

TRANSFORMING AUTHENTICITY – APPROPRIATING THE CONCEPT OF CHARLES TAYLOR FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

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Abstract

The concept of authenticity is troublesome in that it means different things to different people. The authenticity that emanated from the 17th century rationalism paints a distorted picture of the individual who became the centre of attraction – it is authenticity intermingled with autonomism and individualism. Since then, thinkers from the age of Romanticism until the present age have endeavoured to correct the shortcomings ascribed to authenticity. Charles Taylor in *The ethics of authenticity* has made great strides in clearing authenticity from its rationalism baggage, but he still has not addressed all its shortcomings.

Since philosophy is never religiously neutral, a philosophical topic can be approached from various fundamental view points. My decision to approach this study from a Christian point of view is affirmed by the notion that the roots of authenticity can be found by employing the biblical principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, also known as ‘appropriation’, to appropriate ideas from Renaissance thinkers along the example of the early church fathers, especially Augustine – and normatively transform it from a Christian point of view.

The result, although sobering, but not surprising, culminates in the realisation that authenticity is neither a product of the mind, nor of self-definition. The path of progress, in discovering one’s authenticity, is an inward journey of contemplative reflection to explore and develop the inner self in seeking a relationship with God.

Preface

The focus of this study is to explore the modern understanding of the concept of authenticity, especially Charles Taylor's version of the concept. Although the term 'authenticity' originated during the Renaissance, I argue that the notion of authenticity had been an antecedent praxis since the early ages. This study sought first to determine the shortcomings of the concept as portrayed in modernity, secondly to find the source of authenticity, and lastly to appropriate material from the Renaissance philosophers to normatively transform Charles Taylor's concept from a Christian perspective by using the ideas of the Patristics¹, notably Augustine.

¹ This study looks at authenticity from a Christian perspective, and in doing so I shall focus on the work of Patristics from the latin, western European Roman Catholic church, especially Augustine's views

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Appropriation, authenticity, autonomy, Christian point of view, horizon of significance, individuality, inwardness, rationalism, religious belief, source, transformation.

2.1 Introduction²

The notion of authenticity is a troublesome concept in that it means so many different things in different contexts (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:1), and seems ostensibly not to be exclusively connected with any specific worldview or philosophical direction of thought. It is simultaneously a pervasive ideal that impacts the worldview of human beings in their moral, as well as in their social and political, thinking.

Mediaeval Scholasticism proved to be a difficult time in the development of the Western mind. The hegemony of the monolithic and dogmatic church controlled original thought and suppressed any individuality, and it enforced complete conformity upon its subjects in all facets of life. Between the 16th and 18th centuries the Renaissance, scientific revolution and Reformation caused radical changes in the West. These upheavals changed humankind's opinion of himself and his worldview. As more discoveries were made during the Renaissance, the Western mind became increasingly sceptical of church orthodoxies, conscious of his intellectual power, his creativity, and more importantly, the freedom to express his individuality. It was then during this period that man emerged as an autonomous human being, increasingly confident in his³ ability to control nature (Tarnas, 1991:282).

One of the most prominent figures of the time was René Descartes, who laid the foundations for the dominance of reason of the human being (Watson, 2002:3). His views and thinking heralded the onset of rationalism⁴ and the realisation that human beings can create their own destiny through their intellectual power. The rationalism movement accentuated the importance of the individual and placed him in the centre of this worldview. Thus, the overbearing worldview changed from an organic world picture to a mechanistic world picture (Venter, 2013a:57–58), wherein the concept of society as an organic whole changed to a concept of society as an aggregation of individuals (Varga & Guignon, 2014:2).

² In this study, there are references to **Charles Taylor** and **Henry Taylor**. To distinguish between them I shall refer to their first names throughout.

³ **Gender Neutral**. Wherever used herein, a pronoun in the masculine gender shall be considered as including the feminine gender unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

⁴ It is prudent to differentiate between rationality, as the exercise of pure reason - the process of thinking within a religious frame of reference, and Rationalism, which is the deviant form of reason - the doctrine that reason alone is a source of knowledge and is independent of experience or religion.

Against this background of rationalism and the focus on individualism during the 18th century, the concept of authenticity emanated and developed in cohesion with the individualist concept of the modern self. The term ‘authenticity’ was used during this period for the first time, almost as if the concept was another new creation during the Renaissance.

As will be argued later, my hypothesis is that the origins of authenticity lie much earlier and much deeper than being a creation of the modern Western mind, and given this view, that authenticity has a much richer and fuller meaning than the present-day praxis. Charles Taylor is one of the most prominent modern-day philosophers on the subject of authenticity. In his prominent work on the topic of authenticity, *The ethics of authenticity* (Taylor, 1991), he takes the concept from its first appearance in the 18th century and describes its development throughout modernity.

My quest in this study is to explore Charles Taylor’s views on authenticity as expounded in his salient work on this topic, *The ethics of authenticity*. I have also explored his other works, *Sources of the self* (Taylor, 1989) and *A secular age* (Taylor, 2007), to set the background for Charles Taylor’s notion of authenticity. A later interview which Ronald Kuipers had with Charles Taylor – *Religious belonging in an “age of authenticity”: A conversation with Charles Taylor* (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008) – is also of particular importance for me since Charles Taylor makes a clear connection in this interview between Christian faith and authenticity.

2.2 Word origin and interpretation of the concept

In this section, the origin of the term ‘authenticity’ and its general understanding, as a relation with the self, is expounded.

2.2.1 Etymology

The word ‘authentic’ originates from the middle of the 14th century directly from Mediaeval Latin *authenticus* and the Greek *authentikos*⁵. According to the Collins English dictionary, authenticity appears to be used from around 1650–1660 and has the associated meaning of ‘the quality of being authentic’ or simply ‘genuineness’.

⁵ The Greek *authentikos* means “original, genuine, principal”, and comes from *authentēs* “one acting on one's own authority” (Collins English dictionary, 2015).

In ordinary usage, the term 'authentic' suggests the idea of being 'original' or 'faithful to an original', and its application implies being true to what someone (or something) truly is (Guignon, 2008:1). In *On being authentic*, Guignon states that the "project of being authentic" has two components – first, to be in touch with one's own inner self, and second, to live in such a way that one's actions reveal the true self discovered from the inward-turning process (Guignon, 2004:75). Authenticity therefore seems to refer to one's relationship with one's inner self, and that one lives according to his authenticity.

2.2.2 Relation with the self

It is my contention that authenticity, as one's relationship with one's inner self, is inherent to the human being, but it transcends the mere immanent reality and autonomy of thought which Dooyeweerd describes as the characteristic of immanence philosophy (Dooyeweerd, 1956:15). The transcendental nature of the self, as I see it, lies in the spiritual sphere. Dooyeweerd draws attention to the human selfhood as the root-unity which transcends all modal aspects of the temporal horizon of human experience (Dooyeweerd, 1956:17). With this view, he aligns with Augustine (AD 354–430), who distinguishes between the outer, physical human being and the inner, which he labels the soul⁶. To him, the road forward for a person, to progress, lies in turning inward to his inner self (Taylor, 1989:129).

The Enlightenment thinkers on the other hand placed great emphasis on the autonomy of individual thought. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) held that one's orientation toward life should come from within, from one's deepest motivations (Varga & Guignon, 2014:4, 5). A contemporary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant (1724–1807), sees the *cogito* as the starting point of one's consciousness (Dooyeweerd, 1956:18). A century later Kierkegaard (1813–1855), as an early herald of existentialism, hints at the importance of the notion of inwardness as "The self is a relation that relates itself to itself ..." (Varga & Guignon, 2014:8).

⁶ Augustine uses the word 'soul' (anima) for the immortal, incorporeal dimension of the human being. He distinguishes between the immortal soul and the temporal body of the human being with his description of the inner and outer person (Taylor 1989:129). It is my contention that he regards the soul and body as part of the complete nature of the human being, and does not see it as two separate entities like Plato and Plotinus.

Existentialist thinkers such as Heidegger, Sartre and De Beauvoir place emphasis on the existence of the individual being and made a significant claim on the concept with Heidegger's idea of authenticity as *Eigentlichkeit*. For Heidegger, the existence – *Dasein* – of the individual being is at issue (Varga & Guignon, 2014:9).

Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Being and nothingness* (1943) spoke about a spirit of seriousness which assumes “there are transcendent values that exist antecedently to humans” (Varga & Guignon, 2014:14). This notion of antecedent transcendent values strikes a chord that relates strongly to the origins of authenticity for me. I shall return to this notion of antecedent values later on.

Simone de Beauvoir builds on Sartre's existentialistic ideas. Her concept of authenticity is “we are called upon to become in our concrete lives, to become what we already are in the ontological structure of our being” (Varga & Guignon, 2014:16).

One could say that all these thinkers have the same broad idea about authenticity. They saw authenticity as a person's relationship with the self, and its inward directedness. This relationship with the self and the inward-directedness relates strongly to Augustine and will be expounded upon later.

2.3 Focus on Charles Taylor's authenticity

According to Charles Taylor, contemporary Western intellectual thinking shifted to an “age of authenticity” (Taylor, 1991; Taylor, 2007) and prompts further investigation and thinking about what Taylor's concept of authenticity actually entails. This study therefore explored Charles Taylor's ideas as one of the most prominent philosophers on the topic of authenticity today.

In *The ethics of authenticity*, Charles Taylor picks up the story of authenticity, especially from the romantic period and the development of the ethic of authenticity, as well as the meaning of an ideal of authenticity as an act of self-discovery and in dialogue with significant others in our lives. Taylor also discusses the pitfalls of the contemporary culture of authenticity.

Underlying Charles Taylor's view of authenticity is the idea that human beings have an innate moral sense – an inner voice (Taylor, 1991:26). This notion of inner depth was, according to Charles Taylor, and inaugurated by Augustine whose mystical interaction with God was the source of his own spirituality (Taylor, 1989:126–143;

Taylor, 1991:26). Charles Taylor however, singles out Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the salient philosopher who reintroduced this idea to modernity. Rousseau's secularised version states that morality is "following a voice of nature in us", and that "our moral salvation comes from recovering authentic moral contact with ourselves" (Taylor, 1991:27). According to Charles Taylor, Herder was also a major articulator of the ideal of authenticity. His idea was that everyone has an original way of being human, each person has his own "measure" (Taylor, 1991:28). Everyone has to be true to himself, to be original. From the views of Augustine, Rousseau and Herder, Charles Taylor's thinking progresses from the individual moral sense to an inner voice, to be true to oneself and to be original without imitating others. By articulating these ideas, a person can discover himself and realise a potentiality that is his own. This is a person's background to understanding the modern ideal of authenticity (Taylor, 1991:29).

Guignon concurs with Charles Taylor in this regard, when he remarks that being authentic places high demands on the individual. It requires a conscious effort to be constantly in touch with the individual's inner self (Guignon, 2004:76).

Years later Charles Taylor describes authenticity as "... shorthand for the background idea that everyone has their own particular way of being human and that you can then be either true to that or untrue to that" (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:1). Other thinkers such as Ferrara, Golomb, Varga and Guignon, joined Charles Taylor in the last three decades in attempts to recover and reconstruct authenticity from the self-indulgent forms ascribed to it (Varga & Guignon, 2014)

Further to reconstructing authenticity, Charles Taylor goes one step further by describing both the individual and social aspects of authenticity. He maintains a more balanced view than other thinkers by linking a socially induced identity to the ideal of authenticity (Taylor, 1991:47). Other philosophers, such as Guignon and Varga, maintain a similar view. According to these philosophers, authenticity is not only locked within the individual, but it must be lived, or exhibited in one's social relations.

However, one cannot address the contemporary challenges that currently face authenticity, unless we understand how the concept of authenticity came about during the Renaissance and early modernity.

2.4 Authenticity and rationalism

In this section I expound the effects of rationalism and human beings' belief in the power of reason and their own intellect on the development of the concept of authenticity. The Renaissance was a period of complex changes with its discoveries as it started to move away from mediaeval scholasticism. Apart from new discoveries and new ideas, it was also an era of going back to the original sources. Philosophically it moved to Classicism to revive the classical Roman and Greek cultures. On the religious front, there were the New Patristics who revived the teachings of the early Church Fathers, but the Reformers followed after the Patristics to revive the teachings of the original Biblical message and to break the hegemony of Catholic scholasticism. The scientific revolution brought a belief in the intellectual power of human beings. So, amongst all in this period of upheaval and change, rationalism was born (Venter, 2013a:55–56).

The worldview of rationalism grew in prominence and popularity between the 15th and 17th centuries. Autonomy and individualism came into being with the emphasis on the intellect, and humankind's ability to excel in all spheres of life. The humanism and rationalism of Renaissance philosophers heralded the move from a theocentric worldview to an anthropocentric worldview. It thus placed more emphasis on autonomy (Venter, 2013c:22–29). During the Enlightenment, the notion of autonomy and individualism grew in prominence with thinkers who believed in autonomous control to solve the problems of the natural world through reason and analytical thinking. Each human being became increasingly individualistic and viewed himself as master of his own fate and able to create order within his own reason (Venter 2013b:3,4). These developments caused a marked shift, not only to an anthropocentric worldview, but also in religious belief. As human beings saw themselves more and more as creators of their own future, they became acutely aware of their distinctness from nature, and their intellectual capacity to control nature, and as a result their belief in, and dependence on, God waned (Tarnas, 1991:282).

It is against this milieu in the Enlightenment that authenticity was born from earlier forms of individualism, especially Descartes' disengaged reason (Taylor, 1989:143–176; Taylor, 1991:25). Following from the Enlightenment, later philosophers in the romantic period placed the responsibility on the individual to define his own beliefs and

reject societal constructed norms or submission to mass-culture. However, they were critical of the Enlightenment's disengaged reason and atomism that denied the ties to community (Taylor, 1991:25). To clarify, the romantics supported the Enlightenment view of individual self-definition and rejection of external conformity. However, the romantics recognised that authenticity is ineluctably linked with society, which is in contrast with the practice of disengaged reason.

As mentioned, for Jean-Jacques Rousseau the ideal of authenticity is to be in relationship with the modern concept of the self. He further holds the view that the orientation towards life emanates from within: it is a process of self-reflection, and introspection. In these inward sources, Rousseau further distinguishes between essential and peripheral motives. Acting on peripheral motives, according to Rousseau, leads to self-annihilation and self-betrayal since it ignores the core aspects of oneself. The ability to turn inward is vital for the moral immanent understanding of the self, said Rousseau (Varga & Guignon, 2014:5). This is the same view held by Augustine, who said the road to self-discovery leads through the inner self to God (Taylor, 1991:26). Charles Taylor also recognises this link, and to me this is the golden thread that opens up to the ideal of authenticity during early Christianity.

2.5 Authenticity and autonomy

We saw earlier that the notion of autonomy and individualism intensified during the Enlightenment and promoted an anthropocentric worldview. The Enlightenment, according to Charles Taylor, abolishes all horizons of significance (Taylor 1991:28). When considering the topic of autonomy, it appears as if it has been assimilated with authenticity, which require thinkers to clarify the difference between authenticity and autonomy. Guignon describes autonomy as a central issue in modernity, where the individual is a self-directed, efficient agent who acts with dignity. The individual is someone who knows what he believes or feels, and who acts according to those feelings and beliefs (Guignon, 2004:77).

Varga and Guignon (2014) further clarify the differences between autonomy and authenticity. Autonomy agrees with the ethic of authenticity as far it emphasises the individual's self-governing abilities and capacity to follow self-imposed guidelines. Conversely, the idea of autonomy differs from authenticity in that autonomy emphasises the individual's self-governing drive, his independence and freedom from

cultural and social pressures. Autonomy in this sense is thoroughly egocentric and does not allow, nor make provision for, a communal outreach towards society (Varga & Guignon, 2014:4).

A further difference is that the notion of authenticity is not restricted by rational reflection like is autonomy. Charles Taylor says authenticity has a language of personal resonance which is beyond the influence of autonomy. Authenticity makes room for the idea that rational self-governance can be overridden through moral reasons and motives that are inherent to the self, to one's identity. Authenticity as such surpasses any form of autonomy (Varga & Guignon, 2014:4).

From these differences in meaning it seems that one can argue that autonomy refers to egocentrism and rationalism, and promotes self-directedness and self-glorification, whereas authenticity is much wider; it is an effort of introspection and self-confrontation that is simultaneously outwardly directed.

2.6 Authenticity, individuality and individualism

Individualism is another characteristic from the Enlightenment that plays a strong role in a new interpretation of authenticity. It is valuable to note that Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity makes a distinction between individuality and individualism. In my view, Charles Taylor recognises the intimate, personal nature of authenticity that is strongly linked to one's individuality. He regards individualism as the cause of some of the malaises he identifies in modernism and that it has gone too far: increased individualism results in a loss of meaning and a fading of moral horizons (Taylor, 1991:3,10). This is caused by an over-emphasis and drive to individuation, creativity and imagination (Taylor, 2007:473–476).

One's individuality, as I see it, refers to the personal, intrinsic nature of the human being whilst keeping in mind that the human being still stands in dialogue with others. It is antithetical to individualism, which is egocentric and exults self-fulfilment.

Charles Taylor portrays the ideal of authenticity as something different from individualism. I also agree with Charles Taylor here, because authenticity based on individualism will suffer from continual self-deception, autonomism, instrumental reason and self-indulgence (Taylor, 1991:15, 58, 90), but authenticity based on individuality makes room for a communal outreach in dialogue with others. For Taylor authenticity is one of the important potentialities of human life, where exploration

beyond the individual self in a dialogical situation with other sources for being human plays an important role (Taylor, 1991:74, 91, 106). We can therefore say authenticity, as explained here, has a strong component of individuality, especially in the dialogical relationship with society, and in so doing, authenticity will not implode into a sense of self-absorption and individualism.

My contention is that the individual and the community are intrinsically linked: the one does not negate the other, and both belong integrally to the notion of authenticity (see also Taylor, 1991; 2007; Trilling 1972). To have value and meaning, authenticity must be practised in dialogue with others. Hence, it is socially orientated, emanating from within the self and directed outwards towards others, spreading through communal encounters in society, irrespective of the reigning social order or public opinion (Varga & Guignon, 2014:5).

2.7 Sources of authenticity

Whilst Charles Taylor's clarification of the concept of authenticity gives it a firm ground in the Western worldview in the age of modernity, and goes beyond the modernist emphasis on individualism and autonomism, it still provides only a partial view of the totality of authenticity in my view. I contend that authenticity, although not articulated as a defined concept before the romantic period, have always been present in, and functioned intrinsically as part of the human capacity, expressed especially in the realm of philosophical reflection. The roots and source of authenticity as a praxis lies much earlier in history, as far back as Augustine and the ancient philosophers. Amongst the ancient philosophers, Socrates was concerned with critical self-reflection: he had a vivid sense of the importance of self-knowledge in search for true happiness, which according to him is good for the soul (Tarnas, 1991:35). Socrates confirmed this with his Delphic maxim "Know thyself" (Dooyeweerd 1956:17).

To find these sources of authenticity in this study will require a retroactive search into the works of early philosophers and the Patristics, from where the antecedent values, that make or complete the concept of authenticity, can be applied in the appropriation of the current concept of authenticity.

2.8 Authenticity and religious belief

Studying the topic of authenticity from a wide perspective increasingly revealed that authenticity cannot be a product of reason. Charles Taylor states in his definition that

authenticity involves creation, construction and discovery (Taylor, 1991:66). In Chapter 9, where Charles Taylor's definition is discussed, I analyse in detail how authenticity can be seen as a process of self-discovery. Just like authenticity is inherently linked to individuality due to its inward-directedness, my contention is that one's identity and spirituality are fundamental and intrinsic to the ethic of authenticity. It similarly has a strong bond with one's religious belief and Christian worldview.

It is clear that authenticity cannot be passive. Authenticity is active and a very dynamic process of continual introspection and self-reflection which affects one's worldview, faith and religion. Augustine was one of the early Patristics who practised contemplation as a method of self-reflection. After his conversion and through constant introspection and self-confrontation, he paid much attention to his inner self which he says could not exist without God (Tarnas, 1991:144).

It is especially Charles Taylor's relative satisfaction with the hierarchising and secularisation of the components and sources for authenticity (in which he does not make enough, in my opinion, of the notions of a normative order and of the Augustinian notion of an inner revelation of God) that I explore critically. This entail how religious belief, a creation order and a worldview of man who encounters God in his innermost being influences authenticity both inwardly and in its dialogical communal perspectives. In this endeavour, Augustine's doctrine of inner directness to meet God is paramount and acutely relevant in finding the origin of authenticity.

2.9 Summary

In summary, Charles Taylor describes authenticity as, simultaneously, an attitude emanating from a collective worldview or horizon of significance, and as an individual orientation, self-determining (even self-creating) freedom, and as self-referential (Taylor, 1991:66, 91,101). Although he has gone a long way in ridding the concept from the malaises of contemporary culture, such as rationalism, individualism, and autonomism, it is not the complete view of authenticity.

Understanding the ideal of authenticity requires an investigation into the historical and philosophical sources thereof, its inward nature on the self, as well as its effects on religious and societal thinking (Varga & Guignon, 2014:2). In this study, authenticity of the individual, and its communal relations from a Christian perspective, is explored.

3.1 Problem statement

We saw in the preceding chapter that the secular version of authenticity is still handicapped by limitations such as rationalism, individualism, and autonomism ever since the 17th and 18th centuries. Therefore, the actual problem statement must be preceded by the following fundamental questions:

- What are the sources of authenticity? This is a question also posed by Trilling (1972) and Charles Taylor himself in Taylor (1989; 1991; 2007).
- How can Augustine's Christian belief be used to clarify the concept of authenticity?

Following on from these questions the main problem statement for this study emerges:

How can Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity be normatively transformed to take into cognition a Christian perspective?

4.1 Central goal

My view is that the authenticity emanating from individualism and autonomy of reason, is a very limiting and shallow view. It implies that everyone is born without any authenticity and would be capable to create, change or reconstruct his own authenticity at any stage of life as it suits him. This is a purely constructionist notion which does not take into account that authenticity essentially involves discovering a God-given true self.

The goal of the study is to transform the concept of authenticity normatively in the thinking of Charles Taylor from a Christian point of view through appropriation or 'spoiling' of ideas along the example of the early church fathers, especially Augustine.

Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity will be dissected and transformed to show that one's authenticity requires a transcendental, spiritual journey of reflective contemplation into the inner self and to God, like Augustine's concept.

5.1 Central theoretical statement

In this section I shall elaborate on the claim of this study and introduce the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* as means of normative transformation of the concept of authenticity.

5.1.1 Claim of this study

The claim of this study is that Charles Taylor describes a too limited concept of authenticity. The concept ‘authenticity’ was first introduced in the age of rationalism from Descartes’ disengaged reason and suffered especially from the autonomism and individualism of rationalism. I shall argue that Charles Taylor’s concept represents a broader concept than the usual secularist account of contemporary culture with its preference for individualism and autonomism, but his is still a partial concept that comprises only self-determining, even self-creative, freedom of the individual as well as or versus the individual’s communal perspective and dialogical relationships, in contrast to the sublime, comprehensive account of authenticity that could emanate from a Christian worldview.

5.1.2 Normative transformation

The exploration and uncovering of this account of authenticity shall involve employing the biblical principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*. In general, it involves the appropriation from the gold (in this case the treasures of non-biblical ideas), then molten and transformed by Christians into a valuable product (idea or philosophy) in their faith and belief. The principle of appropriation shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

In this study, the concept of authenticity shall be taken, or spoiled, from the modernist thinkers and normatively transformed according to the important example of the Patristics for two reasons:

- 1 They were the first to apply the *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* principle to normatively transform ideas from Greek philosophy into Christian thinking.
- 2 They have developed ideas, like Augustine’s inwardness, in rediscovering and exposing the way in which human beings can be true to themselves whilst incorporating the ideas of a Creator, a given creation order, and an idea of freedom and self-reflection which goes beyond the mere negative modernist idea of emancipation, as sources for authenticity.

In this sense, authenticity's relationship with spirituality, belief, faith and Christian religion will also be explored along the way.

In order to reach this goal, the notion of normative transformation will be used as theoretical point of departure which will give direction towards discovering an answer to the question posed above as well as the goal of the study:

In his article "Antithesis, synthesis, and the idea of transformational philosophy", Jacob Klapwijk⁷ (Klapwijk, 1986) writes about normative transformation and asks as follows: "What kind of transformation is involved here?" He then answers his own question: "A distinction needs to be made at this point between transformation in a normative and in an anti-normative sense of the term". In order to explain the normative sense of transformation, Klapwijk asks a second question: "How ought Christian belief ... be brought to bear in changing – that is, reforming and transforming – scholarly discourse?" Klapwijk answers the question with the concept of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, which he (Klapwijk, 1986:10–11) explains as follows:

[The early Church Fathers more than once seized upon this theme of plundering the Egyptians in order to clarify and defend their attitude towards ancient philosophy. Their argumentation was this: Just as the children of Israel were meant to spoil the Egyptians of their finest cultural treasures, so likewise may we appropriate the grand treasures of Greco-Roman civilization and then especially of Greco-Roman philosophy and science".

He adds a provision (which admittedly was not always part of the strategy of the church fathers), "... it should never be our intention to accept uncritically ideas from pre-

⁷ It is worth exploring the difference between transformation and synthesis at this point:

Transformation: Dooyeweerd in my view provides a clear description. "Under the guidance and leadership of Christ, the Christian must explore heathen works and when found, take these treasures away from them, transform and reform it to the Christian ground-motive and then apply it in everyday Christian life" (Dooyeweerd 2012:116).

Synthesis: Klapwijk describes synthesis as "...a connecting of the Christian sphere of faith, or of philosophical conceptions that would flow forth from this doctrine, with philosophical conceptions of ancient pagan or modern humanist provenance" (Klapwijk, 19986, 4).

In a synthesis philosophy, two ideas from different viewpoints (Christian and non-Christian in this case) are merely connected, instead of transforming the best ideas from the one into the other. Therefore, in the process of philosophical reflection, the Christian must remain open-minded about non-Christian thought, and where necessary, appropriate and transform those ideas that will be of value, but a synthesis between Christian and non-Christian view points is not permitted (Geertsema 1987:154, 155)

Christian or post-Christian cultures ... The appropriation of non-Christian learning ... must consist rather in critical assimilation into a Christian view of reality.”

By delving back into the development of early Christian thought and the work of the Patristics, I shall show how this practice of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, which means spoiling, or appropriation, was applied throughout the mediaeval period. The Patristics appropriated material from the ancient philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, and transformed it normatively into their Christian teaching.

Similarly, I believe the appropriated themes from rationalism thinking, and applied to early Christian thinking will make it possible to perform a normative transformation of Charles Taylor’s concept. The *modus operandus* of the process is explained in the sub-questions and the objectives in the following sections.

The main problem statement - How can Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity be normatively transformed to take into cognition a Christian perspective? – requires a systematic approach if it is to be dealt with properly. This systematic approach incorporates exploration of the practice of appropriation in the early Church, Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity, and normative transformation into the Christian thinking of Augustine. This is done by addressing the following sub-questions:

6.1 Sub-questions

My sub-questions are the following:

- 1 How was appropriation practised in the early Church?
- 2 What is Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity?
- 3 How can the Christian belief of Augustine be used to transform the modern view of authenticity?

More precisely formulated:

Are the sources of authenticity only inherent characteristics emanating from human beings as the modernists wants us to believe, or can authenticity incorporate the concepts of the realm and power of a Higher Being as portrayed by Augustine?

- 4 How can Augustine's thinking be used to normatively transform Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity?

7.1 Objectives

The objectives of this study were aligned with the sub-questions above.

The **first** objective in this study is to investigate and clarify the practice of appropriation during the early mediaeval era, from the early church to the 13th century. This is done to indicate that appropriation was a generally accepted practice during those times, and that it can be revived and used again in a careful, yet critical way to appropriate authenticity from the modernists and normatively transform it.

The **second** objective is to explore Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity and provide a true reflection and interpretation thereof. This includes a discussion of the moral ideal of authenticity, its malaises, as well as his view on individuality and the community. This is augmented by views from other philosophers.

The **third** objective is to do an exposition of the important themes within Christian historical thinking which could relate to the modern idea of authenticity.

In the process, I argue that authenticity as praxis originated much earlier than the 18th century and formed part of the Christian worldview since the early church (Colorado, 2007; Venter, 2013b; Taylor, 2013a; 2013b).

I also discuss how authenticity can incorporate the concepts of a normative order and the revelation of God, and as a result, how religious belief makes allowance for sources other than the autonomous self for authenticity (Van der Walt, 2008; Venter, 2013a).

The **fourth** objective is to indicate which important themes in Augustine's belief can be used to normatively transform Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity.

8.1 Appropriation as method of transformation

In this section I explicate the principle of appropriation first from a historical perspective to show it was a widely-practised tradition during the early church and well into the mediaeval period. Secondly, I want to explore Augustine's appropriation in developing Christian theology and philosophy, since his thinking seemingly influenced Charles Taylor largely.

8.2 The principle and practice of appropriation

The practice of appropriation stems from the awareness by the early Patristics that the works of the ancient Greek philosophers are the building blocks, and indeed corner stones, of philosophy, and of great value in Christian thinking. Put differently, the Patristics had a high regard for the oeuvres of Plato and Aristotle in Greek philosophy, for it was seen as works of authority from which they could take, or appropriate, to enhance the development of early Christian thinking (Venter, 2013a:29–44).

This awareness by the Patristics of the value of earlier, non-biblical works, is also reflected in contemporary thinking: Herman Dooyeweerd states in his book *A new critique of theoretical thought*, Vol 1 (Dooyeweerd, 1969) that every thinker must take cognition of historical philosophical development, because it forms the basis of the thinker's ideas and thoughts. Dooyeweerd (1969:118) says:

Philosophic thought as such stands in an inner relationship with historical development, postulated by our very philosophical basic Idea, and no thinker whatever can withdraw himself from this historical evolution. Our transcendental ground-Idea itself requires the recognition of the 'philosophia perennis' in this sense and rejects the proud illusion that any thinker whatever, could begin as it were with a clean slate and disassociate himself from the development of an age-old process of philosophical reflection.

The simplicity of this truth, that all philosophical thought has a direct, innate relationship with historical development, is sobering and profound. One could say Dooyeweerd's statement is a tenet of philosophical thought. No thinker can distance himself, or claim to think outside, and independent of the "age-old process of philosophical reflection." In stating this, Dooyeweerd (1969:118) confirms the early mediaeval practice of the Patristics, which seems to have been forgotten or discarded in recent times, namely that of appropriation.

Appropriation, *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, or the principle of ‘plundering the Egyptians’ was based on the Biblical passage of Exodus 12:35–36:

35 The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. 36 The LORD had made the Egyptians favourably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians (Bible, 1995).

Henry Taylor gives a detailed account of the development of the mediaeval thinking in his extensive works *The mediaeval mind Vol I and II* (Taylor, 2013a; 2013b). He discusses the spread of civilisation throughout Europe, development of early Christianity, and the role of the church in the advent of the Western worldview. In his works, he mentions the prominent figures in the development of history and the practice of appropriation by the Patristics. I shall give attention to the ones relevant to my objectives further on.

Appropriation was a well-known practice throughout the mediaeval period, and was regularly applied by non-religious thinkers, by the Patristics, and other eminent church figures who, not only busied themselves with the formation and clarification of early Christian theology, but also studied the highly valued ancient Greek philosophy within the realm of Latin Christianity throughout. The practice amongst the philosophers and Patristics was to appropriate the ancient non-biblical material, and present it in intellectual forms of normative transformation in Christian thinking (Taylor, 2013a:15).

Augustine provides the most succinct description of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* as a metaphor for appropriation material from heathen works. As mentioned above, this principle was applied in the early church. I shall base my understanding of the principle of appropriation on Dooyeweerd’s stance (Dooyeweerd, 2012:116):

Heathen and pagan works and teachings should not be avoided entirely. It may contain elements that are valuable for instruction in the truth, in morality and even in the worship of God. They may even have institutions⁸ that are valuable for Christian life. Under the guidance and leadership of Christ, the Christian must explore heathen works and when found, take these treasures away from them, transform and reform it to the Christian ground-motive and then apply it in everyday Christian life.

⁸ I would categorise Dooyeweerd’s institutions as modern day systems, processes and mechanisms.

The underlying presupposition is that the appropriator must identify and know what his basis, his ground-motive is, and also ascertain what the ground motive of the non-biblical, or secular material is. That will enable the appropriator to perform the act of appropriation with circumspection, and correctly to achieve his goals.

This methodology of appropriation, in my opinion, provides the impetus for appropriation of the concept of authenticity by Christians from the late modernist use of the concept centuries later.

8.3 The Roman Empire

In this section, I expound how the *modus operandi* of Roman invasion and conquering of Europe led to appropriation by the Patristics and into Christianity.

8.3.1 Latinisation of Western Europe

Henry Taylor (2013a:27–32). describes the tumultuous history of the conquest of Western Europe and how the barbarians, pagans and uncivilised tribes were systematically brought under complete control of the Roman Empire. As the Roman Empire conquered more tribes and acquired more land, it emphatically enforced Roman Latinisation in the newly acquired regions. The Romans ensured absolute and complete integration into the Roman culture first by brutal eradication of the culture and language of the conquered tribes, whom they regarded as barbaric and pagans. They then enforced Roman civilisation and Christianity everywhere to ensure control of peoples' lives and minds throughout the Empire. The Romans enforced Latin as the only language through education, and placed Roman government and administration in all provinces. So, these tribes were forced to learn Latin and accept the Roman way of life; there was no other choice. No other culture, except the Roman culture, was allowed to exist (Taylor, 2013a:27–32).

With Rome as the centre of civilisation at the time, Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church spread with the support of the Roman Empire to all heathen tribes in Europe, especially through the education and teachings of the monks in monasteries at the forefront of Roman civilisation. The role of the church during the early ages was vital, because it ensured that the church flourished as the centre of civilisation in the early mediaeval period, and after the fall of the Roman Empire the Church ensured the survival of Christianity.

8.3.2 Greek treasures

In contrast with their conquests of pagan Europe, the Romans did not destroy the Greek culture. The reason was that the Romans for a long time had good relations with the Greeks, especially at the height of Greek power under Alexander the Great. When the Romans became a regional power, it still held the Greek culture in high regard because of the influence the Greeks had in the Mediterranean. Two prominent Greek thinkers, Parmenides and Pythagoras, even lived in Italy (Venter, 2013a:30).

Since about 200 BC, the Romans began studying the great philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who lived a few centuries earlier, and whose oeuvres were well known at the time amongst novice philosophers, as well as amongst religious thinkers. After conquering Greece around 146 BC, the Romans made Greece a province of the Empire, but the Greek language, culture and more importantly, their philosophical treasures, were left intact. The Romans continued to read and study the Greek philosophers. The early writings of the Romans were merely Latin copies of the Greek philosophers' works and hence, there was initially no originality in Roman philosophical thoughts. It took some time before Roman philosophers like Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus and Porphyry became thinkers in their own right and developed their own philosophical ideas (Carr, 2016; Taylor, 2013a:30–52).

By appropriating the philosophical and other treasures from the Greeks, the Romans laid the foundation for the practice in early Christianity many years later.

The early Christian Church

This section describes the development of Christian theology and philosophy from the early Church to the late mediaeval Church. It starts with the spreading of the Gospel by the apostles and describes the practice of appropriation from Greek thinkers by Augustine, the compilation of the Bible canon, the consolidation of the works of the Patristics and the influence of the Roman Catholic Church during the mediaeval period.

8.4.1 Spreading the Gospel

In their book *Encyclopaedia of Christian education*, Kurian and Lamport (2015), give a detailed account of the development of Christian thought from the Greek influence.

During the second and first centuries BC, Rome followed the well-developed Greek education. In the early years of Christianity, when the Gospels and Epistles were produced in written form, the influence of Greek culture was still strong in the Mediterranean and the Middle-East, even though the region was under Roman control. The apostles, and particularly John and Paul, incorporated Greek philosophy in their Biblical writings – John with his reference to Jesus as the ‘Logos’, and Paul, whose Greek education influenced his views on the Christian human spiritual life, as is evident throughout his Epistles. The Greek influence in Christianity became even greater when the Septuagint was introduced in the 3rd century (Kurian & Lamport, 2015:41, 43, 256).

The apostles realised that they could not go into hostile and gentile territory and start preaching the Gospel without context to the Greeks and even staunchly orthodox Jews living in the diaspora. They had to find a connection with the beliefs of the local people before crossing the divide to the Christian Gospel. This was not the appropriation which Irenaeus and others applied later on, but it laid the firmament of transformation for the early Church: to take the Greek culture and rhetoric, change the pagan Greek belief, incorporate it into Christian faith amongst those people, and transform religion and thinking amongst the Greeks (Kurian & Lamport, 2015:44, 254–256).

Paul understood the Greek culture and thinking very well and he was the one exponent who succeeded exceptionally well in taking the Gospel to the Greeks by starting from their polytheist belief system and transforming it into the Christian monotheist belief

with Jesus as the Redeemer, the Son of God, and himself God, who sacrificed his life on the cross so that those who believed in Him would receive eternal life. This was the wisdom of Christ that Paul preached. He preached in Athens at the Areopagus against the Epicureans and the Stoics about the unknown God, whose statue was amongst those of their gods. He could relate to them, and bring them to the understanding of God, who is the Almighty, Creator of the universe, who does not stand cold and aloof as the Greek gods do towards mankind. God wants His chosen people to love and worship Him as He loves them (Bible, 1995: Acts 17).

Since Paul was well educated in Greek literature and philosophy, he made numerous references in his preaching about Greek poetry and literature. He was also aware of the Greeks' love for wisdom and used Greek philosophy to explain the wisdom of man against the wisdom of God (Bible, 1995: 1 Cor. 1:17–30). It was specifically Paul's reference to the inner being that later attracted the attention of Augustine in his scriptural studies.⁹

During those years, Christianity spread fast throughout the Mediterranean by means of newly converted Christians who fled to escape persecution. Theologically, I surmise Christianity was in its infancy with the core beliefs in place, but there was a gap that needed to be filled to transform Christianity into a practical religion that would appeal to other Christians, new converts as well as non-believers, in their everyday lives.

8.4.2 The Patristics

The Patristics performed a vital role during these early years to ensure that the Christian faith is uniform and unambiguous, whilst they appropriated some of the sublime teachings of the great philosophers into the gamut of Christianity (Kurian & Lamport, 2015:43).

According to Kurian and Lamport, the Christians had the arduous task to develop and consolidate their own thoughts about Christianity in a world dominated by well-developed pagan Greek thinking. Since most Christians in the early years were not learned, they faced the dilemma to obtain education from these pagan sources, yet remain Christian in their faith. The Patristics, who were educated, were instrumental in shaping early Christian thought from Greek philosophy. Through their expansive

⁹ Refer to the Bible, 1 Cor 3:16 and Ephes. 3:16–17 where Paul refers to the inner man.

work in developing Christian thought, the Patristics could thus provide the guidance required by lay Christians in making sense of their faith under Greek influence (Kurian & Lamport, 2015:41, 43–44, 255–256).

Henry Taylor, as well as Kurian and Lamport, describe how Christianity grew fast in the early years, and in the process of synthesising Christian belief with non-biblical beliefs, the early Christians developed many divergent ideas about Christianity. This Christian and pagan belief synthesis was problematic and the Patristics had to contend with these divergent and often heretic ideas which were developed by many of their contemporaries. In developing Christian thinking and to counter these heresies, the Patristics used the following approach:

- learning from pagan sources by finding the treasures it contains and transforming it; and
- all the while keeping check on what is said and written by suspect theologians whose interpretation of the Bible amounted to heresy, like the theology of Arianism (Taylor, 2013a:56–62).

A Christian philosopher, Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215), believed that a person's intellect was created in the image of God; therefore, each person should apply his intellect to learn from the pagans, and to borrow their ideas, especially from Plato and the Stoics, whom he has studied extensively. He also stated that faith must precede any reasoning about God in order to bridge the divide between Greek thought and God (Taylor, 2013a:62; Venter, 2013c:16, 17)

Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 130–202) was the first to introduce the metaphor of plundering the Egyptians in the Church as a means to adopt, transform and incorporate the intellectual treasures of non-Christian culture, at about AD 180, nearly a century after the apostle John wrote his epistles. Irenaeus listened to the teachings of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, and was inspired by what he heard. He used the concept of plundering the Egyptians from the mentioned Biblical passage by using it in his *Adversus Haereses* as defence against the Gnostics who said that God commanded evil when the Israelites were told to spoil the Egyptians (Kurian and Lamport, 2015:44). He introduced the principle to Origen of Alexandria (AD 185–225), who was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria (Elliott, 2014:3).

After Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus developed it further, and Augustine of Hippo immortalised appropriation in Christian thinking. This process of instilling philosophical appropriation in the Church took about 225 years, from AD 180–405. According to his metaphor, the Church is under obligation to take the best of culture, philosophy, science, literature, theatre, art, logic, rhetoric, and even holidays, and just as with the gold of the Egyptians, melt it down, transform it, and utilise the new products of the appropriated cultural ideas to the benefit of the Church and the glory of God (Elliott, 2014:3, 4).

8.4.3 Augustine (AD 354–430)

Augustine was the most prominent figure during early Christianity who had the conviction to apply *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* from the Neo-Platonic philosophies of Plotinus and Plato into his religious thinking (Taylor 2013a:59). He transformed the treasures of pagan Greek philosophers and put it to use in the service of God as he clearly described it in his *De Doctrina Christiana*. In this passage, Augustine explains quite simply and in detail that the principle of appropriation can be applied metaphorically on intellectual, spiritual and philosophical treasures too:

“Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it. For, as the Egyptians had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt appropriated to themselves, designing them for a better use, not doing this on their own authority, but by the command of God, the Egyptians themselves, in their ignorance, providing them with things which they themselves were not making a good use of ...” (Augustine, 397:Book II, Chapter 40).

Augustine, after being converted to Christianity, came under the influence of his contemporary, Aurelius Ambrosius of Milan (AD 340–397) at a time when Christianity required firm guidance and formulation in a world dominated by well-developed pagan Greek thinking (Dooyeweerd, 2012:111; Taylor, 2013a:64). Augustine studied the great works of the Greek and Roman philosophers and he consciously applied the principle of appropriation of the gold and silver from their philosophies. As a philosopher theologian, Augustine’s views were influential in both mediaeval

philosophy and theology. As Augustine himself was greatly influenced by Plotinus and Plato, his teachings contain much Platonism as well as the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus (Taylor, 2013b:350).

Henry Taylor describes Augustine as the master in Christian philosophy and theology during early Christianity. Augustine's prolific works, which are mostly based on Biblical truths and applied appropriation, laid the foundation for the Christian doctrine that emerged from the Patristic philosophy. It influenced mediaeval theology overwhelmingly until the middle of the 13th century (Dooyeweerd, 2012:114; Taylor, 2013a:64).

One could say the writings of the early church fathers became the authoritative works in the vicissitudes of Christianity during these early years, in its doctrine as well as the way of life.

8.4.4 The mediaeval Church

The death of Augustine in AD 430 heralded the onset of the post-patristic period, and the prolific works of Patristic originality in the Roman Catholic church came to an end¹⁰. Henry Taylor states that the philosophical works over the next four centuries in the Latin West were marked by mere commentary, translation, compendium and transmitting the ideas of early Latin Christianity without adding any original thinking (Taylor, 2013a:80).

Henry Taylor further tells of Christian development during the mediaeval period that the Patristics formulated Christian doctrine to allay the adverse beliefs of the heretics. The early church has determined the canon of the Bible and established a formal organisational structure for itself to take the Gospel into a pagan world. It was the time to bring some stability, to assimilate and consolidate the work done to date, to grasp the full message of the Christian doctrine, as well as the Patristic philosophy (Taylor 2013a:64).

The Roman Catholic Church became the vestige of learning and culture during this period. It assumed the role of official custodian of knowledge, and hence was obliged

¹⁰ After Augustine, the Greek East still produced patristic giants such as Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and John of Damascus. Their thought in turn had a huge influence on Aquinas

to provide education, especially in the Seven Arts¹¹, which are divided into the trivium and the quadrivium. The great ruler Charlemagne (AD 747–814) in Western Europe had an interest in all knowledge and started a renaissance of learning of the sacred and of old profane material. His goal was to spread education through Latin letters which served in understanding Christian religion adequately. He kept to the principle of appropriation to edify the people that both the sacred and profane teachings are of value to the people, and must be accepted wholeheartedly. “Pious Christians spoil the Egyptians when they turn profane studies to spiritual account” (Taylor, 2013b:51). During his reign, Charlemagne staunchly spread Christianity amongst heathens and commissioned Alcuin, amongst others, in 781, to teach the clergy and lay people (Taylor, 2013b:51, 99).

Alcuin, next to Charlemagne himself, was the guiding spirit of the intellectual revival by continuing the practice of exploiting the Patristic material. He contributed a compendium of Augustine’s doctrines on the Trinity and produced other works based on Augustine’s sermons. In one of his works, Alcuin explained his method of exploiting from the Patristics (Taylor, 2013a:188–189):

First of all, I seek the suffrage of Saint Augustine, who laboured with such zeal upon this Gospel; then I draw something from the tracts of the most holy doctor Saint Ambrose; nor have I neglected the homilies of Father Gregory the pope, or those of the blessed Bede, nor, in fact, the works of others of the holy Fathers. I have cited their interpretations, as I found them, preferring to use their meanings and their words, than trust to my own presumption.

In his works, Alcuin makes a statement that relates strongly to the notion of authenticity. He says a mortal being, created in the image of God, also has an immortal dimension. This being “... should seek what is truly of himself, and not what is alien, the abiding, and not the fugitive” (Taylor, 2013a:185). I see in this that Alcuin first recognises the spirituality of the human being, and secondly that a person’s search for what is truly of himself, can be brought in relation to the broad concept of authenticity as understood by the later Renaissance and modernist philosophers.

¹¹ The Seven Arts constituted the Trivium and Quadrivium which essentially were the curriculum of subjects taught in the early church. The trivium – grammar, rhetoric and logic, and the quadrivium - arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy (Taylor 2013a:259-260)

Alcuin's pupil, Rabanus Maurus (AD 780–856), continued with the instruction of the clergy in the Seven Arts. Rabanus also persisted with the practice of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, just like Augustine and the masters before him. Rabanus' view was that knowledge of pagan philosophy need not be avoided, but appropriated, "The philosophers, especially the Platonists, if perchance they have spoken truths accordant with our faith, are not to be shunned, but their truths appropriated, as from unjust possessors" (Taylor, 2013a:189)

Through the Christian vision of Charlemagne, and the efforts of Alcuin and Rabanus, an expansion of knowledge led to a larger overlap between Christianity and antique philosophy than before (Taylor, 2013a:177–180; Venter, 2013a:52).

It is necessary to review and state that the practice of appropriation from pagan philosophy, as started by the Patristics, and notably Augustine, was applied constructively from a Christian point of view. It continually added value to Christian faith and provided the impetus to enhance and build Christian philosophy. Mediaeval thinkers that followed were able to use the new material from the Patristics, confident in the knowledge that the foundations of Christian philosophy were good and solid.

It is necessary to summarise here that the practice of appropriation from the Platonists greatly assisted the mediaeval thinkers to expand their worldviews.

8.5 From appropriation to synthesis

In this chapter thus far, I have been able to show that the Biblical principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* was practised actively with great success from Augustine to Charlemagne. In the next section I want to point out that the practice and principle of appropriation exercised during early Christianity, eventually stagnated and gradually evolved into synthesis of Greek philosophy into Christian doctrine.

8.5.1 Scholasticism

The era known as scholasticism started during the reign of Charlemagne and the scholastic practise was followed by prominent thinkers thereafter into the Middle Ages.

The Patristics in the Roman Catholic (western) church had scant and limited access to the materials of ancient philosophers during the early Christian era, since only elements of Aristotle's logic were known to them. It must be noted however that the

works of Aristotle was preserved by the Byzantines and never lost in Greek Eastern Christianity.

For almost a millennium after the western Patristics, the mediaeval thinkers have saturated their knowledge of humankind and the universe known at the time. They have exhausted all knowledge of the Patristics, learned and re-learned, and put it into practise. Up until the 12th century, all the learning and development of philosophy resulted in constant regurgitation of known material. Centuries of consolidating the Patristic philosophy without adding any new thinking has led to stagnation within the Church and society. Still, what was known, and what was understood, was lacking a deeper understanding of the universe and the role of humankind (Taylor, 2013b:287).

During the 11th and 12th centuries the Arabs and Jews had a large presence in the southern Mediterranean and they exerted a strong intellectual and religious influence in the area (Venter, 2013a:53). Their presence, and the rediscovery in the late 12th and early 13th centuries of a large volume of Aristotelian writings, preserved by the Moslems and Byzantines, opened up a new world of knowledge and philosophy in Western Europe (Tarnas, 1991:176). These texts also contained learned Arabic commentaries and Greek writings. This material arrived at a time when Western culture was receptive to the worth of Aristotle's philosophical and scientific system of thinking. Once translated into Latin, it was used by church intellectuals who mastered Aristotle's reasoning skills (Tarnas, 1991:176).

Due to the role it assumed since early Christianity, the Catholic Church gained control over all temporal life. It regarded itself as the sole custodian and source of knowledge in matters of religion and natural science, and became very authoritative. It was as if the Church acted from the stance that they could take any selected non-biblical concepts and 'Christianise' it, to use Dooyeweerd's term. I think that by this time the practice of appropriation fell by the wayside, and made place for a synthesis and hybridisation of the works of Plato and Aristotle with Christian thinking.

8.5.2 Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225–1274)

The fertile ground opened by the rediscovery of Aristotle's works was the ideal opportunity for the mediaeval philosophers to embark on a new venture where humankind's faculty of reason was explored. No longer was it faith alone that is important, but humankind's ability to reason about itself and the nature of things was

recognised. Albertus Magnus, and more importantly, his student Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225–1274), as the final contributor of the all-comprehensive *Summae Theologica*, were particularly prominent in this movement. As a philosopher and devout theologian, Aquinas, more than anybody else before him, saw the value of the Aristotelian philosophy and its associated Arabian commentaries, and studied it intensely. This was at a stage when there was a debate and conflict between the Christian faith on one side and the natural world and human reason on the other. Together, Magnus and Aquinas opened the dialectics of reason and faith, nature and grace, and between human knowledge and Christian doctrine in the *Summae*. Aquinas, especially, regarded them as mutually supportive (Tarnas, 1991:177–179).

Thomas Aquinas integrated Plato's spiritual absolute and Aristotle's dynamic nature of form and matter. In doing so, Thomas also corrected Aristotle by showing that the individual is not a mere isolated substance, but that human beings are united to each other and to God in the participation of existence. In this process of his synthesis, Aquinas made a thorough study of Plato's Ideas, and of Aristotle's concrete reality of essence and existence with the Christian view of God as the Creator, the One or the Highest Form. Aquinas dealt with Plato and Aristotle from his Christian perspective. Both of their ontologies contained elements of the full picture, but neither had the complete picture correct. In this process, Aquinas clarified the epistemological relationship between being and knowledge, the religious question between faith and reason, and the ontology of man who is both spirit and body (Tarnas, 1991:184–187).

It was Aquinas, however, who succeeded more than any Christian philosopher before him to bring Plato, Aristotle and Christianity together. He synthesised the elements of ancient philosophy and Christian theology in his *Summae*. Aquinas' epistemology focused on one's knowing. Every act of knowing, he says, is both growth in one's being, as well as increased participation in God's creation. One can thus deduce from Aquinas' view that each person is in a continual intimate relationship with God to strive for perfection as much as he can during his temporal life, his quest being to grow spiritually ever closer to God. Aquinas regarded a person's telos as unification with God in the afterlife (Tarnas, 1991:188–190).

Aquinas was the evangelical philosopher who stood at the end of scholasticism and on the brink of the Renaissance. Like the other theologian philosophers, he was more

intently focused on the human being's spiritual journey and his telos to be with God, than to be concerned with giving the inwardness, the true essence of his being, a name. In the next section, it will be made clear how authenticity was defined by emphasising reason by Enlightenment philosophers, such as Descartes, Rousseau and Kant.

8.5.3 Different voices

It must be noted that not everybody accepted Aquinas' *Summae Theologica* equally well.

8.5.3.1 Early criticism

The Church initially included some of the *Summae Theologica* in its list of condemned propositions. The Augustinians rejected the inclusion of Aristotle entirely. Other secularist philosophers, such as Siger of Brabant and his colleagues at the university of Paris, did not see the need for integration of Aristotle into Christian theology. According to these secular philosophers, theological faith and Aristotelian reason was too divergent to be reconciled. Their view, in a sense, initiated the autonomy of reason which would surface in the Renaissance (Tarnas, 1991:191–2).

The changes that occurred in western Europe during the first 1400 years of Christianity had reached a level of maturity on many fronts – religious, economic, social, political and constitutional. The intellectual progress continued unabated throughout, inside, as well as outside universities. On the philosophical front, Aquinas' *Summae* integrated Greek philosophy and humankind's understanding of the natural world into a Christian belief system. The voices of others, notably Dante and William of Ockham added to the expectation of new and far-reaching developments that would shake the modern world (Tarnas, 1991:220, 221).

8.5.3.2 Modern criticism

Henry Taylor's understanding of the practice of appropriation is very different from that of the Patristics, as I formulated it earlier. From studying his works, *The mediaeval mind Vol I and II*, it is clear he sees 'appropriation' as any material taken from a different source for one's own purpose:

So saint and poet and artist-craftsman join in that appropriation of Christianity which was putting life into whatever had come from the Latin Fathers, by pondering

upon it, loving it, living it, imagining it, and making it into poetry and art (Taylor, 2013a:23).

Henry Taylor and Tarnas are quite lenient and complementary towards Aquinas. They regard his work as skilful integration and appropriation from the works of Plato and Aristotle. However, Venter and Dooyeweerd are more critical of Aquinas. As mentioned, Dooyeweerd describes him as the prince of scholasticism, whereas Venter states that the scholasticism, of which Aquinas was part, produced a synthesis and hybridisation of Plato, Aristotle with Christian thinking (Venter 2013a:54).

Even though Thomas Aquinas' works are regarded by some as monumental, and the *Summa Theologica* "the most influential work of all western mediaeval scholasticism" (Taylor, 2013b:377), it remains works of synthesis, and not appropriation as earlier formulated. From the early start of pure appropriation into Christian thinking, the overall process eventually evolved into full scale synthesis with Aquinas.

Since a cardinal part of this study involves the principle of appropriation, I shall revert to the original principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* as used by Augustine.

8.5.4 Critique on Augustine's appropriation

Dooyeweerd, in the *Roots of Western culture* (Dooyeweerd, 2012), remarks that although the Patristics were philosophically educated in the Greek way of thought, and even though the principle of appropriation is sound, the Patristics failed to realise that the Greek philosophy with its profound pagan ground-motive is fundamentally different from the Christian ground motive. The ground motive of Christian religion demands an inner-reformation, says Dooyeweerd, where the Patristics reformed the Greek thinking into Christianity. Augustine was a prominent figure in the early Church. Under scriptural guidance he proclaimed that Christian faith must give guidance to philosophy. In the early years after his conversion to Christianity in AD 386, he tried to Christianise Greek philosophy through accommodation and synthesis of Greek philosophy with Christian faith to produce a Christian philosophy devoid of the non-biblical Greek thinking. He initially succeeded with appropriating the treasures from Plato, but also succumbed to the dual approach of appropriation and accommodation (Dooyeweerd, 2012:114–115).

In his article on Augustine, Abraham Bos remarks that Augustine's conversion into Christianity was genuine, but he thinks Augustine had a problem in fully identifying and confessing to the Scriptural truths, whilst still identifying with the Platonic world of ideas.

It is one thing to confess in the words of Scripture that God founded the earth in wisdom and set the heavens in their place by understanding, it is something else again to identify this divine wisdom and understanding with the Platonic world of Ideas (Bos, 1991:59).

Although Bos and Dooyeweerd concur on this point, I am of the view that Augustine contributed enormously to Christianity with his appropriation and transformation of Platonism within Christian philosophy. He certainly was one of the most prominent Patristics who, in many respects, succeeded in reconciling the life world of the Christian with Scripture. His many treatises and monumental works are evident of his brilliance to provide solutions and answers to the theological problems that plagued Christianity during his time.

Back to appropriation: The point to be noted, therefore, is that appropriation can only be effective if one understands the (pagan) origin and ground-motive of the treasures to be appropriated in relation to one's own ground-motive, and is able fully to transform and reform it into Christianity.

8.6 Renaissance

In spite of the Scholastic attitude towards further, or new, knowledge, it became all the more evident that the divergent views on reason and faith in the modern world, i.e. Western Europe, was the start of a new intellectual awakening where each person for the first time saw himself as an important factor in creation (Venter, 2013a:35).

The term 'Renaissance' means 'rebirth', and the first two centuries since the change from mediaeval scholasticism into the Renaissance was indeed a painful birth process of random disasters, circumstances and events that all contributed in extraordinary fashion towards the changes that occurred on all fronts of life as it was known then. It was a tumultuous and complex time of drastic changes and upheavals: philosophically, religious, socially, intellectually, technologically, scientific, politically and institutionally. Here are some of the most significant events and people that had a cardinal influence during the Renaissance (Tarnas, 1991:454–455):

- 1335 First public clock was erected in Milan. In a way it contributed to the mechanistic worldview.
- 1452 Leonardo Da Vinci is born.
- 1455 The Gutenberg Bible is printed.
- 1473 Copernicus is born.
- 1475 Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (Michelangelo) is born.
- 1483 Martin Luther is born
- 1492 Columbus reaches America.
- 1497 Vasco da Gama reaches India.

New inventions such as the magnetic compass enabled explorers such as Columbus and Vasco da Gama to navigate the seas and discover new worlds. Gunpowder brought a new dimension to making war and shifts in political power. The mechanical clock brought about a new era in humankind's perception of time, which was before then measured by the celestial movements. The printing press allowed the mass production of literature and learning material which opened up a complete new era in the spreading of knowledge amongst lay people – it democratised learning and allowed a faster propagation of ideas than before, which led to more people to challenge the authority of the clergy (Tarnas, 1991:225–226).

In summary, we see that in the space of 31 years a number of people were born that through their lives and own efforts would change the history of the world: Da Vinci, as an artist, inventor and engineer; Copernicus who published his theory of the heliocentric solar system, which heralded the start of the scientific revolution; Michelangelo, who as a contemporary of Da Vinci, was equally brilliant as an artist and an engineer; Martin Luther, who initiated the protestant reform against the Catholic Church, thereby starting the Reformation (Tarnas, 1991:454–455).

It was during the Renaissance that the rift with mediaeval scholasticism occurred. A cultural explosion ensued during the Renaissance that was unparalleled in the history of humankind hitherto. Man awakened to an increasing awareness of his intellectual abilities. Technological discoveries and developments in science and mathematics proliferated the knowledge of nature and the universe, the formulation of scientific theories, and the development of calculus by Newton and Leibniz, which was used at the start to devise the laws of motion. All of these changes resulted in the belief that

reason and natural science became dominant (Venter, 2013b:22). The rational person was born and he embarked on a quest of self-realisation to define his place and role in relation to nature, the universe, God, and even himself, during the Renaissance transition (Tarnas, 1991:224–9).

I specifically refer to the Renaissance as a transitory period, because the changes and events that occurred only reached a state of quiescence in the Enlightenment and romantic periods after the Renaissance. The prodigious spread of knowledge, scientific discoveries, ingenious inventions, and the development in art and literature, were so profound and exasperating that not even the thinkers and prominent figures during that time could predict the full effect of all these events on the human mind and psyche. This shock wave of momentous events spread like wild fire throughout the modern world from the mid-14th century to about the end of the 17th century.

While the Renaissance was a period of transition, it was also thoroughly revolutionary in multiple concurrent movements: The scientific revolution, the Christian reformation, and the philosophical revolutions of Classicism – to go back to the original philosophies of Aristotle and Plato - and Rationalism.

All of these revolutions were, in one way or another, in conflict with the church, mainly because the Renaissance thinkers rejected church control over thinking. The Reformation sought to revert back to the Biblical truths of Christian theology, but the other movements followed a secular tract in its development. All these movements sought to emancipate themselves from the hegemony of the Church (Venter, 2013b:21-22).

It is important to note here that the development and continuity of Christian philosophy within the Catholic Church was not taken forward by the Renaissance thinkers. The treasures of appropriated Greek philosophy into Christian faith remained intact and firmly under church protection.

The different Renaissance revolutions are briefly discussed below.

8.6.1 Scientific revolution

The scientific revolution started when Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), a Polish Catholic priest, postulated the heliocentric solar system in 1543. The Church initially accepted Copernicus' theory, but under pressure from first the Reformers (Luther,

Melanchthon and Calvin, and later the Catholic Church itself) his theory was rejected. The nature of his theory had far-reaching implications, since it shook the very foundation of Christian belief, cosmology and even Aristotelian philosophy. Galileo, after Copernicus, was forced to recant by the Inquisition and it was left to Kepler to come up with the sophisticated mathematical model that proved the planets, including Earth, revolve around the sun in elliptical trajectories. He validated his theory of heliocentric planetary movement by verifying the calculated positions of Mars against the empirical observation data of Tycho de Brahe (Tarnas, 1991:254–257).

8.6.2 Christian reformation

The invention of the printing press enabled the proliferation of printed Bibles available to lay men as well as to clergy. For the first time lay Christians could read for themselves what the Bible says, and often it was different from what was preached, or proclaimed, by the Catholic Church. This led to people challenging the authority of the clergy during the Protestant Reformation.

The Christian reformation lead by Luther, and later Calvin, was aimed to recover the original message of the Bible due to the departure of Catholic Church from the Biblical theology. Luther, as a Catholic priest, nailed his 95 theses on the church door of Wittenberg on 31 October 1517, all of which explained the Catholic deviance from Biblical truths (Tarnas, 1991:233–246).

The Protestants based their reformed faith on five formal principles derived directly from the Bible, also called the five Solas¹² (Monergism, 2008; Orr, 2012:3).

Following on from Tarnas' view above, it must be noted that while the Renaissance thinkers in general celebrated the freedom of autonomy and reason, there seems to be dualism between the Renaissance movements to follow its own approach in pursuit of its goals. The Reformation used its freedom in thinking and applied its autonomy

¹² The 5 solas of the Reformation:

Sola Fide (by faith alone) – the Bible teaches that men are saved by faith even without works;

Sola Gratia (by grace alone) – salvation is an unearned gift (cf. ex gratia), not a direct result of merit;

Sola Scriptura (by scripture alone) – the Bible alone is the ultimate authority, not the Pope, priest or tradition;

Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone the glory) – God is the creator of all good things and deserves all the praise for them, and

Solus Christus (Christ alone) – the Bible teaches that Jesus is the only mediator between God and humankind. It is also rendered as solo Christo ('by Christ alone').

and rationality to break from the hegemony of the Roman Catholic church in practising their faith. The other Renaissance movements were secular in their approach and focused on reason and autonomy of the human being. As mentioned earlier and discussed in the next sections, these secular movements established the human being, and his quest for self-realisation and self-fulfillment in the centre of their world view (Tarnas, 1991:224–9).

8.6.3 Philosophical revolution

The philosophical revolution in thought was driven by technological and scientific advances, with the human being now at the centre of his universe. Even though the universities in the 13th century introduced secular thinking, the church censured everything that was taught. The Renaissance thinkers broke with church control over thinking and some of them introduced Classicism “to go back to the sources” (Venter, 2013b:55).

The mediaeval scholastic Biblical understanding of, and belief in, a flat Earth resting on pillars, and the geocentric model of the universe did not make sense any longer. The dogma of the Church has become stale and ineffective. It was time to move beyond the Biblical allegorical understanding of the universe to the heliocentric understanding of the universe. Humankind was being prepared for the next step: to think autonomously outside the framework of Patristic philosophy and break with the scholasticism of the Catholic Church (Taylor, 2013b:341).

The break with Catholic Church dogma would only happen after the heliocentric universe was postulated by Copernicus.

The Classicist thinkers reverted to the classical texts to search in antique Roman and Greek sources for solutions to their problems. This stimulated new investigation and new research to elevate empirical science and mathematics, and combined with the heliocentric theory of Copernicus, resulted in the growth of natural science. As stated before, the human being became increasingly aware of his autonomy, and so a new conception of reason came to the fore, as best encapsulated by the Cartesian concept of disengaged reason, where a person is viewed as pure mind, distinct from his body (Taylor, 1991:102). This has led to an ever more secular worldview since the Renaissance (Venter, 2013b:55; Venter, 2013c:21). Charles Taylor describes how the

Cartesian disengaged reason later evolved into instrumental reason and an atomist outlook of self-centered fulfilment in modernity (Taylor, 1991:96,104)

8.6.4 Rationalism

The development of mediaeval thinking had strong ties with the ontologies of Plato, the Ethics of the Stoics, and later the rediscovered works of Aristotle. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the treasures from Plato and Aristotle were appropriated by the Patristics and mediaeval thinkers and incorporated into Christian faith. Through the centuries, the hegemony of the Catholic Church scholasticism incorporated the antique Greek philosophies so comprehensively that the appropriated portions of antique philosophy into Christian thinking left almost no trace of the originals from Plato and Aristotle in Christianity (Tarnas, 1991:282–284; Venter, 2013c:25).

The Renaissance brought about the awakening of reason as humankind's strongest capability. It broke the hegemony of the Church on independent thinking on all matters of religion, nature, science, mathematics and especially philosophy. Just as the original antique Greek philosophical ideas were appropriated and assimilated into church dogma, so all philosophy became subservient to the Church during the mediaeval period. Philosophy, one could say, was completely encompassed and convoluted beyond differentiation with Christian faith, during mediaeval scholasticism (Tarnas, 1991:224–232, 282, 283).

The secular worldview came about during the Renaissance because of a shift in the view that the human being's reason provides order in theoretical as well as practical knowledge; that order is not something given by God. Reason has become a trusted and autonomous law-giver in human life according to Descartes (Venter, 2013c:37). It is clear that the rebirth established the human being in the centre of his own universe with a new approach to acquire knowledge. In the early 17th century, Francis Bacon accentuated the need for empirical study to gain knowledge of the real world. All the while Descartes' disengaged reason and deductive mathematical reasoning created the dual epistemological platform of empiricism and rationalism that empowered independent philosophical thinking and the quest for scientific knowledge of the natural world. It was devoid of the traditions and prejudices of mediaeval scholasticism (Tarnas, 1991:273).

In my opinion, when mediaeval scholasticism was perceived to be a burden to the freedom of the human being, all Christian thinking associated with the church was ignored or discarded during the tumultuous years of the Renaissance. In the drive of the Renaissance thinkers and scientists to move away from mediaeval scholasticism, to go back to the original sources, or to pursue new scientific discoveries, it seems they discarded all Christian appropriated works which was protected and controlled by the church, including the appropriated treasures from the antique Greek philosophers, and hence the baby was thrown out with the bath water¹³.

I further contend that the autonomy of reason became the new quest to be followed and practised by philosophers, scientists and artists into the modern era. The philosophical wheel was reinvented too. Gone were the days of appropriation or spoiling from antique sources. We have seen that authenticity came into being in the 18th century by thinkers in the league of René Descartes, Immanuel Kant and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This created the impression that authenticity is, like many of the scientific and artistic feats of the post-mediaeval period, a novel and new invention of the Renaissance, the product of human reason.

The Renaissance thinkers, scientists, and reformers of whatever kind, moved away from mediaeval scholasticism and generally disregarded its dogma, because of its religious hegemony and the powerful influence it had on the human mind up to that stage. There was a yearning and a sense of urgency to ignore and disregard every mediaeval scholastic teaching and to return to first principles. First, the scientists and explorers broke away to explore the natural world with a new secular (non-religious) worldview supported by new inventions such as the magnetic compass, telescope and mathematical modelling of the laws of nature. Not all inventions were for the good of humankind though. The invention of gunpowder irrevocably changed the art of warfare and made conquering the 'new world' so much easier than it would otherwise have been. In general, though, the scientific revolution and its astonishing achievements heralded a new area of progress and emphasised the autonomy of reason and the human being's ability to control his environment.

¹³ 'Throw the baby out with the bathwater' is a German proverb, *das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten*; the earliest printed reference to it, in Thomas Murner's satirical work *Narrenbeschwörung* (Appeal to Fools), dates from 1512 (The Phrase Finder, 2016).

Secondly, in the realm of philosophy, philosophers from the Renaissance and beyond also latched onto the idea of the autonomy of reason, and they similarly returned to what they perceived as the first principles in philosophy: the original antique philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. This is where the problems in philosophical thinking arose. The Rationalist thinkers, many of whom were scientists in their own right, such as the mathematician René Descartes, continued with the dual drive of scientific discovery whilst inventing a new philosophy based on the autonomy of human reason. In doing so they ignored the notion of philosophical reflection which Dooyeweerd mentioned many years later (Dooyeweerd, 1969:118). As mentioned in section 8.2, according to Dooyeweerd, every thinker must take cognition of historical philosophical development, because it forms the basis of his own ideas and thinking. The Renaissance thinkers did not exercise any philosophical reflection.

They seem to start from a blank slate (to use Dooyeweerd's term) and thus a void arose in their thinking. This ignorant approach to philosophical thinking hitherto had the effect that a millennium of philosophical development was, one could say, in vain. I am of the opinion that especially the Enlightenment thinkers disapproved of everything associated with, or had the slightest aura of, mediaeval Scholasticism. Therefore, the foundations laid by the Patristics and other great mediaeval thinkers, who, through appropriation from the antique sources and augmented with their own thinking, were completely discarded, and so a whole treasure of philosophical work was forced into oblivion.

Even though authenticity was articulated in the 18th century, my contention is that authenticity was born much earlier, as the result of appropriation by the Patristics and others, and the answer lies in the treasure chest of work developed in the early Christian Church.

In this chapter I have shown and described how appropriation was applied by the Patristics in the development of Christian thinking in the early church and the mediaeval period. I also pointed out that the practice of appropriation atrophied due to a lack of new sources and eventually turned into full-blown synthesis in the works of Thomas Aquinas and the scholasticism. The views of Dooyeweerd as Reformational philosopher brought a fresh perspective on the metaphorical application of appropriation in Christian philosophy with his idea of philosophical reflection

(Dooyeweerd 1969:118). I also explicated how it came about that the monumental works that culminated in Christian philosophy, was discarded during the Renaissance.

In the next two chapters I examine Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity to see what it exactly entails and how it can be transformed from a Christian perspective.

8.7 Summary of appropriation

What started off as a single article from Jacob Klapwijk about the practice of spoiling or appropriation from an obscure passage in the Bible, led to a remarkable discovery of how the same practice was applied repeatedly during the early Church and into the mediaeval period. They appropriated some of the sublime teachings of the great philosophers into the gamut of Christianity to enhance theological and philosophical thinking throughout the mediaeval period.

Henry Taylor's work provided an overview of how the Romans enforced civilisation amongst the pagans while still preserving the works from the ancient Greek philosophers for posterity.

There were quite a number of salient writers and thinkers from the mediaeval period who shaped the Western mind, some of whom need mentioning here. I shall start with the apostles Paul and John whose epistles exhibited the influence of Platonic philosophy in the early Christian thinking. After them came Polycarp, a disciple of John, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine, whose works bear the signature of pure Christian thought in laying the foundations of Christian doctrine. Later Charlemagne, who staunchly spread Christianity amongst heathens, commissioned Alcuin as a teacher in AD 781 to teach the clergy and lay people. Alcuin, next to Charlemagne himself, was the guiding spirit of the intellectual revival. He continued the practice of exploiting the highly regarded Patristic materials, such as Augustine's sermons, which many of his works are based upon. Alcuin's pupil, Rabanus Maurus, persisted with the metaphor of spoiling the Egyptians, just like Augustine originally did.

About 450 years later, the rediscovery of Aristotle's works prompted Albertus Magnus, and more importantly, his student Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), to produce the all comprehensive *Summae Theologica*, which opened the dialectic of reason and faith; between nature and grace, and between matter and form, and between human knowledge and Christian doctrine.

Although appropriation was practised with great effect to develop Christian theology during the early Church until the Carolingian period¹⁴, it stagnated when there was no more new material available for appropriation. The corollary, as I see it, is that appropriation can only be applied or practised when there is a source of pagan or non-Christian material from which the hidden treasures can be gained.

The process of regurgitating known material continued until Aquinas' synthesis of Plato and Aristotle with Christian religion during the Scholastic period. Although one could surmise that philosophy stagnated due to the lack of originality, one must understand that the works of Augustine and the Patristics were so incisive and far-reaching that the thinkers afterwards spent their time in interpretation and comprehending the Patristic philosophy and doctrine. To me this was a period of consolidation and assimilation of the Patristic theology and philosophy produced until then.

The advent of reason during the transition from the late mediaeval period into Renaissance became as a powerful weapon in the human's armoury, which caused the move away from the Roman Catholic hegemony on everyday life. The Classicists reverted to the original sources of the ancient philosophers. Rationalism and Enlightenment also moved away from the Roman Catholic dogma to an apostate culture, and opted for a worldview of individualism, wherein reason is glorified as the impetus for self-creation of the individual.

It is clear that even though the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* has atrophied since, it certainly remains valid even today. It is now exigent to search for, and uncover the golden and silver treasures that lay hidden in history. As seen from Dooyeweerd earlier, a thinker cannot dissociate himself from history in developing his own thinking from afresh. A thinker has to apply philosophical reflection critically!

Through continued and repeated acts of appropriation since the early Church, a treasure chest of Christian philosophy has been built over many centuries. I am convinced that present-day thinkers have a duty and obligation to uncover and reintroduce the treasures of earlier philosophers and use it to enhance their own thinking. In my opinion it will provide the Christian basis and ground-motive from where

¹⁴ The Carolingian period refers to the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries, which were strongly influenced by Charlemagne (AD 747–814) and the works of Alcuin and Rabanus Maurus.

one can venture into pagan, secular philosophies and appropriate those elements that can be transformed and reformed from a Christian point of view to purify modernity from its malaises.

9.1 Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity

In this section I describe how Charles Taylor picks up with the historical development of the concept of authenticity and its development into modernity when he states "What we need is a work of retrieval..." (Taylor, 1991:23).

Since the focus is on Taylor's concept of authenticity in this study, it is important to explore his particular views on the history and concept of authenticity.

This study, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, focuses mainly on Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity as his views developed over time as depicted especially in *The ethics of authenticity* (1991), and supported by his views in *Sources of the self* (1989) and *A secular age* (2007). *The ethics of authenticity* had its origin in a number of radio broadcast series in November 1991 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and was first published under the title *The malaises of modernity*. In this book he claims that authenticity was born at the same time as the age of romanticism, and he proceeds to explore three malaises of modernity which he also identifies as militating against his concept of authenticity. The main theme is that the age of modernity is experiencing a moral crisis which must be addressed. "Our moral salvation", he says, "comes from recovering authentic moral contact with ourselves" (Taylor, 1991:27).

9.2 Sources, epistemology and ontology of Charles Taylor's authenticity

Charles Taylor approaches the concept of authenticity realistically by stating it "was born at the end of the 18th century from earlier forms of individualism, such as Descartes' disengaged reason" (Taylor, 1991:25). In *The ethics of authenticity*, Charles Taylor starts off with the malaises of modernity and its detrimental influences on authenticity. He carefully sculpts his idea of authenticity out of the marble of modernity by chipping away those pieces that do not belong to, and do not add value to, the original product as he envisages it. To the uninitiated, his thought process seems cumbersome initially, especially since the book was originally titled *The malaises of modernity*, with the focus on the three malaises he identifies (Taylor, 1991:4–10):

- individualism/loss of meaning/fading of moral horizons
- instrumental reason/eclipse of ends
- loss of freedom/soft despotism

The original title of this work is more apt in my view, since he discusses these malaises and the deviant forms as they exist and are being practised in modernity. The bulk of his book is a description of what is required for the retrieval of authenticity. This unusual mode of Taylor's thinking forces the reader, almost as the spectator observing the sculptor chipping away at the granite block, and to experience the gradual formation of authenticity as he strips it of the malaises and exposes the eventual product, just like the artist revealing the final product from the marble block.

9.2.1 Sources of authenticity

Charles Taylor also states that authenticity has roots in the 17th century notion of morality as a voice of right or wrong within us. He mentions Jean-Jacques Rousseau as an exponent of this idea, while recognising Augustine's view that the road to God is discovered from reflexive awareness of God within ourselves. Charles Taylor mentions that authenticity emanates from earlier forms of individualism, like René Descartes' idea of disengaged reason. He also states authenticity is a child of romanticism which "was critical of disengaged rationality and of an atomism that didn't recognise the ties of community" (Taylor, 1991:25–27). These statements seem to be contradictory since it raises the question where authenticity belongs and therefore they require further explication.

The term 'authenticity' is partly a product of autonomous reason which finds its sources in the mechanistic world picture of the Industrial Revolution, and partly a product of romanticism. The age of romanticism came into being in the latter half of the 18th century, as a revolt against the established order and rigid, impersonal scientific rationalism of nature characterised by elements within the Enlightenment (Tarnas, 1996:375; Taylor, 1991:25–27).

It is interesting to note that the revolution in thought is dynamic and does not always agree with previous or historical ideas. Dooyeweerd's call for philosophical reflection, in my view, means that while one has to take cognisance of historical philosophical ideas, one must maintain a critical stance towards those historical ideas without blanket acceptance thereof. So, just as the Renaissance thinkers rejected the Scholasticism, the revolution in thought continued in a dynamic situation whereby the romantics revolted against Enlightenment thinking. This process continued into modern day philosophy where thinkers remain critical of previous ideas.

Tarnas provides more insight into the problems encountered by the romantics. He says the reaction of the romantic movement against the impersonal science of the Enlightenment was to retrieve the organismic worldview of the mediaeval period, since it placed much emphasis on imagination over reason, emotions over logic, and intuition over rules and formulas, it saw nature as an animated source of mystery and revelation (Tarnas, 1996:369). The romantics valued the aesthetic, mystical and spiritual, and they used the visual arts, music, narrative and literature to exhibit the authentic character of ordinary life (Tarnas, 1996:375). The Romantic period thus experienced the invention of expressivism by the intellectual and artistic elites who searched for an authentic way of expressing themselves (Taylor, 2007:473). It is safe to say that while the Enlightenment thinkers rejected mediaeval scholasticism, others took a more positive view, such as the romantics.

At first glance, it seems as if authenticity started off from earlier forms of individualism following from Descartes' disengaged reason, but was adopted by the romantics in order to define their own concept of authenticity (Taylor, 1991:14, 25). It appears to be used as a sort of quality verification by those thinkers who want to lay claim to some form or grade of truth about their character, works and thinking. Each movement seem to have its own notion of authenticity.

We know that authenticity has roots in the individualism and autonomism of the rationalism only to be described by Charles Taylor as a product of romanticism at the next moment (Taylor, 1991:25). It is therefore important to take note that during that crucial period of the 18th century, the Enlightenment, driven by rationalism and the scientific revolution, introduced the concept of authenticity, which builds on the human being's autonomy of reason, as a loose understanding of the concept without a clear definition (Varga & Guignon, 2014:5). When the romantic movement came into being in the 1750s, with its emphasis towards the aesthetic, religious, mystical and spiritual in ordinary life, it also used 'authenticity' to describe the character of romanticism – once again with a vague understanding of the meaning of the term.

So, as the use of the concept increased, it came into conflict with earlier forms, and since then the meaning of authenticity has been subjected to its own process of evolution and interpretation. My contention is that, even though these movements seem to have their own interpretation of authenticity, it contains treasures of

authenticity hidden in each of these movements that can be appropriated and reformed from a Christian viewpoint.

Charles Taylor starts his book by first stating the three malaises of modernity and its detrimental effects on authenticity. He then continues to discuss the first malaise, individualism in detail, and suggests that the other two malaises, loss of freedom and instrumental reason, can be treated similarly (Taylor, 1991:12, 93). In his exposition of individualism, he gradually, like a sculptor, identifies and removes the redundant and alien strains to expose the essence of authenticity.

I have noticed that Charles Taylor mentions 'authenticity' in his earlier major work *Sources of the self* as if it is a well-known concept (Taylor, 1989:507, 510), but in *The ethics of authenticity* two years later, he uses the term 'authenticity' for the contemporary ideal (Taylor, 1991:16).

Charles Taylor sees authenticity as the ideal of contemporary culture. In the embodiment of authenticity, Charles Taylor takes a dual approach in my opinion - epistemological and ontological. I regard the epistemology of authenticity as grounded in the nature of the mind, as an act of knowing between the knower and the known.

9.2.2 Epistemology of authenticity

I believe one of the tenets of philosophical reasoning is that a person is only able to discuss or express a view on an idea or concept after he became aware of this idea or concept and can articulate it. In the act of knowing, the knower must be aware of the presence or existence of the object which is to be known. I cannot endeavour to know or pretend to understand a concept if I am not aware of it, and have a vague idea what it entails, and a desire to know more about it. First there is the awareness, secondly the acts of analysing and abstraction, and lastly, the acts of appropriation, transforming and reforming. I contend this principle also holds for the concept of authenticity.

Charles Taylor starts his study with the presupposition that the values of modernity are often debased and wayward. His point of departure, as I see it, is that the human being in the contemporary culture has an insincere and warped image of his own originality, which is caused by the fading of one's moral horizons, instrumental reason and loss of freedom. These factors emanate from personal self-imposed pressure or

pressure from society which the individual then accedes to. It can then result in increased individualism, rampant instrumental reason and conforming to society in pursuit of creating a caricature of the true self of the human being (Taylor, 1991:3–10).

Charles Taylor wants to determine, or better still, to rediscover, the modern understanding of authenticity. What is needed, he says, is an act, or a work, of retrieval (Taylor, 1991:23). In this retrieval process Taylor makes certain epistemological observations and deductions about the features of authenticity.

The 19th century romantic view of morality is that human beings are endowed with a moral sense – an intuitive feeling of what is right or wrong. This moral sense is a means to recover contact with our inner selves; to be true to ourselves, what Jean-Jacques Rousseau calls “le sentiment de l’existence”. This moral compass, although intrinsically present in every human being, needs to be predicated for the person to be “a true and full human being ...” (Taylor, 1991:26–27).

To be true to myself is of a crucial moral significance in the understanding of authenticity. Charles Taylor states that only I can define my own originality (Taylor, 1989:375), and to discover it I must articulate it (Taylor, 1991:29). I shall expound later that the road to self-discovery leads through the inner self to God, to be in touch with Him again, as Augustine practised (Taylor, 1991:26). This moral compass, in search of God in us, is a concept preached by the early church, but the ethic of authenticity, as the articulation of the moral compass, is new and peculiar to modern culture (Bible, Rom 12:2; Taylor, 1991:25).

Authenticity, according to Charles Taylor, is an ideal worth espousing (Taylor, 1991:23, 73). The discovery of the ideal of authenticity is closely linked to the discovery and articulation of our own identity (Taylor, 1991:81). Our identity, according to Charles Taylor, determines essentially “who” we are and “where we are coming from” (Taylor, 1991:34). In this sense Taylor says, our identity, as a feature of human life, is dialogical in character, because we stand in relationship with the ‘significant others’ in our lives, and we define our identity through our interrelationships and interactions with these “significant others”. We define our identity through language of expression, and the genesis of the human mind cannot be accomplished on its own (Taylor, 1991:33, 45, 48).

The dialogical character also means that reasoning on any matter is reasoning with somebody (Taylor, 1991:31). Importantly, Charles Taylor makes it clear that the individual cannot simply define his identity in isolation or unilaterally. Making and sustaining our identity remains dialogical, especially with those close to us – our loved ones and families – and the society in which we operate (Taylor, 1991:35). He continues that one's identity must be negotiated through dialogue with others, partly overt, and partly internal (Taylor, 1991:47–49).

He nevertheless also links authenticity to each person's originality, the acceptance of diversity and differences amongst human beings (Taylor, 1991:37). In this, Taylor's understanding is clear: we, as individuals need relationships to discover our identity, but not to define ourselves. We define ourselves against the horizon of things that matter (Taylor, 1991:34, 40). This confirms that identity formation is always dialogical; it depends on recognition from significant others and from society on different levels, whereas identity definition is based on one or more ideals that matter to the individual (Taylor, 1991:40, 48–53).

An individual can only understand what it is to define his identity if he can determine what his originality comprises and what is unique about himself. The individual can do this only if he has a background of significance and a framework of ideals that matter to him (Taylor, 1991:35, 40). Charles Taylor calls this background or framework a person's horizon of significance (Taylor, 1991:37). The horizon of significance is given, since it comprises the conditions of things that matter. I am, however, of the opinion that it can neither be static nor dormant, it is dynamic and ever-active, always adjusting and changing to give shape to a person's life.

Nevertheless, the emphasis in the concept authenticity is usually on the individual side, as Varga and Guignon make clear when they bring the concepts of autonomy, moral sense, originality and identity in direct relation to the ethic of authenticity (Varga & Guignon, 2014:4). According to them there are motives, desires and commitments imputed by the ethic of authenticity, which are so fundamental to one's identity, that if not followed, will lead to alienation of the self as a moral agent.

The relationship between these fundamental motives and desires and Charles Taylor's horizon of significance is, in my view, determined in a hierarchy of logical order: Each human being must have a horizon of significance from which a set of fundamental

moral values originates. The uniqueness hereof is the person's originality which in turn determines his identity.

Epistemologically, one needs ask the question: how does this all fit in with the concept of authenticity? This question can be answered in three ways.

- Authenticity is both endogenous and extroversive in nature, and furthermore it is spiritual. Its endogenous nature is one's relationship with oneself and inherent to the human being. It points to the individual's inward-directedness, identity and horizon of significance. Charles Taylor explicates the logical hierarchy between identity, the horizon of significance and authenticity as follows: one's identity is defined against the background of things that matter, which is the horizon of significance. However, these things that matter are encompassed in the demands emanating from beyond the self (Taylor, 1991:40–41). Authenticity therefore supposes the horizons of significance, and hence it is not possible to describe authenticity in ways that collapse the horizons of significance (Taylor, 1991:39). Therefore, by inference, the ideals that matter, originality, and a person's identity is directly linked to authenticity.
- Authenticity is extroversive, and it supposes demands that emanate beyond the self. This outward directedness of authenticity requires one to open up to dialogical relationships with one's significant others and with society. These dialogical relationships, as I see it, also serve as indirect sources for authenticity since the amount of recognition and feedback one receives on the intimate and social levels, influences one's identity, which in turn affects one's horizon of significance, and ultimately authenticity.
- What has not been fathomed or clarified by the endogenous or extroversiveness, is the actual source of the human being's authenticity. As mentioned in Chapter 2, authenticity transcends the immanent reality and autonomy of thought (Dooyeweerd, 1956:15). The transcendental nature of the self is spiritual in an inward journey to discover and gain knowledge about the self. Dooyeweerd uses the term 'human selfhood' as the root-unity which transcends all modal aspects of the temporal horizon of human experience. He says self-knowledge requires critical self-reflection (Dooyeweerd, 1956:17). This, in my opinion, ties in with the concept of contemplative reflection and Augustine's view that the road forward is

in exploring and developing the inner self in seeking a relationship with God (Taylor, 1989:129).

The balance lies therein that one's authenticity first and foremost come from within and is then developed further through dialogue with the significant others and with society. Charles Taylor says that each of us has an original way of being that needs to be discovered. This discovery process, he says, cannot be done by searching for pre-existing models or by hypothesis. This way of being must be discovered through critical self-reflection and through articulation in word and deed (Taylor, 1991:61).

From what I have said in this section, it should become clear that Charles Taylor's authenticity is dualistic in nature: it is self-referential (it is an individual orientation) and it is exploration beyond the self (Taylor, 1991:82, 91). In his definition, Charles Taylor does not address the third dimension – the transcendental nature of authenticity – like Augustine, and as mentioned by Dooyeweerd. However, Charles Taylor makes mention of it at a later stage in his thinking. I shall return to this point in Chapter 11, where I expound on Charles Taylor's definition and view of authenticity.

9.2.3 Ontology of authenticity

In the previous section I shed some light on Charles Taylor's epistemology of authenticity in the process of knowing, where he explicates the relationship of an individual's authenticity to his horizon of significance, his originality, and identity. In this section I discuss Charles Taylor's ontology of authenticity to explicate and clarify further his understanding of what the concept refers to.

In the *Ethics of authenticity* Charles Taylor's authenticity is firstly within the self, and then exploration beyond the self in relation to others, given one's horizon of significance. This points to a dualism in Charles Taylor's view on authenticity, but later in *A Secular Age*, his view changes to monism when individual creativity is emphasized. This is further discussed under the evolution of Charles Taylor's thinking on authenticity (Section 9.5).

- Dual nature of authenticity

As I have mentioned in the previous section, I interpret Charles Taylor's authenticity as dual in nature: it is self-referential (i.e. it is an individual

orientation) and it is exploration beyond the self. This is also reverberated by Varga and Guignon's view that authenticity stems from earlier forms on individualism in its inward directedness, but it is neither egocentric nor anthropocentric in its approach. According to Varga and Guignon, authenticity is active and animated and practised within the social context of the individual, emanating from within the self and directed outwards towards others (Varga & Guignon, 2014:5).

This dual nature of authenticity is clearly expressed by Charles Taylor in his definition of authenticity in *The ethics of authenticity*. This definition is formulated against the background of the malaises which he systematically unravels to expound the meaning of authenticity (Taylor, 1991:38–41, 66). The definition of authenticity as a concept requires a careful and fine balance between the poles of pure individualism and the demands from society. First, it cannot be determined or formed purely through reason in isolation from society, because it allows for a certain degree of influence or interrogation of one's own authenticity. However, any over-exertion in self-determining freedom to take full control will be a slide towards self-centred modes of the ideal of self-fulfilment. This leads to atomism and a collapse of the horizons of significance and destruction of the fundamental values and principles which will have a completely detrimental effect on one's authenticity (Taylor 1991:60). Secondly, a person can also not disregard the fundamental ideals, morals and commitments emanating from the self, and allow society to dictate his horizons, or values or identity entirely. Charles Taylor goes on to say that if people seek authenticity in some popular culture or consumerist trend, where they are subjected to external forms of conformity, they will become virtually indistinguishable from each other, thereby defeating the very purpose of their search (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:2). This leads to a total negation of one's originality and also one's authenticity.

- Horizons of significance

Charles Taylor refers to the present age as an age of authenticity as the background from which people work out their lives (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:1). It also relates to the "horizons of significance" mentioned in *The ethics of*

authenticity, where Charles Taylor states that authenticity supposes the horizons of significance (Taylor, 1991:40–41).

- Freedom and individualism

Charles Taylor says authenticity is a battle for hearts and minds (Taylor, 1991:8, 107) and as seen already, he views it as a contemporary and a moral ideal worth espousing (Taylor, 1991:16, 26). The ideal of authenticity has been articulated over the last two centuries as one of the more important potentialities of human life, and it opens an age of responsabilisation, such as freedom and individualism (Taylor, 1991:77).

- Spirituality

In the *Sources of the self* (2007), Charles Taylor explicates the relationship between spirituality and authenticity when he says the ethic of authenticity “is to discover one’s route to wholeness and spiritual depth” (Taylor, 2007:507).

It is prudent here to state what I understand under the term ‘spirituality’. The terms ‘spiritual’ or ‘spirituality’ has to do with the human being’s relationship to God, it is the immortal dimension of the human. As Augustine says, it is a path “leading from the exterior to the interior, and from the interior to the superior” (Taylor 1989:136).

Now that I have dealt with the epistemology and ontology of Charles Taylor’s concept of authenticity, I would like to expound Charles Taylor’s definition of authenticity, as stated in *The ethics of authenticity*, in more detail to clarify its strengths and also its shortcomings.

9.3 Exploring Charles Taylor’s definition of authenticity

The previous two sections about the knowing and being of authenticity should culminate in an explanation of Charles Taylor’s definition of authenticity, which he formulates as follows (Taylor, 1991:66):

Authenticity –

- Involves
 - creation and construction as well as discovery;
 - originality; and

- frequently opposition to the rules of society and even potentially to what we recognise as morality.
- Requires
 - openness to horizons of significance (for otherwise the creation loses the background that can save it from insignificance)' and
 - a self-definition in dialogue.

I regard his definition as much clearer and comprehensive than the vague descriptions from other thinkers that I mentioned in Chapter 2, or the one-sided descriptions of authenticity emanating from individualism and the disengaged self. As I have observed earlier, before one can express an opinion about a topic, any topic, one must have at least a basic intuition of the topic in your mind. Similarly, if you are looking for something, you must know what you are looking for, what it entails, or else your search shall be in vain, because you may stumble upon it, but if you do not recognise it, it will remain undiscovered.

Charles Taylor has set out from his own antecedent ideas about authenticity and in *The ethics of authenticity* (Taylor, 1991) constructed this definition through historical analysis and careful contemplation of the features and factors that influence or make up his view of authenticity. The importance and value of this definition is that it aspires to be universal, has a solid basis of reasoning and is relatively free from conjecture.

His concern is, however, that the contemporary culture of authenticity is eroding the ideal of authenticity and prevents it from coming into its own. The contemporary culture of authenticity strengthens its self-centred modes, like narcissism and individualism, but only manages to give it a certain patina of deeper philosophical justification (Taylor, 1991:61).

It is worthwhile to consider Taylor's own view of his definition and to make further independent observations of it.

Charles Taylor reminds us that the definition of authenticity is very derivative and subjective. His definition comprises two parts: A and B, where A can broadly be described as the inner-directedness of the self, and B is the relationship with society or community, with the focus on the horizons of significance and the dialogue with others. Although he says it is possible that these parts could be in tension with each other, he makes it clear that both parts are of equal value and importance (Taylor,

1991:66, 67). Both parts of the definition are integral to the whole and neither part can be used to explain the gamut of authenticity in isolation from the other. He warns that if one part of the definition is privileged or takes precedence over the other, it will lead to the deconstruction of authenticity into its constituent components A (i- iii) and B (i- ii).

9.3.1 Focus on the self

Let us look at Part A of Charles Taylor's definition with the focus on the self.

The first condition of part A (creation, construction and discovery), according to my understanding, involves an act of reasoning and self-determination by the individual. Charles Taylor provides a detailed exposition of the immanent factors contributing to authenticity, and in addition, the factors detrimental to it.

Charles Taylor sets the scene against which authenticity should be seen and describes the deviancy of contemporary culture. He says it strengthens self-centred modes which are self-defeating and fosters a purely personal understanding of self-fulfilment which makes the individual's various associations with communities purely instrumental because of its focus on the self (Taylor, 1991:43). Furthermore, he says that the contemporary culture has a lack of moral force which causes a slide into a state of self-destructive soft-relativism (Taylor, 1991:40, 89).

Charles Taylor further derives that authenticity is closely connected to the notion of self-determining freedom (Taylor, 1991:38–9). This means a person is free when he decides for himself what concerns him, rather than being shaped by external influences (Taylor, 1991:27), when the person can remake the conditions of his own existence, when he can dominate the things that dominate him (Taylor, 1991:101). Although self-determining freedom is partially the default solution of the culture of authenticity, it cannot go all the way with self-determining freedom, because it enhances anthropocentrism (Taylor, 1991:68–9). If the communal-directed component of Charles Taylor's definition, component B, is neglected or ignored and the individual goes all the way in glorifying component A, the self-determining freedom will lead to anthropocentrism and ecological aggressiveness (Taylor, 1991:58, 68, 69). The over-exertion of self-determining freedom will also lead to a slide in subjectivism, like in the case of self-fulfilment above (Taylor, 1991:89).

This self-fulfilment and slide in the culture of authenticity is directly influenced by instrumental reason as the second of the three malaises. Instrumentalism also generates a culture of social atomism, where there is a break in social relations caused by a narrow and flattened life view (Taylor, 1991:59, 94). Charles Taylor further remarks that modern society with its scientific outlook enforces atomism in a quest for instrumental efficiency where technology has entrenched itself with greater technological control over the world by reducing direct human interaction and interpersonal contact (Taylor, 1991:98, 101).

In Chapter 9 of *The ethics of authenticity*, Charles Taylor expounds instrumental reason: he says instrumental reason is subjected to polarisation which is linked to Descartes' disengaged reason and has its own moral background. The atomist and instrumentalist outlooks originated and spread among the educated classes of Western Europe and America before the Industrial Revolution. Instrumental reason, if applied correctly, is beneficial to society because it helps to control its environment through, what I would call, dissociative thinking in the sense that matters of priority can be separated and addressed in isolation. However, instrumentalism has gained undue dominance in modern society. The application and support of atomism and instrumental reason since the initial stages inevitably caused modern society to become fragmented and divided with a strong emphasis on individualism and endangerment of the common consciousness (Taylor, 1991:99–102). On the last page of his book, Charles Taylor makes the important statement about the link between instrumental reason, atomism and authenticity. He says atomism and instrumentalist stances are prime generating factors of shallower modes of authenticity (Taylor, 1991:120).

Taylor states there are two moral contexts which promotes instrumental reason:

- Although disengaged reason is grounded in the moral ideal of self-responsible, self-controlling reasoning, it is at the same time an ideal of freedom, of autonomous self-generating thought (Taylor, 1991:103, 4).
- It is an affirmation of ordinary life by giving unprecedented importance to the production of conditions of life and the relief of suffering (Taylor, 1991:104).

Instrumental reason is thus linked with the disengaged model of the human subject. The latter is Taylor's description of Descartes' notion that we are pure mind,

disengaged from our bodily constitution, emotions and our dialogical situation. We are pure self-verifying, self-responsible, self-controlling rationality (Taylor, 1991:102, 103).

Charles Taylor's description of instrumental reason, atomism and self-fulfilment exposes the latter kind of deviant effects of over-emphasis of the individual. Where the self is glorified, it degrades authenticity into an atomist, egotistical transformation where horizons of significance are suppressed and the dialogical relationships with society are severely compromised.

This analysis has come a full circle from its 18th century origin from earlier forms of individualism and Descartes' disengaged reason, which are seen as the very foundations for authenticity, to how it distorts and degrades the ideal of authenticity today through sheer acts of misappropriation.

I do concur with the other two conditions of part A: originality and opposition to society and morality. As described earlier, an individual's authenticity is intimately unique and the identity formation of the self requires originality (Taylor, 1991:61). An individual can neither be authentic, nor have his own identity, unless he is able to be original and realise his own uniqueness. Taylor describes this well in his comparison with art when he says there is a close relationship between self-discovery and art. One cannot be himself if he imitates others. This is the act of mimesis. One can only be himself through poiesis, by seeking to be original in a new creation. However, to be oneself requires self-discovery through the act of poiesis (making) and it involves imagination (Taylor, 1991:62). One can achieve this from the basis of his own horizon of significance (Taylor, 1991:35).

The third condition flows directly from the second: originality involves truth to the self and poiesis. Any form of mimesis or social conformity is in direct contrast with authenticity (Taylor, 1991:63).

9.3.2 Relationship with societal context

The second part of the definition addresses the relationship to society or community, with the focus on the horizons of significance and the self-definition in dialogue with others. Charles Taylor states that one's identity and authenticity is dependent on our horizons of significance (Taylor, 1991:37, 39). In the social context, the individual's association with a community or society is based on a shared horizon of significance.

This shared horizon serves as framework for recognition of differences between the members of that community or society (Taylor, 1991:52).

As noted before, authenticity requires exploration beyond the individual self in a dialogical situation with others. This exploration beyond the self require shared horizons of significance, and my understanding is that authenticity supposes these horizons of significance. The depth and quality of the intersection or shared portion of the various horizons of significance in a group context determines the outcome of exploration beyond the self.

The problem within the social context is twofold. First, there is always pressure for external conformity (Taylor, 1991:29). The causal effect from significant others, family, and community to dictate social conformity to an individual is an inevitable limiting and diminishing contact with himself, which has an ontological chain reaction. It collapses the individual's horizon of significance and will override his intrinsic fundamental ideals, morals and values. This leads to a total negation of one's originality and hence authenticity. The person takes an instrumental stance towards himself, and he loses contact with himself and he does not heed his inner voice (Taylor, 1991:29). His own authenticity will genuflect in the advance of social conformism.

The second problem is if the person takes an egocentric and atomistic stance towards society, he will develop a distorted horizon of significance and self-definition. He will alienate himself and will not be able to relate healthily with society in a way required to exhibit his authenticity soundly.

In essence, Charles Taylor says that the enemy of authenticity is social conformity (Taylor, 1991:63), and I would add social alienation. Authenticity requires that one therefore has to maintain a precarious balance between one's relationship with yourself and then with society. One must therefore listen to your inner voice, remain true to yourself, maintain your own horizon of significance, create your identity, and keep seeking self-fulfilment – all of this in dialogue with others. Authenticity is a intricate balance between that which a person can source inwardly, and that which he need to share or portray with, and towards society.

9.4 Critique of Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity

9.4.1 Analysis of the authenticity definition

In part A of his definition (Taylor, 1991:66), Charles Taylor states authenticity involves creation, construction as well as discovery. This is significant in the search for the source and finding the nature of authenticity. There is a dichotomy in this part because it refers in one sentence to creation and construction, and then to discovery. The creation or construction actions can be apperceived as products of reason. Secondly, discovery of authenticity is an endogenous activity into the inner depths of the self that has to be sought or retrieved. It is my contention that every person is endowed with his own authenticity. This is a fundamental point of understanding: Authenticity cannot be created or rationalised as part of one's emancipation or self-fulfilment. One cannot create or construct something that already exists, and it implies that the acts of creation or construction of one's authenticity, as mentioned in Charles Taylor's definition, are therefore not possible; it is a misconception to think that one can create or construct his own authenticity.

The corollary is that each person is an authentic human being. Once a person can grasp the profoundness of his own authenticity, he can embark on his Augustinian journey of contemplative inner reflection and beyond to discover his authenticity.

So, what then was the 'authenticity' that was born in the 18th century from earlier forms of individualism and the Cartesian disengaged reason? It is my contention that the early roots of the concept of authenticity is a mimesis of actual authenticity, simply because any product of rationalism, any creation of the mind that has the goal to remake or express oneself will remain ineluctably in the realm of individualism. As Charles Taylor describes further in his works: in modernity, in the age of authenticity, there are higher and lower forms of individualism. The lower, more deviant forms, like egoism, atomism and anthropocentrism are the result of a relentless search by the modern human for self-indulgence and self-fulfilment (Taylor, 1991:14–17).

In the higher form of individualism, authenticity is pure in nature and ineluctably spiritual. It is ever present in every human being as it is part of his created nature. Where one's authenticity is not apparent or visible in one's life, it can be discovered or retrieved, but not created. It is the only means through which a person can determine and regain his authenticity. This can be achieved through an intimate transcendental

journey into the inner self. A vital part of this discovery or retrieval involves simultaneous processes of:

- contemplative reflection within ourselves, and transcendental exploration beyond ourselves since the road to self-discovery leads through the inner self to God (Taylor, 1991:26); and
- philosophical reflection into the gamut of philosophical works of past thinkers, and appropriate that which is of value, because it is a prerequisite, I believe, to adjust and recalibrate one's horizons of significance.

This will become clearer in the following sections where I discuss the evolution of Taylor's thinking on this subject and his view on religion and appropriation from earlier sources.

As initially remarked, Charles Taylor has taken a bold step in stating an elaborate definition of authenticity that goes against the grain of the general descriptions and understanding of the concept that has been portrayed in philosophical circles over the span of two centuries. It is well known that Taylor's own thoughts on the subject have evolved considerably after he wrote *Sources of the self* and *The ethics of authenticity*. I argue that Taylor's definition comprises a too limited (limited in an ontological sense) concept of authenticity, as stated earlier in Chapter 5 of this study. I also explore his views on inwardness and the relationship with God in his earlier work *Sources of the self* (Taylor 1989) and the article in *The other journal* with Ronald Kuipers, *Religious belonging in an "age of authenticity": A conversation with Charles Taylor* (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008). There Charles Taylor opens up to the notion that authenticity has a strong relationship to spirituality and religion.

He remarks that this age of authenticity requires of people to actively explore their particular direction. People are increasingly yearning for spirituality in this culture of authenticity (Taylor, 2008). I think this deepened inclination towards spirituality in this age of authenticity is indicative of those people wanting to discover and establish a deeper inner relationship with the Divine, just like Augustine and the mystics did. I am furthermore of the view that it will lead them to find their own authenticity. It is an intimate contemplative spiritual journey, I believe, wherein the telos of every human being is to find his authenticity, and then to live accordingly to the glory of God.

Charles Taylor's definition of authenticity in the secular milieu of modernity is an immanent definition which speaks to the endogenous nature of authenticity, both from the viewpoint that it is situated in the inner self, and is exhibited extrovertly in dialogue with others. However, the ontology of authenticity is not fully addressed or explicated in Taylor's definition. He states that it involves originality and individualistic facets and it requires openness to horizons of significance and self-definition in dialogue. However, in my opinion, Charles Taylor does not elaborate satisfactorily what the details of the involvement and requirements are, or at least what it must be. This is what I want to indicate in the first paragraph of this section about discovery of authenticity above.

In his definition, Charles Taylor does not address the source of authenticity either. He steers clear of any form of any reference to the transcendental aspects of spirituality or religion in his definition and prefers to immure it secularistically. Although Charles Taylor himself is a religious person (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008) and he is aware of Augustine's view that the road to God is through the self (Taylor, 1991:26), he does not incorporate it in his definition later in the book. By omitting the spiritual aspect of authenticity, I am of the opinion that Charles Taylor, at the time of writing his book, is apologetic about any religious consociation with authenticity. The reason could be that the main topic and focus of *The ethics of authenticity* was to elucidate the malaises of modernity and its derogatory effects on authenticity, and to expound the ontology of authenticity itself. I get the impression that he expects the readers of the book already to have a strong background idea what authenticity is, so he proceeds to formulate a definition of authenticity that fits his requirements in order to address the malaises.

Part B of the definition, the individual's relationship with society and the exhibition and portrayal of authenticity in dialogue with others, is very remarkable in its simplicity and logic. Charles Taylor further recognises that authenticity cannot remain inner-directed only. The extroversive nature of authenticity requires it to be lived in relation to others. People need people, and one can only exhibit and radiate authenticity if it can be done towards others in society where there is mutual understanding and openness to each other's horizons of significance. In the culture of authenticity, relationships are the key loci of self-discovery and self-confirmation, he says (Taylor, 1991:49). This is also the view of Guignon, who states that authenticity is a dialogical situation between its personal and social dimensions (Guignon, 2004:82).

Another facet of the definition that is implied, but not exhaustively addressed, is the question whether authenticity is subject to change by the self, or whether it can be influenced by others. The answer to this lies in the degree to which autonomy is exercised, identity-forming social relations, and the extent to which an individual conforms to society.

The first answer is that the self cannot affect or change its own authenticity, because I do not think it can be created or constructed as Taylor stated in Part A of the definition. As stated earlier, my contention is that everybody is born with his own measure of authenticity. It is the unchangeable, transcendent, spiritual part of every human being, and the telos of every human being is to live his authenticity to the glory of God. Guignon also makes the statement: "What steadies and stabilizes the inner life cannot itself be something within the inner life. There is no coherence in the notion that the inner life can define itself" (Guignon, 2004:78). I am of the view that there has to be a normative standard beyond the inner self which can serve as its reference.

Similarly, if individuals cannot change their own authenticity, whether through personal or collective effort, it certainly cannot change or influence another person's authenticity. Authenticity cannot be emulated from another person either. However, facets such as identity, originality and moral values are linked to the horizons of significance and authenticity. These facets depend on the social relationships with others and give importance to recognition (Taylor, 2008:47–9). These facets, because of their human, temporal nature, can be influenced, developed, enhanced or diminished through enforced external conformity or recognition from society. One's authenticity, by inference, will maintain its true and pure form, irrespective of the degree of interaction within a community, or of changing societal circumstances.

9.4.2 Views from other thinkers

One could therefore construe that cultural practices and societal normative standards do not have any authority over authenticity. One can be authentic even if society does not recognise or acknowledges it (Guignon, 2004:82).

Varga and Guignon in their article (Varga & Guignon, 2004:4) support this viewpoint. Other thinkers such as Cobb, Cooke and Echeverria maintain views that closely resemble Charles Taylor's views.

Cooke analyses Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity in his article *Authenticity and autonomy* (Cooke, 1997). He makes a similar two-part distinction that authenticity focuses on the:

- Inner self, which presupposes context-transcendent normative standards. This corresponds to Charles Taylor's view on the inner-directedness of the self.
- Beyond the self towards evaluative interpretations that forms a horizon of ethical and moral judgment. This corresponds to Charles Taylor's view that authenticity supposes demands that lie beyond the self. It also corresponds to Charles Taylor's horizons of significance.

These two points also aligns to my earlier view.

According to Cooke the ideal of authenticity has its roots in a philosophy of nature that are unclear and problematic (Cooke, 1997:264–265). Cooke has a problem in grasping the notion of the “inner self”, which incidentally, is not a problem to Charles Taylor.

While Cooke wonders about the “inner self” in authenticity, Echeverria states that God is the source of all authenticity (Echeverria, 1998:173).

Augustine, many years before Cooke, provides the answer on who the inner person is (more about this later.)

These views of other thinkers of this age are given here to indicate that there is support for both sides which Charles Taylor identifies in the nature of authenticity.

9.5 The evolution of Charles Taylor's thinking on authenticity

Charles Taylor as a thinker focuses on modernity, and how the human being has developed in this kind of thinking and definition of himself. Charles Taylor sets out to examine how the various streams of thought in this process of self-discovery, and one's yearning for recognition, has led to deviant and self-stultifying forms of one's own being. Charles Taylor describes how the ideal of authenticity is degraded through self-determining freedom and instrumental reason which led to anthropocentrism, individualism, relativism and atomism.

As noted above, Charles Taylor's definition in *The ethics of authenticity* is clear and precise, and though it was the best version at the time when it was penned in 1991, it remains incomplete, and there are areas of his thoughts on authenticity that require

further expansion. It is, however, not possible to go in search of the origin of authenticity by only focusing on Charles Taylor's single definition of authenticity. The full gamut of his thoughts must be expounded in order to come to any conclusion of Charles Taylor's view on the origin of authenticity.

Even though his thoughts and philosophy in *The ethics of authenticity* dwelled on the effects of modernity on humankind, Charles Taylor's ideas and views about authenticity has evolved over the years to retrieve it from rationalism and romanticism and align it with spirituality and religion, as noted earlier. Charles Taylor's thoughts developed gradually, and his next book, *A secular age* (2007), is the product of roughly a decade of research which arose out of his Gifford lectures, entitled "Living in a secular age," which were delivered in Edinburgh in 1998–1999. It has placed him at the centre of many contemporary debates about religion and secularity. In this book, Charles Taylor describes the modern approach to religion, where the pendulum swings from a theistic construal of life and outside conformity, to a secular age where unbelief has become the major default option (Taylor, 2007:14). He addresses the effects of modernity and the exigencies of society on belief, faith, spirituality and religion.

Of interest for this study is the evolution of Charles Taylor's thoughts and views to open the discourse on the interrelation between authenticity and these spiritual facets. In an interview with *The Other Journal* a year later, he describes authenticity as a process of seeking and rediscovering one's spirituality (Taylor, 2008:1), which is an addition to *The ethics of authenticity* definition, and that of *A secular age*.

In *A secular age* Charles Taylor defines the culture of authenticity as –

[T]he understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressivism of the late-eighteenth century, that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or any religious or political authority (Taylor, 2007:475).

In drawing parallels between Charles Taylor's two definitions, it is worth to note that the latest definition focuses on the individual only and specifically excludes the dialogue with others, or community. It is a marked departure from his earlier definition of authenticity in *The ethics of authenticity* and the reason for this, in my view, is that

Taylor here addresses the age of authenticity against the backdrop of the discourse on secularism in the present age, and the effects it has on spirituality, faith and religion (Taylor, 2007:473–535).

Some further observations may be added here. Neither of his definitions contain any reference to spirituality or faith, irrespective of when it was formulated, although he remains consistent in stating that authenticity has a long pre-history in both definitions. The interrelation between spirituality and authenticity was stated in *The other journal* interview after *A secular age* was published.

Both definitions have to do with the age of modernity, but it is more interesting to compare the authenticity of the late 18th century with the current age of authenticity as described by Charles Taylor. Here are the differences and similarities.

- 1 Both definitions underline the fact that authenticity is concerned with instrumental rational control.
- 2 Whereas the authenticity of the romantic period is a product of the élite milieu only, it is a more widely praxis in society in the last half century (Taylor, 2007:477).
- 3 Both definitions of authenticity came to the fore in an era of disenchantment with an existing form of rigid, institutionalised, external conformity upon the self. In the 18th century, the disenchantment was aimed at the Roman Catholic Church with its hegemony of religious scholasticism, which resulted in the Protestant Reformation on the one side and the secular movements on the other. The age of authenticity, which started in the 1960s, was a concerted break away from any form of outside conformity, especially the prescriptive and stifling religious practices of the church, and the singular focus on nationalism after World War II in every facet of life of the citizens of the Western states.

It seems as if the concept of authenticity is in a state of flux, not only within the thinking of Charles Taylor alone, but for all thinkers over the span of time since it was first described in the 18th century to the present day. The philosophical concept of authenticity appears to be unfamiliar in the public domain, but it is a well-known subject discussed at length in the philosophical domain. Therefore, the concept seems not to be recognised or widely pursued as “a moral ideal worth espousing” as Charles Taylor puts it, either by individuals, groups, communities or society (Taylor, 1991:23). As noted and explicated in detail by Charles Taylor, modern society is not concerned with

espousing the ideal of authenticity, but is rather fixated on the deviant forms of individualism such as atomism, anthropocentrism, self-indulgence, expressivism and subjectivism. The human being today has a deep-seated hunger for immanent solutions to its problems. This created a flourishing market for many soothsayers and writers on self-help psychology books, which focus on topics such as improving self-image, create your identity, discovering yourself, building personal strengths and eliminating weaknesses, improve your health and wealth, be happier – all in the name of becoming a better, more glamorous you. This has very little to do with authenticity, but all of this must be understood as forms of the modern yearning for authenticity.

9.5.1 The age of authenticity

I need to expound Charles Taylor's reference to the period since the 1960s as the age of authenticity. In *The ethics of authenticity*, he describes how human beings' fixation on the self in the age of modernity leads to the malaises like individualism, egotism and anthropocentrism (Taylor, 1991:58, 59, 68). In *A secular age*, he explicates the renewed move to secularism in modernity. The age of authenticity, according to him, appears in the 1960s, after the second World War, as result of a cultural revolution that "... has profoundly altered the conditions of belief in our societies" (Taylor, 2007:473).

The current wave of secularism, in my view, cannot be described or viewed as an age of authenticity, at least not as an age that can be described in the sense of Taylor initial definition of authenticity in *The ethics of authenticity*. Just like the disenchantment with the hegemony of mediaeval scholasticism and the subsequent dissociation of many thinkers with the totalitarian control of spirituality and religion by the Roman Catholic Church caused a schism during the tumultuous period of the Renaissance, Christian reformation, scientific revolution, rationalism and romanticism, an equally aggressive disenchantment ensued after World War II (Taylor 2007:473–504).

In this age, the post-WW II generation, the "baby boomers", were disillusioned with the system of political power which enforced state morality and social conformance. The authoritarian political will of Western governments after the military victories of WW II led to a civil order which was controlled through soft totalitarianism and selective indoctrination (my terms). The baby boomers in the Western World, under the power

of individual reason and self-determining freedom, revolted in the 1960s against any form of external control or conformance. This was most evident in the hippy culture with its forms of self-determining freedom which found its expression in their free-spirited lifestyle, their music and art (Taylor, 2007:475–480).

This revolution towards self-determining individualism was not all good either, because the absence of social norms and moral values, which are the foundations of responsabilisation, undermined the link between Christian faith and civilisational order, led to a collapse in morality and social discipline, increased promiscuity, substance abuse and a general collapse in their horizons of significance (Taylor, 2007:489–503).

Charles Taylor declares in the second part of his original definition that the individual is in a dialogical relationship with society or community, with the focus on the horizons of significance and the self-definition in dialogue with others. As stated already, he further remarks that authenticity is an ideal worth espousing. My impression is that Charles Taylor seems to make a call for the present age to become aware of its own authenticity, and espouse/embrace it in earnest. Individuals also need to be fully aware of the existence and effects of unbridled individualism, secularism and loss of horizons of significance in the context of not living up to their own authenticity. Charles Taylor makes these points over the span of 17 years and although it seems that his views are dialectical, I am of the opinion that he emphasises these seemingly opposing points in accordance with the message he wishes to convey at each stage.

The societal awareness of individual authenticity seems to be problematic though. Ever since its inception, and as already stated, the concept of authenticity remains in the realm of philosophical thinking, and has not been fully assimilated by the populace even to this day. What the two movements of disenchantment above have in common, is that in both cases there was an acute dissatisfaction with the existing order and everything that it portrays. The disenchantment movements, as far as I can deduce, revolted against that enforced and prescriptive external conformity which prohibited individual thinking. In both cases, there was a proliferation in all facets of individualism. In the 18th century, it was seen as authenticity, but since the 1960s it was self-indulgence and self-fulfilment. My thinking is that there was no viable replacement of the existing order, no foundation, nor a telos to aim for. It was only a movement against the status quo.

9.6 Charles Taylor's religious belief and view of appropriation

As seen in Charles Taylor's definition and descriptions of authenticity, he shies away from delving deeper into the inner self, or to expand on the relationship between authenticity, spirituality and belief. As stated in the Central Theoretical Statement, Taylor's concept represents a broader concept than the usual secularist modern account with a preference for individualism and autonomism, but it is still a partial concept that comprises only self-determining, even self-creative, freedom of the individual as well as/versus the individual's communal perspective and dialogical relationships.

To get closer to the origin of authenticity from a Christian point of view, one needs to include Charles Taylor's references to the earlier role of religious belief and appropriation. (Here one needs to keep in mind that Charles Taylor is a practising Roman Catholic with a strong Christian religious background and high esteem for Augustine). In my view, Charles Taylor here opens up to the idea that the dialogical relationship with others could also include God or a Higher Being.

In *The ethics of authenticity* Charles Taylor states that the modern notion of authenticity is to be in touch with a source within us. He says that connecting to this source is the road to God or a Higher Being, which is the same for Augustine (Taylor, 1991:26). In his earlier book, *Sources of the self*, Charles Taylor refers to Augustine's belief that the road to God is passing through our inner selves (Taylor, 1989:129).

Charles Taylor states that his aim with the *Sources of the self* is to articulate the history of modern identity in the light of a relationship to God. He examines and explicates "... the ensemble of understandings of the human agent: the senses of inwardness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature which are at home in the modern West" (Taylor, 1989:iv). As mentioned earlier in this study, Charles Taylor relates one's identity to authenticity. It is therefore of importance to see what he says about one's identity and the relationship with God, because that may shed more light on his views about spirituality and authenticity than before. He singles out the "affirmation of ordinary life" as a major aspect of the modern identity. According to Charles Taylor, this affirmation points to a higher form of life that is evident in the "manner of living ordinary life" (Taylor, 1989:23). This affirmation of ordinary life originates in Judaeo-Christian spirituality, and finds its way into the modern era through the spirituality of

the Reformers (Taylor, 1989:215-218). In following Charles Taylor's reasoning, it is evident that one's identity finds its expression in the affirmation of ordinary life, which in turn refers to one's spirituality.

Charles Taylor pays much attention to morality and moral consciousness, especially to the development thereof by Plato and Aristotle, but also the thoughts and ideas of Augustine during the early Christian period and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, during which Bacon, Descartes, Rousseau, Kant and Locke were major exponents. He also explicates how their radical unbelieving ideas emerged out of Deism and precipitated into theism and secularism of modernity (Taylor, 1989:314–320).

Charles Taylor often refers back to Augustine's spirituality, Augustine's inwardness, and his intuition that the soul's relationship with God determines the capacity to aspire to truth (Taylor, 1989:129, 324). Charles Taylor continues to describe the different variants emanating from the Enlightenment (subjectivism, expressivism, self-determining freedom) and analyse these against the framework of Christian spirituality. Ultimately, the way I see it, and as Charles Taylor states, describing the sources of the self is a matter of retrieval, of uncovering buried goods through re-articulation of the sources (inter alia of Christian spirituality) to empower the human being in discovering authenticity (Taylor, 1989:507, 520).

In *A secular age* Charles Taylor describes how secularism marginalises religious belief by pushing it out of public institutions. Earlier cultures, which were based on faith and religion, are replaced by secular societies where modern individuals can live their lives devoid of religion or God. However, Taylor also sees our lives as having a certain moral/spiritual shape, and somewhere in this shape lies a fullness where "life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be." This place of fullness for believers is beyond human life or nature and requires reference to God (Taylor, 2007:5, 8). Unbelievers, however, follow the Kantian variant that as rational beings they have the power to make autonomous laws, i.e. their power lies within. Irrespective of whether one is a believer or unbeliever, each belief is based on a background framework, the horizon of significance, which determines the extent to which one believes in God. This fullness of which Taylor speaks, is intensely spiritual for believers, and closely related to their religion, and it is informed by the ethic of authenticity which emanates from the horizons of significance. Charles Taylor does

not make the link directly, but through deductive reasoning I would say that Charles Taylor's fullness could also relate to authenticity.

While the authentic life lies in the realm of spiritual fullness, it is important to recognise that Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity, as a person's inner voice, was first alluded to by Augustine's inwardness. His mystical interaction with God was the source of his own spirituality and he regarded the road forward, the path of progress, as exploring and developing the inner self in seeking a relationship with God (Taylor, 1989:129, 134). As noted in the previous chapter, Augustine's inwardness was inspired by the study of the epistles of Paul. The inner self is mutual to the views of both Charles Taylor and Augustine. One can therefore, by inference, make the link between Taylor's authenticity and Augustine's inward road through the self to God.

More is said about Augustine later in Chapter 10.

With this link established, we need to view Charles Taylor's understanding of spirituality in the age of authenticity. As mentioned before, *A secular age* focuses on the secular effects of modernity on spirituality, belief, faith and religion. This age of disengaged reason requires spiritual insight. Many people today suffer from a consumer culture with its drive for instant gratification and a lack of discipline and rejection of any kind of external authority. Therefore, their belief in God, the Divine, or a Higher Being outside of their worldview, borders on agnosticism or apostasy. Taylor asserts that there is a crucial link between Christian faith, self-discipline and civilisational order (Taylor, 2007:488-491). However, secularisation caused people to feel they do not need the strong ethic of self-discipline in pursuit of their self-fulfilment. The transgression of these personal boundaries dislodges the link between the ethic of self-discipline and civilisational order and alienates them from the Church with its organised religion (Taylor, 2007:493). One could say their horizons of significance have collapsed.

Charles Taylor further states what eventuality transpired in a life lived in the immanent order, is a secular and hedonistic pursuit of self-fulfilment and self-indulgence. This kind of life is one-sided, narrow, flat and devoid of a higher purpose. Those who realise there is more to life than this, are following their spiritual instincts and expand their horizons of significance to pursue their own telos. They want to rid themselves of the feelings of guilt and inferiority of the one-sided pre-eminence of reason with its

disciplined, instrumental identity. For each individual, the focus changes to a holistic approach in the unity of mind, body and spirit for each to seek and discover his own spiritual wholeness which comprises personal wellness facets such as harmony, immediacy, spontaneity, centeredness and personal health (Taylor, 2007:506, 507).

Charles Taylor remarks that spirituality is crucially related to authenticity by saying that one's spirituality, the retrieval of one's own spiritual depth and wholeness, is informed by the ethic of authenticity. I concur that the spiritual insight which Taylor speaks of can only be revived, or rediscovered through the retrieval of authenticity in a transcendental fashion. All immanent modes of self-absorption, which give rise to a flattened and narrow view of authenticity, should be prescinded and rejected (Taylor, 2007:507, 508).

A further crucially important view on the transcendence of authenticity comes from Paul Heelas' book *The spiritual revolution*, which Charles Taylor makes use of, to explicate the relationship between authenticity and our telos. According to him, Heelas contrasts discovering oneself and becoming all that one can be, against abnegation for the Divine. Charles Taylor says the first term can be a quest to which the second is the answer. He leaves the possibility that the answering of this quest is not guaranteed, but not denied either (Taylor, 2007:509). I would make it much stronger to state that Heelas' second part of the statement is the telos of the first part. In other words, I say that the end goal of a life of authenticity is one of increasing denial of the temporal self in aspiration to become a spiritual image-bearer of God.

In the interview with Ronald Kuipers on behalf of *The other journal* in 2008, Charles Taylor expands further on faith in the age of authenticity, and he also makes reference to appropriation (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008). Charles Taylor refers to the more general description for authenticity "as shorthand for the background idea that everyone has their own particular way of being human and that you can then be either true to that or untrue to that", to articulate the background from which people work out their lives (Kuipers & Taylor 2008:1). A trivialisation of authenticity leads to insincerity about important issues, whereas authenticity can produce "more profound ways of living and engaging with these issues", he says (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:1).

It is against this background that Charles Taylor says Christian faith should be regarded in its gamut if it is to be lived fuller and deeper through links with thinkers

from other ages, particularly Augustine. Taylor's view of appropriation is that a person needs to understand the nature of the age he is in, but not identify too closely with it. This can be seen as Dooyeweerd's pagan ground-motive. A person must also be cognisant of his religious past, of how it came into being and developed thereafter. This is his religious ground-motive. These ground-motives can also be understood as horizons of significance. The person must also understand how his religious past is linked to his current age. So, there is a language of transcendence at work here, a process of relearning and repeating forward. Studying the works of Augustine and other Patristics would therefore assist to widen our horizons of significance (our belief system) and look beyond the narrow identification with religion in our own age (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:1, 3).

Charles Taylor has an affinity for Augustine's views because he also makes reference to him in his other books, *Sources of the self*, *The ethics of authenticity*, and *A secular age*. It is therefore clear that Charles Taylor encourages appropriation, because he realises that in the current age our faith is limited by our own restrictive dogmatism about our religion and spiritual traditions. Christians need to think where they are at in the age of authenticity, and what the shortcomings of this age are. What is required is an increased awareness of what needs to be done; then to go back and retrieve those morals, values and principles that were left behind in the Middle ages. This also refers to Dooyeweerd's term 'philosophical reflection', mentioned earlier. To close the gap, Christians need to open up and throw away their crutches "to move towards a more open, honest, and authentic faith", Charles Taylor says (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:6).

In this article Charles Taylor once again makes it clear that there is an inextricable relationship between faith, spirituality, religion and authenticity. The corollary of this relationship is that there are antecedent concepts about authenticity which originates from much earlier than the 18th century Cartesian version of disengaged reason. As Charles Taylor notes, authenticity is both solitary reflection within ourselves, and transcendental exploration beyond ourselves since the road to self-discovery leads through the inner self to God (Taylor, 1989:129; 1991:26).

10.1 Appropriation from a Christian point of view

In this chapter, I report on two things:

- 1 reviving and reintroducing the practice of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* of the Patristics; and
- 2 applying the principle of appropriation by taking the valuable elements from the secular viewpoints of Enlightenment thinkers on the concept of authenticity in order to use in Christian tradition, especially Augustine's idea of inwardness, and normatively transform it in a Christian framework.

In the previous chapter, I noted that Charles Taylor was of the opinion that a person must be cognisant of his or her religious past, and how it came into being and developed further. He is open to the idea that a person needs to explore his religious past, to undertake a spiritual journey of appropriation and discovery as a means to find one's own authenticity.

So far the principles and practice of appropriation and Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity have been expounded. In the interview with Ronald Kuipers, Charles Taylor states that people can avoid trivialisation of their authenticity by deepening their Christian faith and religious life. He then encourages people to establish links with prior ages and to read Augustine and the other Saints (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:2, 3). My understanding therefore is that Charles Taylor is in favour of philosophical reflection, and by implication, to appropriate treasures of value from the secular age, reform and apply it in our lives to regain our own authenticity. This also concurs with Dooyeweerd's viewpoint.

I strongly believe that a philosophical reflection on the work of the early Patristics and antique philosophies will assist humankind in the current age to rid itself of the burdens of instrumental reason and other malaises of modernity. It will require a spiritual journey wherein the modern human being has to open up and transcend his inner being to discover and retrieve his own authenticity and search for the source thereof. In an effort to reach this state, each individual first needs to understand what authenticity means to him. Then, secondly, he needs to benchmark himself to determine where he is in relation to the ideal of authenticity he wants to retrieve. This process will reveal to the person how much he has regressed from the ideal of authenticity he wants to espouse. Even more sobering, the searching individual will

come to understand that he cannot close this gap by himself through application of his mind only, because the spiritual nature of this journey precludes any form of rationalism, and renders it totally ineffective. An important remedy, as I see it, is to go back and search for answers from the early thinkers who have completed this journey before. The individual should be more receptive to the thoughts and ideas contained in the works of the Patristics, notably that of Augustine.

From the article in *The other journal*, Charles Taylor also admits to making his own spiritual journey during his visit to Taizé in France. He describes it as "... an excellent example of people responding to where people are, as they say, living and loving in a way that makes up for some of the lacks and losses that come along with our age of authenticity." (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:3). However, Taylor only mentions and encourages us to make use of appropriation, but he does not describe the process in any further detail. He leaves it open to every individual to go back and determine for himself what is to be appropriated, and how it can be done. I must emphasize here that if appropriation is not done correctly, it can quickly deviate to accommodation or synthesis of pagan ideas into one's own belief, similar to what happened in the early church.

In exploring Charles Taylor's views in the previous chapter, he has identified authenticity's relationship with spirituality, belief, faith and Christian religion, but he refrained from admitting that authenticity is a created part of the human, and that it was not a product of the 18th century rationalism. After indicating why Charles Taylor's definition of authenticity only partially describes the concept, my further quest from a Christian worldview, as stated in the Central Theoretical Statement, is to employ the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* to find a way in which human beings can be true to themselves whilst incorporating the ideas of a Creator and a given creation order, and an idea of freedom and self-creation that goes beyond the mere narrow modernist idea of emancipation.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, the acts of appropriation will be expounded to determine its meaning in the age of authenticity.

10.2 Search for meaning

As noted before, there is a vague understanding amongst the general populace about the concept of authenticity.

Everyone, mostly subconsciously, wants his or her life to be meaningful. Human beings continuously endeavour to add meaning to their lives. That is their telos. People pursue this in many different ways: some on a spiritual level, those who are influenced by the age of modernity seek it in the egocentricity of self-fulfilment, others pursue materialism to gather as much goods and riches as they can during their lives, while still others follow in the traditions or cultural behests of their family or community. The search for meaning is highly subjective and purely individualistic and everyone decides for himself what matters to him as a worthwhile goal to achieve. This quest for meaning and understanding has been pursued by a multitude of thinkers since the days of the early philosophers.

The impetus in humankind's universal search for meaning, to find his place in this universe, and to understand the meaning of his life, lies in the discovery and retrieving of his authenticity. Viktor Frankl, in his book *Man's search for meaning* (Frankl, 2008), makes the link between authenticity and the human being's search for meaning. Frankl equates one's authenticity and genuineness by stating it is "man's desire for a life that is as meaningful as possible." (Frankl, 2008:106). This subconscious search for meaning in his life is mostly what keeps the human being going throughout his temporal life. Frankl says:

Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life ... This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone, only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning (Frankl, 2008:105).

My contention is that this search for meaning is a human being's telos in life: for every human being to live his authenticity in reverence to God.¹⁵

Frankl describes how strong the sense of meaning in a person's life is, and equally how devastating the perceived loss of meaning can be. As a Jewish psychiatrist who was interned in Auschwitz during the Holocaust, Frankl witnessed how many of his fellow inmates in the concentration camp endured extreme physical suffering, hunger, torture, hardships, and agony, only to succumb after being liberated, because they

¹⁵ Herman Dooyeweerd (1956:37) states, "Meaning is the being of all that has been created; it is religiously rooted and is of divine Origin". Charles Taylor calls this our 'moral compass' (Taylor, 1991:25).

have no more meaning in their lives, they were devoid of vision of a future and purpose. Frankl quotes Nietzsche, “He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How” (Frankl, 2008:96–110). Obviously, these survivors of the physical torture could not cope with the moral and spiritual depravation and void they faced after their torture and eventual liberation. This is attributed to a loss of a person’s ‘visual field’, which I regard as the same as a collapse of Charles Taylor’s horizon of significance.

My reaction to Frankl’s remarks is that even though a person’s search for meaning may be the primary motivation of the ordinary person’s life, it emanates from the gamut of the human being’s essence: his belief system, worldview, horizon of significance, identity, originality, spirituality and religious belief. All these facets contribute to the human being’s search for meaning in his life. This search for meaning is in a crucial way just like authenticity, of an individual nature, but also dialogical. It emanates from the inner self and finds its expression in dialogue with the significant others in the individual’s life. It is only through direct interaction with the significant others that the individual is able to cultivate and grow his own sense of meaning.

10.3 The practice of appropriation

I concur with Kuipers and Taylor that the search for, discovery and retrieval of authenticity involves a multi-facetted process of linking to previous eras and going forward, repeating what has been learned previously (Kuipers & Taylor, 2008:3). This is both a retrospective and an introspective journey. It is retrospective because it is a transcendental journey back in history to see and learn the truths that other great thinkers have discovered, and it is introspective since it is simultaneously an inward journey through the inner self to discover and subsequently retrieve what lies beyond the self. I am convinced that the treasures discovered in the early Church by the great thinkers and Patristics, and what will be found beyond one’s own inward journey, can be regarded as the sources for one’s own authenticity.

The discovery and retrieval of authenticity is a natural progression of incremental inwardly exploration. It is just logical to acknowledge that a human should first ask the questions: “Who am I?” and “Where do I fit in this universe?” and “How can I find out what the meaning of my life is?” This search of meaning then leads the human deeper into his inwardly journey. The ancient philosophers faced this quest, so did the Patristics, the mediaeval church fathers, the Renaissance thinkers and also the

thinkers of the age of modernity. The individuality of authenticity does not allow for a fixed recipe or methodology for thinkers to gain answers to their own questions. The ancient philosophers resorted to their empirical philosophy, whereas Augustine in early Christianity did a synthesis of the Christian teachings and appropriated material from the works of Plotinus and mainly Plato to interpret and establish the Christian doctrine. The Enlightenment thinkers, the influence of Descartes' disengaged reason, and the misguided hegemony of individualism, only relied on the human's mental capacity as a means of the human being to find out who he is and where he belongs in this universe.

The latter, even though it coined the term 'authenticity', did it from an incorrect and incomplete premise, as expounded in the previous chapter. Authenticity cannot be a creation of the mind, it transcends one's immanent, temporal being into a spiritual journey of exploration and discovery into the inner being. This journey is both retrospective and introspective, in that one needs to go back in time to search and find the treasures that can be appropriated and then be applied individually in finding and retrieving one's own authenticity.

10.4 Early Christian worldview

Cooke says authenticity presupposes context-transcendent normative standards which align with Charles Taylor's view (Cooke, 1997:264). These normative standards are, as I see it, the links mentioned by Charles Taylor that can be found in the Christian historical thinking which developed from the early Christian worldview.

These normative standards, interestingly, were developed at the same time as the Bible. The canon of the Bible finally came into being in the 4th century. Even more remarkable was that the canon of the Old Testament (39 books) were written and recognised around 300 BC, during the same era when Plato and Aristotle lived in Greece (427–322 BC). The canon of the New Testament developed, or evolved, over the course of the first three centuries of early Christian history. It was a long and arduous struggle and debate amongst the bishops and church leaders of the time until those books that were most trusted and referenced by others eventually became the New Testament (Fairchild, 2016).

Equally so, and quite fittingly I would say, the canon of the New Testament, was established during the lifetimes of Plotinus and the early Patristics, and finally

accepted by the Church in AD 367 when Athanasius of Alexandria identified the final 27 books of the canon for the first time.¹⁶ Up until that time, and probably for a long period thereafter, just like in the ancient biblical period, many of the sayings of the apostles and early church fathers were kept alive through oral tradition (Baker, 2008:3–5).

10.4.1 Plotinus and the early Church

Plotinus was a disciple of Plato, and the creator of Neo-Platonism, which was a synthesis of important elements from Aristotle and the Stoics with Platonism. He studied under Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria for 11 years and spent the latter part of his life in Rome. Even though he had plenty of exposure to Christianity during these periods, he was a fierce critic of Christianity. He regarded himself and the ancient philosophers as intellectually superior to the uneducated Christians. Since he lived in the time of the early Church in cities well-known for their Christianity, he was aware of the Christians' incorporation of ancient philosophical ideas into Christianity, but considered it a barbaric distortion of all Platonic ideas (Stankov, 2007).

It was left to Augustine a century or so later to appropriate Plotinus and Plato in clarification and enhancement of Christian doctrine.

10.5 Augustine

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Charles Taylor speaks of a spiritual place of fullness that transcends human life or nature in search for God. I concur with Charles Taylor on this point because in my view it embodies authenticity (Taylor, 2007:5, 8).

¹⁶ Christian thought and the establishment of the Biblical canon

I include this short interlude on the history of the Bible to show it is ineluctably intertwined with the formation of Christian doctrine. The spiritual and theological dialogue amongst the most esteemed church persona during those centuries culminated in the canon of the Bible and it was paramount in the definition and clarification of the early Christian worldview.

The Biblical canon was created over a period of 700 years. Circa B.C. 300 the Old Testament Hebrew books were recognised as official, canonical books. Through the ages the process of compiling and refining the biblical canon continued. It was especially during the early Church and through the fervour of the Patristics that the Canon of the Bible, which comprises the 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, were finally established along with the 14 Apocrypha books.

The early church fathers were eminent in the process of establishing the New Testament and formalised Christian doctrine at the same time were Polycarp (AD 69–155), Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 130–202), Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215), Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 296–373), and Hieronymus (Jerome) (AD ~340–420) (Baker, 2008:3–5).

With this in mind, I explored Augustine's views and his inward journey through his appropriation of Platonism in Christianity.

Augustine's monumental works of expounding Christian doctrine is a lasting legacy not only to Christianity, but the Western worldview as a whole. His treatise on the Christian understanding of the Holy Trinity is an unambiguous standard of faith declaration, which the Church adopted in its teaching against many heresies. Augustine's focus is on God and His saving grace towards humankind and the inward journey takes the human beyond his sinful nature in search for God within himself.

It is safe to say that Augustine's worldview does not contemplate any form of individualism or anthropocentrism. His staunch theocentric view, as far as I could ascertain, is quite simple: we need to know that God exists, He is visible in nature, but He can be found in the intimacy of self-presence. God is desirous of our salvation, and He wants us to approach Him and seek His presence, hence we need to embark on our inward journey. It would suffice for Augustine to explore the inward road through the self in search for God within.

It is rudimentary to understand that Augustine was exposed to, and was influenced by the thinking of Plato, but, after his conversion, became a staunch Christian whose faith prompted and coerced him continuously to seek understanding about God as Trinity, and humankind's relation to God. Augustine's seeking led him to Plato and Plotinus, with both of whom Augustine was familiar, especially Plotinus. In his search, he accepted that his Christian understanding was incomplete, but that the works of Plato and Plotinus contained material of value that he could appropriate to formulate a better understanding of Christianity than would be possible otherwise. Augustine used his peremptory knowledge of Christianity throughout as foundation and reference to discern the inconsistencies between pagan ethics and Platonic philosophy to clarify and enhance his Christian religious belief (Taylor, 2013a:58).

10.5.1 The influence of Platonism

As indicated earlier in Chapter 8, Augustine was greatly influenced by Plotinus (AD 205–270) and Plato (427–327 BC). Plato's writings and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus had influenced and permeated the minds of many thinkers over the generations. So too, it affected Augustine, when he was exposed to their ideas. Their thoughts reverberated within him as their ideas were passed on from generation to generation.

The most important elements of Platonism and Neo-Platonism which Augustine appropriated were their spiritual ideas and their view of the physical world.

The principal parallel between Augustine and Plato lies in their respective views about God and the Idea of the Good. The ultimate quest for them concerned the contemplation of this highest reality (Taylor, 1989:129). In following the thinking of Plotinus, Augustine held the belief that a kind of mystical unity is possible between the human intellect and the Son, who illumines the mind of the human. Augustine stated one can therefore know the laws of God through direct contact of our minds with God. Like Plotinus, Augustine intently focused his thinking on the mind and soul, which are set upon God, the Spirit. Augustine had little or no interest to expand his knowledge of the physical world (Taylor, 2013a:51; Venter, 2013c:17–22).

Augustine claimed that although neither Plato nor Plotinus was a Christian, their views closely reflected the Biblical portrayal of God (Bos, 1991:57–58). He accommodated and synthesised their views and associated the Father with ‘being’ and the Holy Spirit with ‘goodness’ (Venter, 2013c:16). As a Christian, Augustine realised that the hierarchical model of Plotinus is contrary to the Biblical view of God, and in clarification of the Holy Trinity, he performed a thorough long-drawn biblical exegesis which culminated in his landmark treatise *De Trinitate* in AD 421 (Clark, 2006).

Unlike Plotinus, Augustine placed all three persons of the Holy Trinity on the same level, but the Son, being the ‘second’ person, is the ‘Logos’ as He is referred to in the Gospel of John (John 1:1–4) as evidence that the Son was God’s ‘mind’ or God’s ‘intellect’. He replaced the intelligible world of Plato with the logos and in this way made Jesus, as the ‘mind’ of the Father, the source of the order of creation (Venter, 2013c:16).

10.5.2 The inward road to God

I stated in the previous section that Augustine saw other parallels between Christian doctrine and the Platonic views. A first to mention is the split between spirit and flesh (the inner/outer) which relates to the Platonic distinction between the bodily and non-bodily. Augustine’s central theme of inner/outer seems to be supported by antitheses from Plato: spirit/matter, higher/lower, eternal/temporal, and immutable/ever-changing. Augustine’s outer person is his physical body, and the inner is his soul. It is

evident that he was strongly influenced by the Platonic concept of contemplation, of inwardness, as the path to knowledge of God (Dooyeweerd, 2012:115).

Bos and Dooyeweerd both maintain that Augustine was influenced by the Greek concept of contemplation as a method of radical reflection wherein the individual concentrates on the self and towards true knowledge of God (Bos, 1991:56, 59; Dooyeweerd, 2012:115). Augustine himself sees the road forward for a person, to progress, lies in turning inward, to his inner self, and beyond to God. In this sense, I would agree that Christian contemplation leads the individual to discover and integrate his or her personal, God-given uniqueness.

Augustine describes his contemplation as follows: *Noli foras ire; in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas; et si tuam naturam mutabilem inveneris, transcede et teipsum* (Augustine, 390: par 39:72). Anton Adămuț translates this as: Do not waste yourself outside, go back to yourself; the truth can be found in the inner man and, if you find out that your nature is changeable, go beyond thyself (Adămuț, 2009:2). Charles Taylor only quotes Augustine partially here, but he fully supports Augustine's views (Taylor, 1989:127–129).

I understand Augustine as saying the truth about each person is not to be found in the external world, but it is a contemplative, intimate journey into one's inner sanctuary, where eventually a person will find God.¹⁷

10.5.3 Augustinian epistemology

Augustine, like Plotinus and Plato, had little interest in understanding the physical world, hence Augustine shifted his attention and focus from the domain of objects to the activity of the knowing itself. Augustine held the epistemology that a person could know truth by being illuminated directly from within by the Logos, which is Christ (Tarnas, 1991:185). Augustine regarded this activity of knowing as intimately specific and personal. Each person is engaged in taking a reflective look to the self. Augustine regards this as an inner light that illumines ourselves. He differentiates between an inner light and an outer light: the outer light is the sensory perception of the physical world, and the inner light which he sees as the soul. Charles Taylor introduces the

¹⁷ Augustine understood the principle of grace very well, and his view on the 'inner road' refers to one's understanding of the self in search for intimacy with God. It does not make any reference to salvation through good deeds.

term 'radical reflexivity' here, which he says put Augustine epistemically between Plato and Descartes. For Augustine, the steps towards the inwardness of radical reflection are nevertheless a step towards God, and God is above human reason. God can be known through his created order, but cannot be known directly except for instances of Divine intervention by God himself (Taylor, 1989:129).

Personally, I believe Augustine epistemically rises above Plato and Descartes. In my opinion, Plato formulated his own understanding of the world by rationally creating an abstract hierarchical model of the order of things with the Idea of the Good at the top. Descartes, on the other hand, exalted reason as the means of self-creation of the individual. The knower used reason in the act of knowing to create or understand the known, as he perceives it to be. Of the three, Augustine's epistemology is different from both Plato and Descartes; it is based on his faith. Through his faith, he innately accepts that one cannot know God through reason. Knowing God first requires an inward journey within the self, and secondly a transcendental journey beyond the self through divine intervention by the Holy Spirit.

Augustine encountered another problem: one can only believe in or know God if He exists. In order to prove God's existence, Augustine embarks with the proof of himself, of his own being; to prove that he knows something, and subsequently that he exists. The certainty of his existence is contingent on the fact that knower and known is the same. Thus, Augustine invented the fundamental first-person standpoint in the search for truth; it was his 'cogito'. He was the first to use the term in this sense, and René Descartes adopted it, although in a much more anthropocentric way, in his 'Cogito, ergo sum' (Taylor, 1989:133).

In the process of establishing this proof Augustine not only shows that he exists, but that he lives, and that he has intelligence, and there is a hierarchy of superiority between these aspects. The higher can judge the lower, with the higher being the reference standard for itself and the lower. Reason is superior in human nature and with it we can show our activities of thinking are really trustworthy in the common world of objects. Augustine also noted there are higher modes of reason which is not uncommon to achieve, but it is not done frequently. These are the modes of wisdom and morality, since it represents common standards and norms that can be used in our minds as judgement of lower forms of reason (Taylor, 1989:130–133).

There is however an aspect of the human being that goes beyond reason, and this aspect is that which cannot be seen or experienced with the temporal body or the mind. This aspect transcends the working of mere sensory or rational faculties. This is the spiritual aspect of the human being. The anima (soul or spirit), according to Augustine, is linked to eternal principles (*legibus aeternis*), the inner light that is higher than reason. He states further that cognition of ourselves and nature originates from senses, of memory, and of experience, out of which the universal is rationally deduced (Taylor, 2013b:350–351). Even Plato and his later followers, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Plotinus recognised that the highest truths must be known in modes transcending reason and its syllogisms, although these were the necessary avenues of approach (Taylor, 2013b:61).

Only by engaging with himself on a spiritual level can the knower proceed with the act of knowing to find the known. Augustine says this activity is grounded upon and presupposes something higher than the person's own faculties, it is something to be revered. The journey of going inward, he says, is also a journey upward. In Augustine's search for self-knowledge, he comes to the conclusion that he can only know himself through God who is not only visible in nature, but He can be found in the intimacy of self-presence. "The truth dwells within ... and that God is truth", Augustine says (Taylor, 1989:134). This truth is higher than reason, because reason recognises that truth is not of its own making, and therefore truth lies above reason. While we can pass judgement with the truth as reference standard, we cannot judge the truth. It is the ultimate normative standard and that standard is God (Taylor, 1989:134).

With this clear and decisive reasoning Augustine not only opens up to "cogito", but he also proved that God exists as the Truth and that our reason is insufficient to fathom God.

Our inward journey, in our search for self-knowledge, is fuelled by an innate, subconscious understanding of what we are, our 'memoria'. According to Augustine the soul lies inward, but the soul cannot know itself. The soul presupposes something higher than itself. The basis of this 'memoria', of this innate understanding, he says, is God Himself, who is the Source of light that illumines everyone (Taylor, 1989:134).

Augustine's inward journey leads him to find the Source of light. Then Augustine shifts his reasoning to inner and outer light sources which seem to cause an ambiguity in his

reasoning. He describes the human being as having an outer light, which is his observation of the sensible world, and the inner light, which is the soul. Then in the search of self-knowledge one finds the soul, and at the very end of this search, at the root of memory, the soul finds God, the Source of light. The question immediately springs to mind: if God is the Source of light, then how can the soul be the inner light? Or alternatively, if the soul is its own (inner) light source, would another light source be necessary? The answer is – and this is my articulation of this apparent ambiguity – there is only one source of light, God. This experience of being illuminated by another source, or experiencing standards higher than reason, is clear proof of God's existence. The soul who connects to God is illuminated by Him, and the soul will continue to radiate its inner light as long as it remains connected to Him. As the inner light of the soul animates the body, so does God animate the soul (Taylor, 1989:134).

This is stated similarly in the Bible: "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." (Bible, John 1:9) and "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Bible, Ps 36:9).

One could argue in Augustine's epistemology, the Source of light can be seen as the known; illumination by the light in the act of knowing, and where the knower is in the search for self-knowledge.

So, according to Charles Taylor, Augustine's inward journey, in search of self-knowledge, is a first-person activity to make myself fully present to myself, and only when the full potential is realised that knower and known are one, then I shall finally realise and understand that God is both within me, and ever higher than my reason, and my soul. From this first-person perspective, Augustine shifts his focus from the objects known by reason, to striving inwardly for self-knowledge and continues with the activity of knowing into the intelligible and to the end of the path thereof where he finds God in the intimacy of self-presence as the source and the power above all. Augustine states that God is indeed "... closer to me than I am myself, while being infinitely above me ..." He is '*interior intimo meo et superior summo meo*'" (Taylor, 1989:136).

10.5.4 Criticism on Augustine

As mentioned in Chapter 8, both Bos and Dooyeweerd noted that although Augustine succeeded in applying the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, he also fell foul of accommodation and synthesis in an effort to Christianise Plato. The views of Bos and Dooyeweerd are certainly valuable, and in the course of this study I intend to focus solely on the appropriation of Augustine, and avoid any of the dualisms accommodated by Augustine (Bos, 1991:56, 59; Dooyeweerd, 2012:115).

Dooyeweerd provides a different perspective on Augustine from his Reformational ground-motive point of view.

Dooyeweerd states that Augustine's worldview was firmly based on Platonist philosophy, even though he held a pure ground-motive of the revelation. The Greek dualisms of form-matter and soul-body remained intrinsic in Augustine's worldview. By accommodating these Greek dualisms, instead of a thorough reformation of these concepts, Augustine failed to expound the "divine revelation of the religious root-unity of human existence" fully. Dooyeweerd, however, supports the value of Augustine's works from a Christian perspective, but provides the directive that Christians, even today, must always know that the fundamental answer lies in the ground-motive of God's revelation (Dooyeweerd, 2012:115–116).

10.5.5 Augustine and authenticity

This section deals with Augustine and his appropriation of ancient Greek philosophy from a Christian worldview, and authenticity.

First: this is clear from his belief, faith and works. Augustine says that the road to God requires an inward (transcendental) journey through the self. In this process, Augustine provides the hierarchy of normative standards between existence, life, and reason in the sensible world, but paramount to that, he establishes that the spiritual (or soul – the *anima*) which resides in the inner-self, is higher than reason, but even higher lies the truth, which is God. Everything, Augustine says can be judged and known against the truth as ultimate normative standard and reference, but the truth, being God, is unfathomable (Taylor, 1989:129–133).

I regard Augustine's view as somewhat limited, or one-sided. Due to his affinity for Platonism, Augustine does not pay much attention to the physical world. This would

explain why he only focuses on the self and neglects to realise that God's revelation to humankind is the same as God revelation to the rest of Creation. Furthermore, Augustine, and perhaps because of his accommodation of Plato, had a dualistic view of the body and soul.

Charles Taylor, with his predilection for Augustine, states in *Sources of the self* that the concept of authenticity, as a person's inner voice, was inaugurated by Augustine whose mystical interaction with God was the source of his own spirituality. Augustine regarded the road forward, the path of progress, as exploring and developing the inner self in seeking a relationship with God (Taylor, 1989:126–143). In my opinion, Augustine's view assisted in the acknowledgement that each human being has a spiritual dimension, and that the road to God is a transcendental journey from the temporal to the spiritual.

It is worth stating that Augustine did not use the term 'authenticity', or even vaguely attempted to describe it. To me, his inward journey and his contemplative self-reflection, is to discover what is truly of himself, which I think, opens up to one's authenticity. I believe if one can understand Augustine's systematic approach of biblical study, augmented with his Christian thinking, and grasp his view of inner directedness and spirituality (as mentioned by Charles Taylor), then it opens one up to the prospect that Augustine laid the foundations of what is described centuries later as authenticity.

11.1 Conclusion

This study of the concept of authenticity and how it could be transformed by way of spoiling or appropriation, provided insight into Charles Taylor's thinking on authenticity as it evolved over more than a decade. My quest also took me down the path of early Christianity and the delightful journey of discovering the mediaeval mind, from the early Patristics right through to Thomas Aquinas. My aim was to show that authenticity, as it emerged from the Enlightenment and the romantic period and further developed into modernity, did not do justice to the roots of this concept in the work of the early church fathers. Epistemologically, I argued that authenticity is not solely a product of reason or some source in the human mind.

My search for the sources of authenticity took me on both a retrospective, and an introspective journey. It was inevitable that my research and analyses of the topic resulted in a clarification of my own horizon of significance which in turn brought about a personal catharsis of discovering and retrieving my own authenticity.

Before I get to the problem statement of this study, I shall first address the sub-questions posed in Chapter 6, and finally I shall address the problem statement by discussing the validity, or not, of the central theoretical statement posed.

11.2 Appropriation

The first sub-question was: how was appropriation practised in the early Church?

The Patristics applied the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, or 'plundering the Egyptians', from the Biblical passage of Exodus 12:35–36 as a means to adopt, transform and incorporate the intellectual treasures of non-Christian culture. Augustine was by far the most prominent figure with his appropriation of the treasures from Plato into Christian thinking. For the sake of clarity, I repeat my earlier description of appropriation:

Heathen and pagan works and teachings should not be avoided entirely. It may contain elements that are valuable for instruction in the truth, in morality and even in the worship of God. They may even have institutions (modern day systems, processes and mechanisms) that are valuable for Christian life. Under the guidance and leadership of Christ, the Christian must explore heathen works and when found, take

these treasures away from them, transform and reform it according to the Christian ground-motive and then apply it in everyday Christian life.

In theory, this sounded as a good way to accomplish appropriation, but in practice it was quite difficult to apply without reverting to other means to incorporate material into Christian thinking, such as accommodation. Even Augustine himself was guilty of accommodating the dualisms of Plato into his Christian thinking.

It is cardinal to note that the process of appropriation presupposes that the appropriator first ascertains the nature of the non-biblical ground-motive of the material to be appropriated. Secondly, it requires the spoiled material to be completely transformed and reformed according to a Christian ground-motive. Thirdly, any other forms of 'incorporation' of non-biblical material, such as accommodation, integration, hybridisation or synthesis must be avoided all together.

Another basic principle of appropriation is that it can only be applied to new or unknown material. This caused a problem later in the mediaeval period when there eventually was no new material available for appropriation, so eventually Christian theology and philosophy turned into regurgitation of known material. The Scholastic period was marked by synthesis and hybridisation of Plato, Aristotle and Christianity.

With this, I have indicated how appropriation was used, but also what the deviant forms of appropriation were.

11.3 Charles Taylor's authenticity

The second sub-question is: what is Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity?

I interpreted Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity as of a dual nature: it is self-referential (it is an individual orientation (Taylor, 1991:82), and it is exploration beyond the self (Taylor, 1991:91).

In analysing Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity, especially through dissection of his definition in *The ethics of authenticity*, I pointed out that his definition is incomplete, since it does not make room for a transcendent source. Taylor's definition is largely a human constructionist notion with a tension/dialectic between individualist and collectivist components. The notion of God as a source which he accepts (also through the articulation of Augustine) is not incorporated in his definition of authenticity. As I stated earlier, authenticity cannot be created or constructed, because authenticity is

not a product of reason in the way that Descartes, Kant, Rousseau and the thinkers of the Enlightenment and romantic era led us to believe.

The corollary of such a notion is the following: if it were possible for one to create or construct his own authenticity, then it would be reasonable to accept that everyone is born without any authenticity, like a blank slate. The individual then has *carte blanche* to create his own authenticity once he is ready and able to do so, and furthermore, that everyone can change or reconstruct his authenticity at any stage when it suits him or her. Such a purely constructionist notion would be self-defeating if authenticity is defined as the attempt to be true to an inner self.

Authenticity is for a large part a work of retrieval of the inner self. It is linked to one's individuality. As part of this individuality comes the notion of autonomy, as that which focuses on the individual's self-governing drive, his independence and freedom from cultural and social pressures within the framework of authenticity. As noted from Charles Taylor, authenticity requires retrieval or discovery from the inner self. It is therefore not a creation of the mind, but it transcends one's immanent, temporal being through contemplative reflection, which is ultimately a spiritual journey of exploration and discovery into the inner-being. Authenticity is deeply seated and intricately woven into the essence of the human being, with God as the normative standard that can be used in the discovery or retrieval process of one's authenticity.

With this I have endeavoured to clarify the transcendental nature of authenticity that is a shortcoming in the first part of Charles Taylor's definition.

The role of reason and human collectivity comes to the fore in the way a person lives his authenticity in relation to society. I have indicated that the discovery of authenticity involves a spiritual journey, but the practice of authenticity in a dialogical relationship with others requires a conscious, rational effort.

This we see in the second part of Charles Taylor's definition where authenticity requires openness to horizons of significance, and a self-definition in dialogue with others in society. Both of these requirements are products of rationality, and human collectivity.

I have explained what Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity is, but also what is amiss in his definition.

11.4 Source of authenticity

The third sub-question concerns the sources of authenticity: Are the sources of authenticity only inherent characteristics emanating from human beings as the modernists want us to believe, or can authenticity incorporate the concepts of the realm and power of a Higher Being as portrayed by Augustine?

Charles Taylor suggests there is a relationship between belief, faith, religion and authenticity. The spiritual nature of this relationship means that there are antecedents for authenticity which cannot be attributed to the rationalism of the 18th century thinking. Charles Taylor notes that the nature of authenticity is extroversive in that it involves exploration beyond the self with society. However, I note that the source of authenticity also requires transcendental exploration through the inner self in accordance with Augustine's belief that the road to God is passing through our inner selves (Taylor, 1989:129; Taylor, 1991:26).

None of the Patristics or later thinkers used the term 'authenticity' anywhere, but they were quite clear that the inwardness, the exploration and development of the inner self was paramount as it leads to an ever-increasingly intimate relationship with God.

The task of finding authenticity in Augustine lies in the appropriation of the modern concept of authenticity, and to transform and reform it. To do that the help of Charles Taylor is required. By appropriating from Augustine via Charles Taylor, I can argue that the source of authenticity lies inward. Its discovery requires an introspective journey to the inner self. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the mystics used the practice of contemplation, or centring prayer to enable them on this inward journey (Nicol, 2002:17–27). This introspection transcends mere physicality and takes one to the inner self, which is the seat of authenticity. In Chapters 9 and 10, I noted Charles Taylor's contention about authenticity on this transcending path. Taylor further states that authenticity is to be in touch with a source within us, and this source is God.

The answer to this question shows first that Charles Taylor adjusted his own view about the concept of authenticity, and secondly that he makes the cardinal observation that authenticity requires an inward journey into the self, which is a marked departure from the Enlightenment thinkers. Hence, Taylor confirms the belief that authenticity transcends human reason and does indeed incorporate the realm of a Higher Being.

11.5 Christian themes in transforming authenticity

This last sub-question deals with the contribution that Augustine can make: How can Augustine's thinking be used to normatively transform Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity?

Continuing from the previous section, it is apparent from the discussions on Taylor's religious belief and Augustine's inwardness that there is convergence in thought between them. In expounding Taylor's view of the authenticity from a religious perspective leads one to his understanding of the transcendent link between faith, spirituality and authenticity. Following Charles Taylor's interpretation of Augustine, a distinction between the outer person and the inner person can be made. Augustine's faith revolves around a person's inward journey to discover truth, and the truth (Augustine says) is God.

The dual elements of introspectiveness and extroversiveness of Charles Taylor's authenticity is synchronous with Augustine's view of the inner and outer person. Charles Taylor links authenticity with spirituality and Augustine links spirituality with God.

Augustine uses the apostle John's description of God as the Source of light, where the human being, in the search of self-knowledge, finds the soul, and at the very end of this search, the soul finds God, the Source of light (Bible John 1:9). In his dual view of the human, Augustine also describes the human as having an outer light, which is his observation of the sensible world, and the inner light, which is the soul (Taylor, 1989:132, 134-136). According to my understanding of Augustine's description, the relationship between these lights is that the Source of light illuminates the inner person. God provides light in the universe as His creation. The soul animates the body, and the eye of the human observes the universe in the physical light.

My reasoning is that the same mechanism holds for authenticity: God is the ultimate source of authenticity. Through His creation law every individual is endowed with his own authenticity. Very similar to the Biblical parable of the talents, a person needs actively to retrieve, employ and apply his authenticity for it to be of any value to him. Therefore, each human being has the innate, Godly duty (my term), first and foremost to nurture his fellowship with God, and secondly, in his temporal life on earth, to apply and develop his authenticity in fellowship with other human beings.

The themes in Christian thinking that plays a definite role in the normatively transformed concept of authenticity are:

- 1 there is a transcendent link between faith, spirituality and authenticity;
- 2 God, the Source of light, illumines the inner being, to reveal this authenticity;
and
- 3 every person, in fellowship with God, is called upon to exhibit his authenticity in his societal relationships with others.

11.6 Revisiting the central theoretical statement

In the previous sections of the last chapter, I have provided a summary and further explication of the discoveries and deductions made of the historical practice of appropriation. I have also explored the sources of authenticity, and provided my views are on the shortcomings in Charles Taylor's definition. Lastly, I have looked at the material that can be appropriated from the modernist, secular concept of authenticity and transformed from a Christian point of view.

Finally, the problem statement in this study poses the question: how can Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity be normatively transformed to take into cognition a Christian perspective?

This question can also be posed in another way: what are the sources for authenticity? This is a question also posed by Trilling (1972) and Charles Taylor himself (Taylor, 1989; 1991; 2007). Which earlier Christian philosophical works can be used to clarify the concept of authenticity?

To see if this study succeeds to address the posed problem statement, one needs to revisit the central theoretical statement and verify that what is stated there has been addressed and fully clarified in the course of this study.

11.6.1 Origin of authenticity

The primary point to understand is that there is a distinct difference between the origin of authenticity, and the source of authenticity. Authenticity originated from the change in worldviews during the Renaissance. The humanism and rationalism of Renaissance philosophers heralded the move from a theocentric worldview to an anthropocentric worldview.

First, the concept 'authenticity', as it was first introduced in the ages of Enlightenment and subsequent romanticism, has roots in Descartes' disengaged reason, Rousseau's "le sentiment de l'existence" and other early forms of individualism. It was neither formulated properly, nor understood well amongst the Rationalist thinkers of the time. They saw it as a moral compass, an intuitive feeling of right and wrong, and to be true to oneself (Taylor, 1991:26, 27), and because of this vague idea of the concept, it quickly suffered from the malaises mentioned by Charles Taylor (Taylor, 1991). I argued that the novel ideal of authenticity genuflected before the perceived hegemony of reason which led to various forms of deviancy, especially self-centredness, egocentrism, instrumentalism and atomism. As I have indicated, reason is not capable of creating or constructing authenticity; it can only be applied in the employment and exhibition, or portrayal of authenticity in dialogue with others in society or in a community.

11.6.2 Shortcomings in Taylor's definition

The claim of this study is that Charles Taylor describes a too limited concept of authenticity. The net result of my analyses and explication indicates that Charles Taylor's concept alludes to a broader concept than the usual secularist modern account with its preference for individualism, autonomism or collectivism, but he stops short of addressing the full ontology and transcendental nature of authenticity. In my view the main shortcoming of Taylor's concept rests on the premise that he seems to take for granted that authenticity flows from, and reacts to, individualism and disengaged reason, neither of which engages in, nor recognises a spiritual source for authenticity. In spite of his affinity for Augustine, Taylor does not consciously and explicitly include the reference to God or a Higher Being as the source and origin of authenticity in his own definition. Nor does he make reference to the spiritual aspect of authenticity and the fact that it resides in the inner self. In following the diminished and instrumental stance of the Renaissance thinkers on authenticity, Taylor portrays a still too shallow and narrow version of authenticity, a version that renders a partial concept of authenticity because its original promoters do not understand the full and true concept thereof.

As already stated, the move from a theocentric worldview to an anthropocentric worldview was a clear accent shift that opened up to the modern idea of authenticity.

Epistemologically, I think, the Renaissance thinkers were convinced that they could complete the act of knowing and reach the known, but they failed to grasp that, although reason is the highest reference standard in their mechanistic worldview, it is wholly inferior to the normative standard of God's creation law. Any version of authenticity built on this premise, as Taylor does, will remain susceptible to deviant forms of individualism, collectivism, rationalism and irrationalism.

In this regard, I would like to apply Dooyeweerd's views on appropriation to Charles Taylor.

It is also valid to note that Charles Taylor himself does not apply the practice of appropriation in his concept of authenticity. He bases his concept of authenticity on the views of the Enlightenment and romantic thinkers, but instead of appropriation, he accommodates their views and principles in his own thinking. Similar to Augustine many centuries before with the Greek philosophers, Charles Taylor expressly does not take into consideration the difference with the modern thinkers' secular ground-motive and his own. The net effect is that he partially succeeds in transforming authenticity, but he does not succeed in a thoroughgoing inner reformation of the concept of authenticity.

In my opinion Charles Taylor is unable fully to describe the concept, because he continued with the modern train of thought, which is largely secular and anthropocentric. It is not clear to me why Charles Taylor does not explore the source of authenticity according to Augustine's belief (which he knows very well) and approaches authenticity from a scriptural, Christian view point.

In the next section I shall explicate the Christian worldview and the source of authenticity.

11.6.3 Christian worldview and the practice of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*

So far, I have shown that the concept of authenticity born at the end of the 18th century from earlier forms of individualism and autonomy of reason, and perpetuated by Charles Taylor, only provides a partial and shallow view of authenticity. The search for, and discovery of, the actual source of authenticity will reveal the true meaning thereof in all its richness and fullness.

I approached this study from a point of view with the pre-supposition that God may be the ultimate source of authenticity, hence it cannot be situated in the mind of the human being. Zizioulas states that philosophy confirms the reality of a person, it is theology that reveals the genuine, authentic person in his ontological freedom, because the person needs to transcend the limitations of his nature (Zizioulas 1985:43, 44). With “nature” I understand Zizioulas means the temporal createdness of a person. I see Zizioulas’ view as similar to Augustine’s transcendental journey through the inner self.

I agree with Zizioulas and Augustine in this regard that religious belief is cardinal to the understanding of the source and normative order of authenticity. Accordingly, I came to the conclusion that the Creator is the source of authenticity and His creation law is the normative standard for everything, including each human being’s authenticity. Given this viewpoint, it is clear to me that any form of self-determining freedom, self-creation, or self-definition which relates strongly to the autonomy of the individual and anthropocentrism leans towards egocentricity.

The corollary, from the Christian point of view and the pre-eminence of spirituality, is that authenticity has a compelling relationship with belief, faith and religion.

In my exploration of the notion of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* I discovered that the practice of appropriation from the ancient philosophers, notably Plato and Aristotle, is very old and have been applied regularly in patristic thinking and throughout the mediaeval period in rediscovering and exposing the way in which human beings can be true to themselves. Application of the biblical *spoliatio Aegyptiorum* was not Klapwijk’s idea, but it is valid to say that he is one of the contemporary thinkers who reawakened our thinking to the value of this practice to seek the treasures that are hidden in the dim past, treasures that have timeless value, even for modern thinking.

So far, I have managed to show that authenticity originated during the Renaissance, and although Charles Taylor leans towards Augustine’s inwardness as the road to God, as expressed in the *Sources of the self* (Taylor 1989: 129). However, he did not convey and fully made use of this idea in *The ethics of authenticity*, which was written a mere two years later. The answer to the fundamental sub-questions related to the problem statement is not clear from the above, and hence I regard it as prudent to provide more direct answers here:

- 1 What are the sources for authenticity? This is a question also posed by Trilling (1972) and Charles Taylor himself (Taylor, 1989, 1991 & 2007)?

Charles Taylor correctly describes the dual nature of authenticity – the individuality thereof, as well as the communal horizons of significance and the dialogical relationship with others. However, the foremost source for authenticity is God or a Higher Being, who illumines the inner being of humankind. His creation law is the normative standard for everything, including each human being's authenticity.

- 2 What earlier Christian philosophical works can be used to clarify the concept of authenticity?

Once it became clear that the secularist, rationalist concept of authenticity is debased, and that Charles Taylor did not fully succeed to transform authenticity from this viewpoint, it highlighted the need for philosophical reflection into earlier works. As observed in the previous chapter, the concept of authenticity, as a person's inner voice, can be taken as far back as Augustine whose mystical interaction with God was the source of his own spirituality. Augustine held the belief that to discover who you are and gain knowledge about yourself is a transcendental journey into the inner self, which will ultimately lead to God (Taylor, 1989:126–143). Once a person comes to the awareness and realisation that God is the foremost source of authenticity, it becomes clear that authenticity can only be transformed from a Christian perspective.

As stated, the earlier works of the Patristics, especially that of Augustine, served as guidance and reference first to explicate the principle of *spoliatio Aegyptiorum*, and secondly the transcendent nature and source of authenticity.

With these questions addressed, the focus turns back to the problem statement in the next section.

11.6.4 Transforming authenticity

How can Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity be normatively transformed to take into cognition a Christian perspective?

There is a broad understanding amongst thinkers past and present of what the concept of authenticity entails, but there is no comprehensive and concise definition of

authenticity. This lack of understanding largely contributed to the obscurity of authenticity as a concept that can contribute to our understanding of human nature.

As temporal human beings, we only have the mental capacity to understand the human race, the physical world and creation in the immanent sense. Our faith opens our spiritual eyes to grasp God's creation law, but we are unable to fathom the Creator with our limited mental view and vision while we dwell on earth. The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12 the following, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." What we see now is a distorted image of actuality, but one day in the afterlife we shall see the full picture [my word choice].

To transform Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity and achieve the true meaning thereof requires the realisation that:

- 3 the concept of authenticity as it is defined by Charles Taylor, is inadequate;
- 4 reason alone is incapable of grasping or defining the concept; it is not tangible and the human being is not able to change his authenticity through reason;
- 5 cognisance of historical development, and continued philosophical reflection is cardinal;
- 6 it is exigent to appropriate from non-biblical sources, as long as the material is duly transformed and reformed according to the Christian ground-motive;
- 7 authenticity transcends the physical; it belongs to the realm of God's creation law;
- 8 to transcend the abyss between the sensible, temporal world and the realm beyond will require a dual approach:
 - 8.1 a retrospective action to appropriate the treasures and valued ideas from thinkers who have already travelled this road in the past; and
 - 8.2 introspection into the inner self and beyond;
- 9 innately the source of authenticity is God;
- 10 everyone's authenticity is unique, and every person has the Godly duty to be true to himself; it is therefore ours to use, or not;
- 11 authenticity is a virtue and assumes:
 - 11.1 close encounters with significant others, with other groups, a community and in society at large;
 - 11.2 intimate communion with the Creator himself;

- 11.3 it is God's revelation through the Holy Spirit and an inward journey through and beyond the self;
- 12 it is only when one is able to cross the sensible/spiritual abyss to come in regular, intimate contact with the Source Himself, to light up our "inner light", that Taylor's concept of authenticity opens up to reveal the gamut of its aspects;
- 13 the exhibition and living of authenticity is the means to achieve one's telos, to be an image bearer of God.

After this study, and as a result of it, I am convinced that the intricacy of authenticity will remain a mystery unless it is brought out in the open and recognised in the public forum, as Taylor puts it, "an ideal worth espousing" (Taylor, 1991:23). It will definitely not affect everyone, or be of interest to all, but will affect believers and those who are spiritually inclined.

Furthermore, the discovery and retrieval of one's authenticity is an awakening. Because we live contrary to our own nature, we often succumb to the pressures of social conformity. We are so cloaked with masks and images of idolatry that we have forgotten who we are. We are living lives of mimesis, and not only poiesis, as Charles Taylor says. To achieve this means more often than not to stand up against the will of society, to reject any form of social conformity or assimilation that goes against the grain of your own authenticity.

To go forward remains an intricate, complex struggle. First, it is the innate knowledge and acceptance that everyone is created and born as a complete human being with a spiritual (eternal) dimension and a physical (temporal) dimension. Since God is the source of one's authenticity, one needs to accept its transcendent nature which emanates within oneself and is lived outwardly in the sensible world. It is perfect and in its outward directedness suffices in every sense for a person to strive towards his own telos. Just like everyone's authenticity is unique, so is his telos also, completely unique and dedicated to a person – it is his divine calling, or Godly duty. The pursuit of one's telos is a lifelong endeavour. If we shy away from being the complete creation God intended us to be, then we endanger our relations with our inner self and with God. Therefore, we need to lay off those masks and pretences that prevent us from discovering and living our own authenticity.

Secondly, going forward means turning inward, it is an ongoing, intense, intimate journey within the inner self, a process of constant rediscovering, of discerning between that which I am not, and what which belong to me, which resonates in who I am.

Thirdly, it is outwardly directed in dialogue with society wherein one has the ability to exhibit his authenticity in his social relationships through his thoughts, words and deeds. This extroversion and associated interaction with society at different levels may affect and influence our worldview, but our horizon of significance and authenticity will remain constant.

Only if the first two are in place to the extent that a person can recognise and retrieve his authenticity, then the outward directedness into the sensible world becomes possible.

Our telos activates our communion with God. His light illumines our inner light, our authenticity, who we are supposed to be. Even if we remain silent, it will speak up for us.

Authenticity is ultimately to be an image bearer of God.

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