

"Whatever else a modern feels when he looks out at the night sky, he certainly feels that he is looking out—like one looking out from the saloon entrance on to the dark Atlantic or from the lighted porch upon dark and lonely moors. But if you accepted the Medieval Model you would feel like one looking in. The Earth is 'outside the city wall.' When the sun is up he dazzles us and we cannot see inside. Darkness, our own darkness, draws the veil and we catch a glimpse of the high pomps within; the vast, lighted concavity filled with music and life ... The human imagination has seldom had before it an object so sublimely ordered as the medieval cosmos." — C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image*

"And new philosophy calls all in doubt,
The element of fire is quite put out,
The sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.
And freely men confess that this world's spent,
When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this
Is crumbled out again to his atomies.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
All just supply, and all relation;
Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a phoenix, and that then can be
None of that kind, of which he is, but he." — John Donne, "An Anatomy of the World"



The "culture of authenticity": "... the understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressionism 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 out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from the outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority." — Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*

"One could argue that for many young people today, certain styles, which they enjoy and display in the more immediate circle, but which are defined through the media, in relation to admired stars—or even products—occupy a bigger place in their sense of self, and that this has tended to displace in importance the sense of belonging to large scale collective agencies, like nations, not to speak of churches, political parties, agencies of advocacy, and the like." — Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*

"The history of modern political and social doctrine is, to a large degree, the history of Western culture's long, laborious departure from Jewish, classical, and Christian models of freedom, and the history in consequence of the ascendancy of the language of 'rights' over every other possible grammar of the good. It has become something of a commonplace among scholars to note that — from at least the time of Plato through the high Middle Ages — the Western understanding of human freedom was inseparable from an understanding of human nature: to be free was to be able to flourish as the kind of being one was, so as to attain the ontological good towards which one's nature was oriented (i.e., human excellence, charity, the contemplation of God, and so on). For this reason, the movement of the will was always regarded as posterior to the object of its intentions, as something wakened and moved by a desire for rational life's proper telos, and as something truly free only insofar as it achieved that end towards which it was called. To choose awry, then — through ignorance or maleficence or corrupt longing — was not considered a manifestation of freedom, but of slavery to the imperfect, the deficient, the privative, the (literally) subhuman. Liberty of choice was only the possibility of freedom, not its realization, and a society could be considered just only insofar as it allowed for and aided in the cultivation of virtue." — David Bentley Hart, "The Culture of Pornography"

"Our cultural revolution does not aim, like its predecessors, at victory for some rival commitment, but rather at a way of using all commitments, which amounts to loyalty toward none The wisdom of the next social order, as I imagine it, would not reside in right doctrine, administered by the right men, who must be found, but rather in doctrines amounting to permission for each man to live an experimental life Psychological man, in his independence from all gods, can feel free to use all god-terms; I imagine he will be a hedger against his own bets, a user of any faith that lends itself to therapeutic use." — Phillip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*

"I was raised up believing I was somehow unique
Like a snowflake distinct among snowflakes, unique in each way you can see
And now after some thinking, I'd say I'd rather be
A functioning cog in some great machinery serving something beyond me

But I don't, I don't know what that will be
I'll get back to you someday soon you will see

What's my name, what's my station, oh, just tell me what I should do ..."
— Fleet Foxes, "Helplessness Blues"