientists who have no creed but who still have a devout temper, as in the case of Dawkins.

In relation to faith and reason, Jung notes how historically, in terms of nineteenth-century education, the ‘Church’ told young people about the value of blind faith and the universities propagated an ‘intellectual rationalism’ (Jung, 1958, 343). Jung notes how people in modernity have become tired of these ‘warfare of opinions’ and want to find out for themselves ‘how things are’. In doing so, this ‘desire opens the door to the most dangerous possibilities’ that should be seen as ‘courageous’ and worthy of sympathy. Jung sees this as being invoked by a ‘deep spiritual distress to bring meaning once more into life on the basis of fresh and unprejudiced experience’. Jung realises that we need to be cautious in doing so but we need to support those who wish to challenge their own personality. Opposition to such a venture is simply supressing what is best in people, their ‘daring’ and their ‘aspirations’ and would inhibit that which is an ‘invaluable experience’ that can give ‘meaning to life’. Jung argues that the psychotherapist must tackle this

question and decide whether or not to stand with a human being however it might seem they are embarked on some misadventure. The psychotherapist must not prejudge what is right or wrong because that will undermine the 'richness of experience'. Instead, the focus should be on 'what actually happens – for only that which acts is actual'. Jung's openness is affirmed by the fact that even when it appears some error is self-evident, the error should still be explored because in it lies power and life which is lost if the psychotherapist holds on to what appears to be true. As Jung elaborates, 'light has need of darkness – otherwise how could it appear to be light?'

There is therefore a greater richness in Jung's understanding of religion and the existence of God than Dawkins allows for in his own caricature of that position. Whether Dawkins will allow himself to be open to such a conversation given his 'aggressive atheism' is doubtful but as Taylor indicates it is crucial in creating a decent society that such a dialogue takes place and I now want to examine his attempt to do so.

Taylor considers Dawkins' reasons for arguing that science makes religion redundant and suggests that they 'hardly inspire confidence' (Taylor, 2007, 835n27, referring to Dawkins' quotes in McGrath, 2004, 95). Taylor reports how Dawkins contends that faith, defined as "'belief that isn't based on evidence'", is "'one of the world's great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate'" (McGrath, 20004, 95). In contrast, Dawkins

sees science as being free from faith but as Taylor correctly indicates the idea that there are '*no* assumptions in a scientist's work which aren't already based on evidence' is nothing more than '*blind* faith' without the 'occasional tremor of doubt' (Taylor, 2007, 835n27). As Taylor notes, 'few religious believers are this untroubled'.

Taylor considers further what is at stake when someone such as Dawkins argues that 'Science has refuted God' (Taylor, 2007, 567). For atheists and materialists such as Dawkins these arguments are 'irrefutable' and are based on 'reason'. Yet Taylor conjectures that the opposite of this, 'bad reason', must also be accounted for and especially in terms of why it works in terms of believing in God. The answer is that science may have tried to show that the material world denies the existence of God but Taylor still has his own religious life, a sense of God and how he impinges on Taylor's own existence, against all of which he can assess the claims to refutation. Moreover, we also need to explain why we do what we do not simply in terms of the information from external sources but also from internal ones and this is a story that cannot be heard because of the 'power' of "'atheist humanism", or exclusive humanism' (Taylor, 2007, 568-9). Dawkins cannot allow himself to be open to this but unless he does he simply falls back onto the type of faith in science that he imputes in a derisory manner to faith in religion.

Taylor attempts his own dialogue with Dawkins by referring to a 'moving obituary' that the latter wrote for his colleague, mentor and fellow atheist William Hamilton who expressed his desire to have his body laid out in the Amazon jungle and "'interred by burying beetles as food for their larvae'" (Taylor, 2007, 606; Dawkins, 2000, 12). Hamilton imagines that later his flesh will have nourished the new-born beetles allowing him to escape and fly out "'into the Brazilian wilderness beneath the stars'". Taylor suggests that this 'sense of wonder, and piety of belonging' can be seen as both 'compatible' and an 'intrinsic' aspect of a 'naturalist, immanentist' and 'materialist' perspective and that is no doubt how Dawkins would interpret it (Taylor, 2007, 606-7). However, Taylor then proposes that the 'power' of this experience might include 'something similar, perhaps even richer' that 'might be recovered in the register of religious belief' (Taylor, 2007, 607). Moreover, he suggests that there are also 'modes of aesthetic experience' that have an 'epiphanic, transcendent reference' as is the case with Bede Griffiths or works of art. Taylor concludes that the challenge to the 'unbeliever', such as Dawkins, is to 'find a non-theistic register' to respond to these experiences 'without impoverishment'. He admits that it is arguable whether these registers can be found or arbitrated inter-subjectively even though we all have a reading of these experiences that give us our own response to them. It is also difficult because we can give an order to things without stating on what basis our ontological commitment to them is meant to be. Taylor cites as examples the way Wordsworth's poetry could be revered 'across an

ontological spectrum ranging from orthodox Christians to atheists, including Eliot and Hardy'. Indeed, Taylor finds it interesting that Dawkins' mentor Hamilton, 'a major articulator of contemporary unbelief, faced with the accusation that his age and milieu are lacking depth, points to its love of Hardy and Housman'. Again, though, Taylor states that he is not claiming to decide the issue here, but is rather exposing the 'considerations which weigh with each one of us, as we find ourselves leaning one way or another' in our desire for 'fullness'.

Taylor, though, also needs to be careful. The conversation he is having with Dawkins is a good one and pushes the boundaries where theism and atheism meet. The key is Taylor's use of the phrase 'perhaps even richer' for a theistic understanding of Hamilton's desire to live on as a beetle. Just as Hamilton and Dawkins want this to remain in the immanent materialist frame, Taylor wants to push it into the theist camp but there really is no need to do this from a Jungian perspective. Both are equally valid ways of understating the aspiration to fullness even in death and show how the theist and atheist divide can come into contact with each other. From a Jungian perspective, neither of these accounts are a form of 'impoverishment' either but rich in the wonders of life and our attitude to death and the possibility of transcendence.

Conclusion

This critical exploration of Taylor's endorsement of Epstein's 'minimal religion' has raised a number of important issues in relation to Taylor's thought. In the first instance the attempt to elide the thought of Freud and Jung by Epstein has been shown to be untenable. Jung rejected Freud's theories for their reductionism and superficial understanding of the power of religious thought. Taylor accepts the importance of Freud's theories, but also rejects them for their reductionism and for the fact that they had only a limited understanding of fullness that remained within the realm of immanence and did not engage with the transcendent moment without. To elucidate this important movement from within/without and immanence to transcendence I drew on the theories of Jung, who Taylor does not mention, even though Epstein does, but with scant justice to the richness of his work in this area. A more developed understanding of Jung's discussion on religion and the theory of consciousness has thus been shown to be both a fruitful source to articulate an important aspect of Taylor's religious vision that also opens up the possibility of a dialogue between his theism and a more nuanced humanism. To try to show what this dialogue might look like, I examined the conversion of St. Paul and attempted to create a conversation with the 'aggressive atheism' of Dawkins. In both examples, the richness of the Jungian framework to complement Taylor's minimal religion approach showed how the boundaries between theism and atheism might touch tangentially on the path to fullness and the creation of a decent society.

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