

# **The Recovery of the Moral Self in Contemporary Society**

## **A Study of Charles Taylor's Philosophy**

Tesis untuk memenuhi sebagian persyaratan  
mencapai derajat Magister  
Program Studi Magister Ilmu Filsafat



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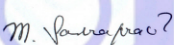

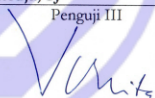
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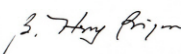

**TESIS**  
**THE RECOVERY OF THE MORAL SELF IN**  
**CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**  
**A STUDY OF CHARLES TAYLOR'S PHILOSOPHY**

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## Abstract

[A] **Name:** Koh Eng Siong ( 00870805 /20053301010860008 )

[B] **Thesis Title:** The Recovery of the Moral Self in Contemporary Society. A Study of Charles Taylor's Philosophy

[C] *iv* + 90 pages; 2007

[D] **Key Words**

Malaises, individualism, instrumental reason, freedom, equality, mutual respect, hierarchy, structure, morality, self, inescapable frameworks, moral background, good, life goods, hypergoods, comprehensive goods, moral sources, strong evaluations, significance, meaningful life, honour ethic, dignity, reason, self-mastery, soul, Idea of the Good, order of beings, inwardness, God, certainty, disengagement, first-person standpoint, expressivism, inner nature, affirmation of the ordinary life, benevolence.

[E] **Contents of Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to find the way to recovery of the moral self in contemporary society. Taylor observes that today's modern problems emerges from three malaises namely individualism, instrumental reason and the lost of freedom. As the result, the strong sense of living a meaningful life and identity is lost. These modern malaises are closely related to the understanding of the moral self. Every human self has a background of moral ontology which lies basically implicit. They are constructed in frameworks of goods with qualitative distinctions such hypergoods, comprehensive goods or moral sources and strong evaluations. The Taylor shows how morality has transvaluated to become separated from their substantive (Plato) and theistic (Augustine) moral sources in ancient times to a procedural reason (Descartes) and self inwardness of natural depth (Rousseau). The affirmation of the ordinary life and expressivism are also facets of the modern identity which endorse for a life of production and reproduction. By acts of retrieval from the past, the contemporary moral self can recover from the consequences of the malaises.

In this thesis, (A) the malaise of individualism which is *inter alia* built upon freedom and equality, has to have engaging limits to an organic body. (a) Freedom has to come with the acknowledgement and submission to strong evaluations which transcend and judge us within an organic construct. The negative freedom we encounter has to be limited with our engagement and accountability to others. (b) Equality on the other hand has to have respectful engagement with significant others. Mutual respect in this ethic is thereby the respect which engages the recognition of one another's dignity and identity. In this respectful engagement, people become significant in the act of recognition. (B) The malaise of instrumental reason is to be subjected to the three criteria of the good. The retrieval from Plato's contemplation of the order of being sets limits and conditions for the use of instrumental reason. Instrumental reason is encouraged with these criteria: (i) when it edifies our soul with the higher good, (ii) when it provides us with long term benefits and (iii) when it does not disrupt the order of the good. We could judge these criteria against the moral framework of Plato and the strong evaluation in our contemporary times. (C) The third malaise of the lost of freedom is mitigated when one could transcend over the first two malaises because the lost of freedom is the consequence of individualism and instrumental reason. By illuminating the moral background and the inescapable moral frameworks, Taylor has opened up a new realm in morality for us to explore and discover. Although this cannot remove our moral modern predicaments altogether, it at least does help and show us a way to live a more meaningful life.

[F] **List of Reference:** 11 buku (1960 – 2005), 11 artikel (1991 – 2004)

[G] **Dosen Pembimbing:** Prof. Dr. M. Sastrapratedja, SJ

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