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**CHARLES TAYLOR AND MIRCEA ELIADE ON RELIGION,
MORALITY AND ORDINARY LIFE**

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Abstract: This paper addresses how Charles Taylor and Mircea Eliade tackle morality and religion by examining their shared phenomenological, historical concern for the orienting sensitivity to the sacred and its effect on the entire horizon of experience in ordinary life. Focusing on religious virtue, the desirable moral qualities of homo religiosus, Taylor and Eliade suggest that it hinges on the orienting sensitivity to the sacred and the constitution of the moral horizon of value, meaning, and a sense of fullness. Taylor and Eliade show that religious virtue involves self-understanding and meaningful activities in ordinary life on the two overlapping spatial, temporal, agential planes of the sacred and the profane.

Key words: Religion, Morality, Religious Virtue, Mircea Eliade, Charles Taylor, Ordinary Life.

1. Introduction

Are there any desirable characters or qualities that religious persons would reveal in their ordinary way of life? How does religion impact their inner horizon of experience in comparison with other non-religious forms of desirable characters? These questions entail the intersection between theories of religion and virtue ethics, since they point to some cross-cultural notion of religion and desirable moral qualities. There have been some attempts to construct theories of religious virtue or spiritual exercises that prompt further inquiries. Pierre Hadot stresses that philosophical life is “the practice of spiritual exercises” for “a total transformation of one’s vision, life-style, and behavior” in “tearing way from everyday life,” as “his way of life [is] totally changed” and “his way of looking at the world [is] metamorphosed into a cosmic-physical perspective” (Hadot 1995, 103-104). As suggesting “a discovery model” of religious virtue, Lee Yearley, a comparative ethicist working on Catholicism and Confucianism, notes that one should revitalize “a permanent set of dispositions that is coextensive ... with a sacred being” that have been “obscured by ordinary human qualities” (Yealrey 2005, 48). These general features of religious virtue underscore the transformative perspective of cosmic reality and the sacred and its effects on moral dispositions and action, which tends to undergo some tension with everyday routines and ordinary human activities.

These approaches to religious virtue allow further inquiries from virtue ethics. G. E. M. Anscombe first initiated the contemporary retrieval of virtue with her consistent critique on existing moral theories that are uncritical to their grounding of the ought, which turned out to be a vestige of some lost theistic concept of law (Anscombe 1958). With this critique of existing religious grounding of legalistic principles of moral norms, Anscombe calls for the shift to a psychological account of virtuous action and its underlying motives/intentions as well as the question of human flourishing (Anscombe 1958, 18). John McDowell addresses virtue in terms of sensitivity. He defines virtue as “a single complex sensitivity,” that is, one’s integrative horizon to discern virtuous action, distinct from the mere application of a certain set of propositional, codifiable formula. This sensitivity attends to some salient conception of how to live and its related desire driving a person to act specifically. “A conception of how to live” that “shows itself” as “salient” generates some volitional or “orectic” readiness for action and finally guides “our understanding of action” in its own context (McDowell 1998, 66-69). In a similar vein, some virtue ethicists employing phenomenological methods emphasize

the orienting power of the good or value and its coherent horizon. Working on classical virtue theories, Julia Annas relates virtue to phenomenological accounts of the experience of flow. Virtue is actualized through some immediate experience of unifying all ends simultaneously and paying attention to proper goals in implied actions (Annas 2008, 21-34). John J. Drummond revisits Husserl's phenomenology in light of virtue ethics and emphasizes that virtue is one's personal valuative experience of discovering "vocative good," its initiative of moral order, and actions oriented to such good (Drummond 2002, 23-25). Ulrich Melle focuses more on how Husserl's value-theoretical approach reveals that one's valuative orientation, involves representation-thinking as well as emotion and volition to constitute the horizon of evaluating other objects as good (Melle 2002, 233).

Charles Taylor and Mircea Eliade shed light on desirable qualities of religious persons from two different directions, the one from a historicistic perspective of tracing religion and morality in terms of their shifting historical dynamics and the other from an essentialistic perspective in terms of their timeless universal structure. Some commentators of Taylor note that he suggests a historicistic sense of transcendence within the condition of modern secularity despite some implicit tendency toward moral universalism (Ward 2010, 337-48; Gordon 2008, 672-73). Commentators of Eliade trace his anti-historicistic, essentialistic definition of the sacred and transcendence from various aspects: his morphological description of history (Smith 2010, 237), the intellectual, political implication of his anti-historicistic approach to Balkan, Bengal folklores (Turcanu 2010, 242), Greek-Orthodox mystical background (Rennie 2010, 204-5), his contemporary philosophical esotericism (Idel 2010, 182), the hermeneutical concern for the unity of the human spirit (Paraschivescu 2010, 62-3), anti-reductionistic, hermeneutical humanism (Wedemeyer 2010, xx; Cordoneanu 2007, 43). As maintaining the reflective concern for understanding the modern spiritual condition in light of the history of religions and secularity, Taylor and Eliade show different but similar approaches to situating religion and morality in the ongoing tension between historicity and human nature.

This paper examines how Charles Taylor and Mircea Eliade can be points of reference for addressing some desirable moral qualities of religious persons by showing their shared interest in the importance of the orienting sensitivity to the sacred and its effect on the entire horizon of experience in ordinary life with their phenomenological and historical analyses. Taylor and Eliade are particularly important, since they suggest two different models of the nature of religion and morality with regard to the historical reality of modern secularity. In the first section, the paper analyzes how Taylor and Eliade suggest that religious virtue concerns the orienting sensitivity to the sacred and the

constitution of the moral horizon of value, meaning, and a sense of fullness. In the second section, this paper considers how Taylor and Eliade show that religious virtue entails an explicit self-understanding and meaningful activities in ordinary life at the intersection of the two different spatial, temporal, agential planes of the sacred and the profane.

2. Taylor and Eliade on the Sacred and Desirable Moral Qualities

As commentators note, Taylor's account of identity and the orientation to the good addresses "virtue without theory" despite his reticence of virtue, given that Taylor's virtue ethics touches on the question of how one's intentional structure impacts on our selections and deliberations in engaging with ordinary action (Reynolds 2013, 113-131; Richter 1999, 353-69). While contemporary virtue ethicists underscore the value-laden aspect of sensitivity based on phenomenological and moral-psychological approaches, Taylor shares quite a similar phenomenological approach with more emphasis on his historical analysis. His analysis of moral agency not only resorts to the historical shifts of moral concepts and their cultural-historical conditions but also rests on his own phenomenological analysis of orientation, value, the good, and action. Taylor's reading of the modern Western intellectual history suggests harmonizing the theistic legacy of each individual's moral perspective of the higher good and the modern affirmation of ordinary life and flourishing, in order to cure modern malaises of mere instrumentalism and myopic self-fulfillment (Taylor 1989, 498-99). Taylor approaches the same issue from his phenomenological, moral-psychological perspective. In arguing that "drawing a moral map of the subject" is intricately interwoven with "discerning the good or higher life," or "the shape of our aspirations" or "the shape of our life as subject," Taylor emphasizes that this mapping concerns "what is really important to us" (Taylor 1985, 68). With regard to the habituation of learning, Taylor denies the incremental view of "habits linking stimuli and responses" or "concatenation of elements" (Taylor 1985, 140). Arguing for the transformational view of habit, Taylor suggests that it is a matter of preserving identity through changes, transformation and maturation, which concerns the "complex of interlocking skills" and the "picture of the world" (Taylor 1985, 142-43).

Later in his *A Secular Age*, Taylor expands this discussion of the orientation to the good and fullness into a matter of religion in the modern secular condition. There is "a place of fullness to which we orient ourselves morally or spiritually," where it is "the presence of God," or "the voice of nature," and so forth (Taylor 2007, 6). It concerns

one's innermost desire, as it is "the alignment in us of desire and the drive to form" (Taylor 2007, 6). There is "a kind of stabilized middle condition" where one lives through "some stable, even routine order in life" (Taylor 2007, 6). From the disenchantment of the late medieval age to the contemporary social context, Taylor reads the history of secularization and the residual excess of spirituality in terms of the tension between the pursuit of flourishing in ordinary life and the orientation to self-transcendence. Modern disenchantment supplants cosmic transcendence with the immanent order of self-disciplined, rational individuals in pursuit of ordinary flourishing, modern moral order, and authenticity (Taylor 2007, 539-44). The human pursuit of transcendence undergoes the pressure of this immanent order. With the collapse of the sacred cosmic unity of the church and society, the pursuit of religious transcendence was channeled into individuals' conscientious allegiance to the national, denominational church, and finally into fragmented authentic spiritualities (Taylor 2007, 486-89). Although "different structures" of the immanent frame encompassing morality, society, technology, and science constitute "this worldly order," Taylor argues that this order "leaves the issue open" with regard to "purposes of ultimate explanation," "spiritual transformation," or "final sense-making" (Taylor 2007, 594).

Apparently, Eliade does not use the term religious virtue in his works. As was noted, religious virtue means desirable moral qualities of religious persons that entail some orienting sensitivity toward the innermost value and its power that imbues human desire with a sense of fulfillment and motivates an action amidst ordinary life. If one defines religious virtue in this sense, Eliade undeniably addresses it as desirable moral qualities of *homo religious*. However, before engaging with this issue, it is important to think about whether and how attaining such moral qualities is a possible moral option for modern humans.

To begin with Eliade's concept of religious virtue, it is important to note Eliade's pursuit of running counter the current of historicism to salvage the moral agency of *homo religious* with his phenomenological accounts, which is quite comparable to Taylor. Religious virtue as moral qualities of *homo religiosus* is the antipode to the moral qualities of modern humans who mistakenly believe themselves as entitled to create history. Contrasting "all the modern historicisms" with "the archaic conception" designated as "archetypal and anhistorical," Eliade underscores that "the nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetition" kept recurring in his contemporary culture where historicity ended up the domination of Marxist elites or degenerated "heroic virtues" of "despair, the *amor fati*, and pessimism" (Eliade 1954, 153). While the creativity of modern "historical existence" leads to the divergence between the triumphant elites and the mass of followers, "archaic existence" is freer and more creative in its power to annul and recreate history through

“periodic abolition of time and collective regeneration” (Eliade 1954, 156-57). Similar to Taylor situating transcendence in its interwoven development with the immanent frame, Eliade shows his ambivalence to transcendence in the historical existence of modern humans. “As the subject and agent of history,” “nonreligious man has developed fully” in the modern West by “refus[ing] all appeal to transcendence” for his historical freedom and “desacralize[ing] himself and the world” (Eliade 1959, 203). However, “profane man” still bears “some vestiges of the behavior of religious man” as they continue to be “emotionally present to him” and “ready to be actualized in his deepest being” with “a large stock of camouflaged myths and degenerated rituals” (Eliade 1959, 204). In the psyche of modern humans, there is a mixture of vestiges of the sacred and the degenerated condition of historical self-creation, revealing the innermost potential of *homo religiosus* obscured by the modern historical condition. The desirable moral qualities of *homo religiosus* suffer from the systematic condition of underdevelopment and impairment in modernity, although their potential is present in the innermost part of human psyche.

Employing a phenomenological analysis of the sacred to secure the innermost potential for religiosity in human consciousness, Eliade notes that the archaic way of existence is not just a fossilized legacy but a real moral option for modern humans that can be developed and actualized. To develop this potentiality, modern humans need to have some orienting beliefs of “an absolute reality” or “the sacred” that reveals itself as a reference point for all things in the world and attributes special, outweighing values. “Whatever the historical context in which he is placed, *homo religiosus* always believes that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying it and making it real” (Eliade 1959, 202). The archaic way of existence hinges on a matter of belief that one can discover an invisible, unknowable transcendent reference point that is sensed indirectly through its effects of attributing significance to one’s world experience. This unintelligible, transcendent reference point is to be sought in one’s inner consciousness as its structural element for universal human sensitivity to the sacred. The sacred is “an element in the structure of consciousness,” through which the human mind can distinguish the salience of “that which gives itself as real, powerful, rich and meaningful” from “the chaotic, and dangerous flux of things, their fortuitous, meaningless appearances and disappearances” (Eliade 1969, i). In so far as religious persons believe that there is a certain inner moral sensitivity to self-giving phenomena, they experience the world in light of the sacred source of power, value, and meaningfulness or intelligibility, which contrasts with the indistinct, insignificant, and chaotic ways of experiencing the world. When religious persons believe that there is the inner sensitivity to the

salience of the sacred in its power, value, intelligibility, they believe that they can actualize their latent power by participating in this salient manifestation of the sacred. "He further believes that life has a sacred origin and that human existence realizes all of its potentialities as it is religious, that is, participates in reality" (Eliade 1959, 202). As religious persons come to be aware of some salience of what gives itself as the source of power, value, and intelligibility, they relate their life to this sense of salience and realize their potentialities.

The religiously integrated horizon of moral agency is attained through participation in the sacred. "The archaic man" or "*the homo religiosus*" has the tendency to participate in the sacred and its consecrated objects, since "the sacred is equivalent to a power and, in the last analysis, to reality" that is "saturated with being" (Eliade 1959, 12). If religious persons have a sense of orientation when encountering the power of the sacred, it generates an innermost desire to participate in it. "Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy Thus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power" (Eliade 1959, 13). According to "the perspective of the man of archaic societies," "the whole of life is capable of being sanctified" (Eliade 1959, 167). Participation in the power, value, and intelligibility of the sacred and its effects constitute the whole horizon of desirable moral qualities.

This transformative participation is not confined to individual interiority but is to be mediated through the natural, historical, cultural manifestations of hierophanies. An absolute reality transcending the world manifests itself dynamically through various natural beings, animism, totems, and local deities, places, while being only accessible to the perspective of *homo religiosus*. There is "a movement away from the transcendence and passivity of sky beings towards more dynamic, active and easily accessible forms" (Eliade 1958, 52), as it generates hierophanies as instances of "the manifestation of the sacred in material things" (Eliade 1958, 29). The moral qualities of religious persons always primarily hinge on "the spiritual perspective of the primitive" that can decipher "a manifestation of the sacred" from some materialized, localized, reenacted spheres of experience (Eliade 1958, 26).

Eliade's suggestion for the desirable, moral qualities of *homo religiosus* reveals striking similarities to and differences from Taylor's account. Taylor's idea of the incomparable good as constitutive of the moral qualities of a person has a similar conceptual frame with Eliade's view of the sacred as the structural element of consciousness to participate in the transcendent source of power, value, and intelligibility. For Taylor, one's view of the higher good determines the entire horizon of aspiration, evaluation, and self-understanding as well

as constitutes the tendency toward transformation and maturation. Similarly, for Eliade, the inner sensitivity to the sacred source of power, value, and meaning shapes the horizon of desire and evaluation to participate in this efficacious power of the sacred, as it involves reconfirming the tendency to orient oneself to the sacred through archetypal reenactments of various symbolic expressions.

However, when it comes to the issue of transcendence and its cosmic implication for desirable moral qualities, Eliade and Taylor reveal significant differences. In his reading of the rise of the cultural condition of secularity and its entangled history of spirituality, Taylor argues that religious transcendence has its shifting paradigms in history along with the pressure from the emergence of the immanent frame. As the cosmic continuum consisting of the self, the church, and the community collapsed, transcendence has been intricately interwoven with the immanent frame's visions of conscientious individuals, the rational construction of social reciprocity, and individual authenticity. Transcendence turned into individuals' conscientious allegiance to the collective national, denominational identity and finally into authentic spiritual searches, although Taylor also stresses the importance of transcendence not reducible to the immanent frame. In contrast, Eliade argues that the desirable moral qualities of transcendence remain perennial. Participation in the cosmic power, value, and intelligibility of the sacred remains the same, no matter whether it is that of ancient archaic people or some rare cases of modern *homo religiosus*. Likewise, the profanity in the modern society and the profanity in the archaic society is not inherent heterogeneous in its nature, but different only in its pervasiveness and intensity.

3. Taylor and Eliade on the Transfiguration of Ordinary Life

As Taylor and Eliade address how the transcendent orientation toward the good of the sacred shapes the entire horizon of value and intelligibility, they also reveal how this horizon promotes self-understanding and meaningful activities in ordinary life. For Taylor, the affirmation of ordinary life comes to be crucial for the desirable moral qualities of personal identity in the cultural history of the West since the Reformation. Morality as the personal articulation of self-understanding and moral action entails "identifying what makes something a fit object for them [appropriate responses]" and "spelling out presuppositions about ourselves and our situation in the world" (Taylor 1989, 8). Taylor describes how the presuppositions of self-understanding, moral actions, and one's given situation have changed from the cosmic emphasis on the higher good to the affirmation of ordinary life, while underscoring the harmony of the two to cure modern malaises. With the decline of "a cosmic moral order" and the

emergence of “the utilitarian Enlightenment,” the emphasis on the good life of contemplation was replaced with “the affirmation of ordinary life” as “the very center of the good life” (Taylor 1989, 13). In diagnosing “three malaises about modernity” as caused by “the fading or moral horizons,” “the eclipse of ends,” and “a loss of freedom,” (Taylor 1992, 10), Taylor argues that they are indebted to modern emphases on “disengaged reason” and “the affirmation of ordinary life,” which is mired in the concern for production, reproduction, work, and the family (Taylor 1992, 104). The emphasis on ordinary life is coupled with the flattened, narrowed horizon of moral significance that leads to a degenerate form of authenticity. A degenerate form of authenticity failing to grapple with “a horizon of important questions” in contemporary culture is confined to a shallow, trivialized, flattened, and narrowed form of self-fulfillment (Taylor 1992, 40). To overcome the quandary, Taylor suggests restoring “strong evaluation” or the incomparable good as the standards for judging ordinary ends and goods (Taylor 1989, 20), which does not deny the value of ordinary life but configures it in terms of such an evaluative reference point. “We struggle to hold onto a vision of the incomparably higher, while being true to the central moral insights about the value of ordinary life” (Taylor 1989, 24). It is a matter of finding “the higher” “not outside of but as *a manner of living* ordinary life” (Taylor 1989, 23).

As Taylor views, the religious-cultural history of the West has witnessed the process of disenchantment from the spatial-temporal, agential complex of cosmic transcendence to the spatial-temporal, agential complex of the immanent order, which triggered the shifting understanding of selfhood and meaningful activities. Disenchantment begins with the collapse of the sacred into the profane in the early modern age. “In one way, we can say that the sacred/profane distinction breaks down, in so far as it can be placed in person, time, space, and gesture” (Taylor 2007, 79). The rise of individual spirituality incurred this process, as individuals’ belief in God’s sanctifying work defused the sacred “everywhere, hence also in ordinary life, our work, in marriage and so on” and also confined it into “our inner transformation” at the same time (Taylor 2007, 79). Previously in the pre-modern cosmic order, there had been the spatial-temporal complex of “higher times” and “modes of eternity” that are interwoven and interfering with “the simple coherent order of secular time-place” following routinized rhythms (Taylor 2007, 96). However, with the emergence of “the immanent frame,” individuals disciplined with their interior reason organize “a constructed social space” according to “instrumental rationality” and “the pervasiveness of secular time” in contrast with the supernatural, transcendent order (Taylor 2007, 542). Taylor notes the tension between the transcendent perspective of the higher goods and the immanent perspective of human flourishing and

its social goal of mutual benefit as sufficient (Taylor 2007, 430). Taylor's view tackles the desirable moral qualities in the moral articulation of selfhood and meaningful ordinary activities for flourishing after the modern demise of the cosmic continuum.

Interestingly, one can witness similarities with Eliade's analysis of self-understanding and meaningful activities in ordinary life. The desirable moral qualities of *homo religiosus* imbue him or her with a specific way of experience and action in ordinary life. As noted above, with the hierophanic symbolisms and ritual reenactments, religious persons are able to participate in the power of the sacred that reveals itself as one's innermost reference for intelligibility and value orientation. This participation opens up a unique cosmic horizon of experience that configures self-understanding and ordinary experiences and activities situated in relation to the whole cosmic reality. Encountering "ciphers of various existential situations" through this anthropo-cosmic continuum, religious persons "live in an open world" and are "accessible to an infinite series of experiences that could be termed cosmic" (Eliade 1959, 169). A *homo religiosus* lives on the plane of "human existence" and the plane of "transhuman existence" at the same time (Eliade 1959, 167-68). Religious persons can take all ordinary activities such as "obtaining and eating food, making love, and expressing thought and feeling" and "acts of no importance" in light of "a religious meaning," whereas non-religious persons have "all vital experiences, whether sex or eating, work or play" "desecralized" and "deprived of spiritual significance" (Eliade 1959, 167-68).

The plane of ordinary human experience and activities is either engulfed by the transhuman, cosmic, spiritual plane of the sacred to gain its value, intelligibility, and power, or is insulated from it to confine itself to trivial, chaotic, and inconsequential profanities. The profane continuum, which is an anomaly only pervasive in the modern secular culture, gets rid of value, intelligibility, and power from various human natural, cultural activities in so far as humans are closed to their innate sensitivity to the sacred and natural, cultural hierophanic symbols. The sacred continuum, which is a normal and normative condition of timeless human nature, pervades in all aspects of natural, cultural activities in so far as humans are attentive to the innate sacred and natural, cultural hierophanies. "We might say that the archaic world knows nothing of profane activities: every act which has a definite meaning- hunting, fishing, agriculture; games, conflicts, sexuality, in some way participates in the sacred" (Eliade 1954, 27-28). Profane activities that are susceptible to chaos and meaninglessness can only gain meaningfulness in so far as they more or less participate in hierophanic symbols as well as recognize the qualitative difference of them as the source of value, intelligibility, and power.

In that respect, Eliade suggests the ambivalent relation between

the sacred and the profane in ordinary activities. On the one hand, there should be “a breach between the sacred and the profane” to lead to the discovery of any locus of hierophany as religiously salient and distinct from other profane objects, so that it can render value, intelligibility, and power to any related activities or experiences (Eliade 1958, 447). On the other hand, there should be “a passage from one to the other” so that any profane objects or activities can derive value, intelligibility, and power from participation in this locus of hierophany (Eliade 1958, 447). Religious persons are supposed to be sensitive to the salience of natural, cultural hierophanies distinct from other activities, while they need to be able to refer these ordinary activities to this hierophanic significance.

On the one hand, Eliade emphasizes the qualitative difference between the spatial-temporal, agential complex of the sacred and that of the profane, so that religious persons engage with cultural activities to find intelligibility, value, and power from the sacred. The sense of salience associated with an absolute reality and its attribution of power, value, and intelligibility find itself in spatially local, temporally reenactable, agentially materialized hierophanic references. Spatially, any natural objects come to attain their “meaning and value” when they participate in “hierophany” by coming to be “the receptacle of an exterior force that differentiates it from its milieu” (Eliade 1954, 4). Temporally, any ritual action acquires its value and meaning when it repeats the reference of “*in illo tempore*” by reenacting “a primordial act” or “a mythical example,” which grounds “an archetype” of action through regularity and normalcy to secure its ontological status (Eliade 1954, 4). It transfers the sacred salience of power, value, and intelligibility to some cities, temples, houses, and rituals through “the symbolism of the center” and the ritual enactments of actualizing archetypes in “*illud tempus*” (Eliade 1954, 5; Eliade 1958, 33). Seen from the agential aspect, some custom of associating agricultural objects and activities with fertility rites can be a symbolic instance of hierophany to derive values and intelligibilities, revealing that “cosmic symbolism adds a new value to an object or action without affecting their peculiar and immediate values” (Eliade 1959, 167). There are some possible tensions between the ordering, orienting effect of the qualitatively significant spatial-temporal complex of sacredness and the chaotically indistinct, flattened spatial-temporal complex of profanity. While “the sacred space” “which reveals ... the central axis for all future orientation” sets up its own “inhabited and organized hence cosmicized territory” with its fixed limits and established orderliness, “the profane space” remains to be as a indistinct, “homogenous mass” and “a foreign, chaotic space” (Eliade 1959, 20-29). The sacred time is a time of religious festival or liturgy that reenacts the primordial *illud tempus*, the original time to be repeated and repeatable, whereas the profane time

is “ordinary temporal duration” that consists of a series of non-religious activities in a routinized way without any sense of temporal significance (Eliade 1959, 68-70).

On the other hand, Eliade also underscores the participatory transition and passage from the profane to the sacred, whereby ordinary cultural activities come to be endowed with religious significance. As was noted, there is a moment of disruption in various symbolic instances that sets the manifestation of the sacred apart from the profane, thus manifesting a fixed point of ordering the whole reality and reenacting the original experience of the sacred power. However, at the same time, the ritual of the threshold and passage is “the paradoxical place” whereby ordinary human cultural activities can communicate with and participate in these sacred references for orientation to derive meaning, value, and intelligibility. Addressing the symbolism of threshold or passage is pervasive “in the bridge and the gate,” “the house with its utensils,” and “the daily routine with its acts and gestures,” Eliade notes how these ordinary objects and activities “can be valorized on the religious and metaphysical plane” (Eliade 1959, 183). In light of this valorization of ordinary life through symbolic references for transitional participation, Eliade suggests that one’s “familiar everyday life ... is transfigured in the experience of religious man” (Eliade 1959, 183).

Although sharing the critical awareness of the loss of meaning in the modern form of ordinary, routinized life and the vision of rehabilitating the moral qualities of religious persons in ordinary life, Taylor and Eliade show their different approaches to suggesting the nature of the problem and its solution. Taylor’s account of the transcendent perspective of the higher good and the immanent pursuits of flourishing in ordinary life is part of his effort to diagnose malaises of modernity and overcome them. It is motivated by his acute sense of the breach between the pre-modern cosmic continuum of the sacred and ordinary life and the modern, anthropocentric construction of reality. The modern pursuit of the higher good to correct the overemphasis on ordinary flourishing also emerges from this modern emphasis on individuality suggested by the modern moral condition of the immanent order. Eliade’s account of the cosmic order of hierophanic symbolisms and profane activities is also part of his critique of the modern anomaly of profanity without hierophanies. However, this critique is impelled by his suggestion of the timeless human nature of the sacred, not by the concession of the irreversible turn to modernity. There is no breach between the pre-modern cosmic continuum of hierophanies and profane activities and the modern cosmic continuum to be reclaimed ideally through the restoration of hierophanies in the secular culture of modern profanities. There is the same nature of the sacred and the profane throughout the ages.

Taylor and Eliade suppose that the desirable moral qualities of religious persons entail the task of making explicit one's self-understanding and moral-religious activities in ordinary life, while revealing different solutions for this moral, religious articulation. Both suggest that the pre-modern spatial, temporal, and agential frame of the cosmic continuum enabled persons to situate their existence within a cosmic order and discover the meaning of ordinary activities and experiences by participating in a higher plane of reality, value, and intelligibility. However, they reveal radical differences with regard to the question of the spatial, temporal, and agential frame of modern humans. For Taylor, modern humans are left with the higher or transcendent good that each should discover to give meaning to one's pursuit of ordinary life in the midst of the secularized time, rationalized social space, and the modern moral order of reciprocal benefit for collective flourishing. For Eliade, modern humans should not only rediscover the sensitivity to the timeless sacred in each person's religious interiority but also reconstitute natural, cultural hierophanic symbolisms that can transform the evacuated, fragmented time and space, ordinary activities, without which the modern profane life finally turns into some futile, meaningless chaos.

4. Conclusion

The question of what would be the desirable moral qualities of religious persons, or to put it simply, what is religious virtue, is a very complicated question. It grapples with a fundamental phenomenological dimension that concerns the experience of the higher value of the sacred, its effects on sensitivity, the horizon of value and desire, and the habit of experience and action in ordinary life. However, there is a historical dimension in addition to this phenomenological aspect, driving the question of whether what is conceived as religious, moral qualities has retained the same meaning throughout the ages in diverse cultural contexts. This paper traced how Taylor and Eliade reveal their phenomenological analyses of the desirable moral qualities of religious persons. They argue that the sensitivity to the highest value of the sacred constitutes the coherent horizon of intelligibility, value, and habitual tendency, and reconfigures ordinary activities in light of the higher plane of the spatial, temporal, agential complex of cosmic significance. However, this paper also examined how Taylor and Eliade show radical differences with regard to the historical dimension of the desirable moral qualities of religious persons. Is the vision of transcendence toward the good amidst the immanent concern for ordinary life only a matter of the modern Western religious pursuit that made an irreversible historical achievement radically distinct from the previous cosmic paradigm of

other religions? Or, does this demand rather betray how the modern West has distorted the natural yearning for the sacred originally present in its lost cosmic legacy and other cosmic religions, which cannot but keep recurring back despite comprehensive repressions. It is still not resolved whether those timeless moral qualities of *homo religiosus* have been repressed but are destined to return periodically, or have been changed throughout the historical shift from the pre-modern condition of cosmic culture to the irreversible modern condition of anthropocentric self-creation.

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