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By Leonard Sidharta

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Moral Saints and Eudaimonia: a Philosophical Justification of Moral Sainthood

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Is approved by the final examining committee:

1. Patrick Kain
Chair

2. Jeffrey Brower

3. Mark Murphy

4. Michael Bergmann

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MORAL SAINTS AND EUDAIMONIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL JUSTIFICATION OF MORAL SAINTHOOD

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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MORAL SAINTS AND EUDAIMONIA:
A PHILOSOPHICAL JUSTIFICATION OF MORAL SAINTHOOD

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
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Leonard Sidharta

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
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For Dewi, my wife

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ABSTRACT

Sidharta, Leonard. Ph.D., Purdue University, August 2012. Moral Saints and Eudaimonia: A Philosophical Justification of Moral Sainthood. Major Professor: Patrick Kain.

In this dissertation, I try to philosophically justify moral sainthood. People like Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, and Mother Teresa are seen as the paradigm moral saints. However, there is a widespread assumption that due to their radical altruism, moral saints are not flourishing. So some critics think that moral sainthood is unworthy of recommendation. By contrast, I argue that attaining moral sainthood is binding and, through critically engaging relevant empirical studies, I conclude that moral saints are flourishing.

In my argument, I use a family of theories that I call Aretaic Eudaimonism (AE) as the framework theory. AE holds that virtuousness is necessary for and expresses flourishing. In line with AE, I interpret moral sainthood as the exemplification of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. I then probe the normative status of attaining moral sainthood via examining the concept of virtuousness. I find that virtuousness is a vaguely calibrated concept, a feature that can be formulated in what I call the Continuity Thesis (CT). CT states that all degrees of virtuousness are on the same continuum, and since the continuum cannot be finely calibrated without being arbitrary, it is binding to be increasingly virtuous, which implies that exemplifying the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness must be binding too.

CT also implies that an increase in virtuousness is accompanied by a growth in flourishing. I explain this through using the New Natural Law theory's (NNL) conception of flourishing. NNL is a species of AE that expound ethical rules in terms of their capacity to defend the integrity of human goods and welfare. Through NNL, I argue that

moral saints live flourishingly, if moral sainthood is a special organization of the aspects of well-being (basic goods) that seeks to pursue one of those aspects. I then conclude that (1) moral sainthood is compatible with vocational pluralism and fulfill the criteria for flourishing-friendly configuration of goods; (2) moral saints' configurations of goods are governed by the coordinating good of religion. Thus, what moral saints promote is friendship with God or the source of moral goodness, which results in radical altruism. But this doesn't exclude non-religious saints, for 'religion' can refer to devotion to self-transcending causes (e.g., goodness, humanity). From theistic perspective, such devotion may signify partnership with God, regardless of whether moral saints are aware of it

Here, virtuousness is one's responsiveness to self-transcending altruistic causes. Since religion promotes and expresses flourishing, an increase in virtuousness entails a growth in flourishing. But how about sufferings that befall moral saints? The sacrifices that the saints make are caused by the very evils that they must confront. So it is wrong and viciously circular to say that a way of life that dares to face those evils is partly responsible for the sufferings that befall it. Moreover, if God exists and moral sainthood is a friendship with God, the ultimate answer for moral saints' sufferings can be provided at present through faith and hope in God's vindication.

CHAPTER I:

"WHO ARE MORAL SAINTS?"

Plankton: "Haven't you figured it out, Spongebob? Nice guys finish last. Only aggressive people conquer the world! (laughs evilly)"
Spongebob: "Well, what about aggressively nice people?"
(Aaron Springer et al., "Spongebob Squarepants: Walking Small")

1. Understanding Moral Saints

In this introductory chapter of my dissertation, I will provide first a definition of moral saints, and then introduce my project by presenting (*1*) its background, (*2*) an overview of its content, and (*3*) its importance to moral philosophy.

1.1. A Basic Definition of Moral Saints

It's likely that the philosophical discussion of moral sainthood in the West (the first of which might be J. O. Urmson's 1958 paper, "Saints and Heroes") is traceable to the secularization of the Christian notion of sainthood in the figure of Mahatma Gandhi.[1]

[1] Some connotations of moral sainthood can be traced to the concept of sainthood in major religions. In Christianity, saints possess heroic virtuousness and must embody the new humanity through imitating Christ (cf. Hawley 1987b: xv)—the saint par excellence. Judaism and Islam stress the possession and display of great virtues that are rooted in friendship with God. Emphasis on heroic virtues, self-denial, and deep spirituality also marks the sainthood in Hinduism and Buddhism. China's Confucianism has a more egalitarian and secular conception of sainthood (cf. Tu 1987). It believes that to be a saint, one must have outstanding civic virtuousness, unify oneself with the cosmic power, take care of one's family, and be ready to sacrifice oneself. Despite differences, these conceptions assume: (*1*) the saints' capacity to perform great virtuous deeds, (*2*) which is based on their unifying themselves with greater powers or deities, and lastly, which I haven't mentioned, (*3*) the saints' being effective or 'contagious' moral exemplars. We'll see that all of these main features are still maintained in the contemporary notion of moral sainthood.

Through Gandhi, many Westerners found out that the ideal of the Christian *saint* could also be displayed to a certain extent by a non-Christian person (cf. Jürgensmeyer 1987). Non-Christian or even non- religious persons can be called moral saints, which is roughly synonymous with moral paragons. But this moralized notion of sainthood still incorporates overwhelmingly many religious saints, for the majority of moral exemplars across cultures are religious. We'll see later whether this is just a matter of coincidence.

Now let us try to find a less religious and more philosophically relevant definition of moral saints. In her seminal article on moral sainthood, Susan Wolf writes, "[a] necessary condition of moral sainthood would be that one's life be dominated by a commitment to improving the welfare of others or of society as a whole" (1982, p. 420). This characterization is crucial, for one can lead an immoral life but still be able to perform occasional and unusual moral sacrifices. Also, even virtuous people who perform heroic moral deeds aren't necessarily moral saints, for to qualify as a saint, they must make altruistic causes their primary life goal. Thus, some thinkers (Sorokin 1950, Urmson 1958, Flescher 2003) claim that moral saints are unlike moral heroes, since "whereas heroes perform considerable altruistic actions in *response* to a situation that morally requires their attention and action, saints *proactively* seek out others who might be in need anywhere" (Flescher 2003, p. 219). We can see this by comparing the lives of some widely recognized moral saints (Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, Albert Schweitzer, etc.) and moral heroes like some rescuers of the Jews in World War II (e.g. the Chambonnais Huguenots). Further, although both moral saints and heroes may willingly go the extra mile, due to the former's making altruistic causes their supreme concern, they are considered to be more virtuous or exceptional than the latter.

It is important, however, to prevent oversimplifications. Showing exceptionally virtuous behaviors or having a morally dedicated life, which is widely thought as essential marks of moral sainthood, may be sufficient—but not necessary—conditions for being a moral saint. It does not help to say that those frequent altruistic deeds must be

supererogatory in character, unless a consistent correlation between supererogatory actions and virtuousness can be shown. Since it is an indispensable part of the basic understanding of moral saints that they display robust character traits across various aspects of life, what we need is a deeper source of such behaviors or concerns, which, according to many studies, is moral saints' exceptional altruistic disposition or virtuousness. So it is enough to say at this point that moral saints refer to the highly virtuous people who make altruistic causes their primary life concerns.

A person, although saintly, might not have the opportunities or abilities (as in the case of paralyzed saints) to perform great moral deeds. That is why it is moral saints' exceptional altruistic disposition that must be the main locus of moral saintliness. The disposition inclines moral saints to perform great moral deeds and live an exceptional moral life. Yet this should not cause one to think that moral saints must always perform heroic deeds, as it is clearly possible that a moral saint's life and actions are ordinary, although they are grounded in a profound altruistic commitment. For instance, a person who has a saintly disposition can only work as a waitress and thereby she can only display her altruistic commitment most of the time by conscientiously and amicably doing her job. Outwardly, there is nothing extraordinary in this waitress' life, but this cannot be the sole or main factor that excludes her from being a moral saint. Therefore, it suffices to say that moral saints have an extraordinarily virtuous disposition, which in some particular contexts, can or should be manifested in their performing altruistic actions, some of which, on some other special contexts, are unusual.

I believe that the definition above is quite representative, and I use it as the main criterion for choosing the relevant empirical studies on moral sainthood for this project. One problem in picking those studies is that scientists or scholars sometimes use different terms for moral saints (moral exemplars, moral paragons, etc.) and suggest quite different definitions of them. Although I mainly rely on my own criterion to deal with that problem, I don't forcibly impose my own standard, for my criterion is partly derived from most of

those studies themselves. Besides, the differences between most of those studies aren't great, since they use similar examples and give essentially similar explanations. I also follow those studies in not differentiating religious saints from the non-religious ones, provided that those saints make altruistic causes their primary life concerns.

To complete my attempt to define moral saints, I'll clarify some common misunderstandings of moral saints.

1.2. Are Moral Saints Moral Fanatics?

Wolf may be right to say that moral saints are the only people whose primary passion, oddly, is in morality. Moral saints are then more radical than ordinary moral agents, who, although they aspire to be more virtuous, typically won't think to make morality their overarching life goal. I want to argue against a possible misunderstanding that, as Wolf's criticism seems to imply, moral saints' radical altruism betrays their moral fanaticism, a psychologically unhealthy preoccupation with being right all the time.

Although moral saints are often "almost maniacally driven by morally good pursuits" (Carbonell 2009a, p. 377), there are some weighty reasons to reject Wolf's suspicion. First, empirical findings show that many moral saints are not preoccupied with being morally upright all the time (Colby & Damon 1992, Kidder 2003, etc.). The findings reveal that many moral exemplars are psychologically healthy and more accommodative to the demands of circumstances than some common caricatures of moral fanaticism or priggishness. Contrary to some caricatures, they are open-minded, hardheaded, and optimistic (cf. Kleinman 2006). An example is Paul Farmer[2], who displayed "acerbic wit and a willingness to do what is necessary to further this cause: curse the inaction of others, pay bribes to soldiers at checkpoints, and accommodate the

[2] Paul Farmer is an American anthropologist and physician (a specialist in infectious diseases), who spent most of his life to provide free medical services to countless poor people in developing countries.

dangerous mythologies of his patients" (Carbonell 2009a, p. 377). Farmer also comfortably used profanities to express his displeasure at morally lax or greedy behavior.

A more philosophical reason to deny the charge of moral fanaticism is given by Vanessa Carbonell in her study of moral saints. Carbonell argues that there is a significant difference between a preoccupation with morality *de dicto* (e.g., rightness, goodness, being dutiful) and a passion for morality *de re* (e.g., helping the poor, fighting against racism; Carbonell 2009a: 390-95). Carbonell thinks that while the former may often indicate an unhealthy psyche or moral fanaticism, the later doesn't. This distinction, I think, isn't baseless. Studies on moral saints show that although they sometimes use abstract moral concepts (e.g. rightness, goodness, etc.) to describe their commitments, they mainly ground their concerns in concrete persons and their actual needs (the homeless in Calcutta, the poor TB patients in Haiti, etc.). One possible explanation for this is that commitment to morality is by nature only expressible in and supervenes upon commitment to concrete causes. This doesn't mean that one cannot conceive oneself to be committed to abstract moral concepts, but it might well be the case that a full or genuine commitment to morality *de dicto* always translates itself into a commitment to morality *de re*, for it is only through the latter that a more sincere and serious dedication to others can be achieved. An obsession with morality *de dicto* that doesn't translate into concrete action plans for concrete others might not be sufficiently or genuinely moral, as it makes morality easily manipulated by one's needs for honor, psychological security, etc.

I hope that I have sufficiently shown that although moral sainthood implies radical altruism, it should not be associated with moral fanaticism, as some criticisms or misunderstanding of moral sainthood might insinuate.

1.3. Is Moral Sainthood an Excessive or Eccentric Way of Life?

The last misunderstanding that I want to deal with is about moral saints' alleged excessiveness and eccentricity, which make their lives seem unhealthy and unattractive.

Examples of moral saints' excessiveness are asceticism, deleterious selflessness, gullibility, etc., whereas their eccentricity is seen in their preaching to the birds, their being dull-witted or humorless, denial or lack of an identifiable self[3], etc. I just jumble these two kinds of behavioral or attitudinal abnormality together in this section, as they often make up one type of misunderstanding of or attack against moral saints.

I don't think that some stereotypical excessiveness or eccentricities necessarily characterize moral saints. Why? The counterexamples abound (Adams 1987, Colby & Damon 1992, etc.). Many saints aren't puritanical, too introspective, ascetic, or melancholic (cf. Fleischer 2003, Oliner 2003). Gandhi's radical asceticism is uncommon among moral saints. Although they can be too kind (in Farmer's organization, "No one could be fired…except for stealing and slapping a patient twice" Kidder 2003, p. 190), it doesn't mean that they are too soft toward others (Kidder 2003, p. 24). Widely recognized moral exemplars like Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez and others show shrewdness and open-mindedness. Other saints show a strong sense of humor, attractive personality, and professionalism. Thus, moral sainthood shouldn't be confused with moral fetishism, asceticism, or other sorts of unhealthy or abnormal ways of life.

Although some stereotypical abnormality isn't universal, it's undeniable that many moral saints do show some sorts of eccentricities or excessiveness. Yet, I don't think that it can be the basis for discrediting moral sainthood, for the eccentricity and excessiveness are of the following kinds: (1) they are only apparent and can be explained away; (2) they are real but not universal and don't undermine the coherence of the notion of moral sainthood. Both points are spelled out more clearly in the following paragraphs:

First, some eccentricity or excessiveness are forms of moral asceticism (voluntary poverty, etc.) that aim to increase financial assistance to the needy, or aim at disciplining oneself to be more adaptive to the demandingness of the altruistic way of life;

[3] The last two characteristics come from Wolf's negative portrayal of moral saints in Wolf 1982.

Next, since most moral saints are religious, the so-called eccentricity or excessiveness may in part refer to pious behaviors or attitudes that belong to particular religious traditions. That is why some criticisms on this regard are caused by divergences in worldviews or faiths.

Third, the apparent eccentricity or excessiveness is sometimes based on the clash between moral saints' ethics and the dominant culture in their societies. For instance, in materialistic societies, asceticism or self-sacrifice may be considered extreme, while in paternalistic societies, courage to stand against authorities is seen as unnatural. This shows that "[Saints] implicitly question [ordinary morality] by seeming to embody a strange, higher standard that does not quite fit with the moral system that governs ordinary propriety" (Hawley, quoted in Flescher 2003, p. 177). Since moral saints are moral pioneers who open up new moral domains or redraw the boundary between obligatory and supererogatory actions (cf. Carbonell 2009b), it's unsurprising that their actions are initially or often viewed as subversive and extreme.

Fourth, sometimes, the so-called extreme behaviors are what many people perceive as non-productive or inefficient actions. Loving one's enemies, asceticism, abandoning career, sacrificing one's life, etc., are often seen as unnecessary or detrimental undertakings.[4] Yet it is unfair to judge moral saints' behaviors by the established standards of efficiency or 'normal' actions, as they represent a different kind of value or address a special sort of need or situation. Further, in morality, some apparently ineffective forms of action are just inescapable. Non-violent struggle requires tremendous sacrifice and is time-consuming, but the result is often more lasting and morally justifiable than violent revolution.

Fifth, moral saints aren't flawless. There are two kinds of flaws: the first is the saints' psychological and behavioral improprieties that are caused by their misinterpreting

[4] "How does one person with great talents come to exert a force on the world?... in Farmer's case the answer lies somewhere in the apparent craziness, the sheer impracticality, of half of everything he does" (Kidder 2003, p. 296).

their way of life and moral demands, inapt emotional reactions, etc. Francis of Assisi's feeding a greedy monk with donkey excrement, Mother Teresa's praise of the Duvaliers, Gandhi's naiveté toward Hitler, Schweitzer's 'pacifism' to bacteria are instances of this kind of flaw. The second kind is moral wrongdoing. Some famous saints committed plagiarism, adultery, had prejudices against other religions, etc. Nonetheless, those flaws do not undermine the coherence of the notion of moral sainthood, as moral excellence can co-exist with some degree of moral flaws, that is to say, moral sainthood doesn't entail moral perfection. Further, the presence of flaws indicates that moral sainthood is not unrealistic an ideal for others to attain (given that these 'others' are virtuous enough people who aspire to be morally better).

Sixth, admittedly, some moral saints' excessiveness is caused by their psychological disorders, which can seriously undermine their moral endeavor and flourishing. But it is not odd to say that some people with excessive emotional reaction or psychological problems can grasp some values or information more accurately. "What right have we to believe Nature under any obligation to do her work by means of complete minds only?" (James 1902, p. 19). Now, if it is not controversial to say that some composers' or artists' depression enables them to reveal the undisclosed dimensions of beauty, then why should one say that the seemingly close relationship between moral sainthood and psychological anomalies in some saints is a basis to dismiss their way of life? This certainly doesn't mean that psychological problems are an inevitable path to attain moral sainthood, but, just as two different configurations of psychological functions can produce similar or alike mental states, it may be the case that some disordered psychological configurations can result in some distinctive features of moral sainthood. For example, while one's compassion can be developed well through moral or religious education, a very melancholic person can show that quality equally well.

2. The Background and Overview of the Project

2.1. The Background

Having provisionally defined moral saints, I'll explain now the background of my project. It seems that moral saints' outstanding devotion to others often comes at the cost of their own well-being. That's why many consider moral saints to be admirable, but in no way enviable. This ambivalent attitude can eventually result in general apathy to the calls and sacrifices of moral heroes, who are seen as anomalous specimens of humanity. Implicit in this attitude, but explicit in many philosophers' works, is the view that only some degree of moral commitment is compatible with well-being and can be required of all; but going beyond that is neither necessary nor safe. Yet, this view creates the very condition that makes moral sainthood a risky way of life.

Since the publication of Susan Wolf's seminal article (1982) that dismisses moral sainthood, moral saints have fallen on hard times in moral philosophy. Wolf, and others, underline two complementary lines of criticism: *first*, moral sainthood, due to its radical altruism, is too demanding. Moral saints' preoccupation with others' welfare obstructs the development of their own talents and other aspects of human well-being or flourishing (eudaimonia). *Next*, more often than not, to be a moral saint is to embark on a perilous way of life. Since moral saints put themselves at the frontiers of struggles against injustice and other sufferings, they expose their lives to circumstances that greatly diminish their well-being. The demandingness and dangers of moral sainthood allegedly show that it cannot be "a model of personal well-being toward which it would be…good for a human being to strive" (Wolf 1982, p. 419). Therefore, being a moral saint is not just non-binding (as most philosophers argue), but also non-recommended. Apparently, the criticism above is so telling that philosophers haven't found moral sainthood to be an option worth considering, much less defending. That may explain the paucity of philosophical work on this topic.

Yet, dismissing or devaluing moral sainthood is very costly. Seeing moral heroes who shape the moral identity of our society as anomalous humans would threaten our moral integrity and undercut our society's ability to self-reform, which is necessary for its survival in a time of crisis. More crucially for philosophical purposes, since moral saints are seen as the excellent embodiment of broadly accepted moral values, belittling moral sainthood might well destabilize moral thought and reflection. In dismissing moral saints, one implies that the natural outgrowth of a morally good life isn't really good or that some non-moral goodness, the goodness of self-preservation, is better than moral goodness. To conceive of the domain of goodness in this way isn't just problematic, but also implies that common morality is self-undermining; that moral sainthood, which is the consistent extension or culmination of widely endorsed moral demands, turns out to be non-binding and unworthy of recommendation.

In response, I construct a philosophically robust but empirically sensitive project that aims to normatively justify of moral sainthood. The project involves giving philosophical defenses of the claim that being a moral saint isn't just recommendable, but also binding, as it perfects human nature and therefore results in human flourishing.

2.2. An Overview of the Project

I'll start the next chapter by introducing "aretaic eudaimonism (AE)"—a branch of virtue ethics (cf. Hursthouse 1999) as the framework theory of my project. AE holds that virtuousness is necessary for and expresses human flourishing. AE provides the needed conceptual tools to analyze moral sainthood and interpret the relevant data, since studies of moral saints are mostly empirical and philosophically underdeveloped.

I then argue that to philosophically justify or defend moral sainthood is to seek its normative basis in a moral theory (Dworkin 2006, pp. 626-27). This shows that moral sainthood is normatively justified, if it exemplifies some normative property in AE. In my view, to say that *p* is the normative basis of moral sainthood in a theory *q* is to claim that

being a moral saint exemplifies *p*, a normative property that *q* conceptualizes. But what is the property that moral sainthood exemplifies? It is commonly believed that moral saints, due to their status as moral paragons, exemplify the concept of the moral ideal or, in AE, the concept of the fully virtuous. However, since it is sensible to say that nobody can attain perfect virtuousness, it is more accurate to say that moral saints approximate the exemplification of the fully virtuous. To be precise, to be a moral saint is to exemplify degrees of virtuousness, which are maximally realizable for ordinary humans.

But to say that moral saints exemplify the maximally realizable degrees doesn't imply that it is universally binding to be a moral saint. Now, let us suppose that attaining moral sainthood is not universally binding. Philosophers who support this position can be divided into two camps. The first holds that since becoming a moral saint is very hard and risky and yet morally excellent, it is non-binding but recommendable; while the second camp thinks that the excellence of becoming a saint is outweighed by the difficulty and the risk, and so it is both non-binding and non-recommended. So, if attaining moral sainthood isn't binding, then it is *either* non-binding but recommendable or non-binding and non-recommended. I think that both disjuncts unacceptably imply that the extent of moral development or the demandingness of moral demands is limited.

Hence, in the third chapter, I defend the universal bindingness of attaining moral sainthood, by focusing my argument against the moderate strains of AE, which argue that being committed to the project of virtuous development is compatible with being satisfied with a moderate degree of being virtuous. My argument is based on my examination of the vagueness of the concept of virtuousness. As a vague concept, it is not only the case that virtuousness admits of degrees (e.g., being moderately, highly, and fully virtuous), but also, the boundaries that separate those degrees admit of borderline cases. This leads to the formulation of the Continuity Thesis (CT), which states that the degrees of being virtuous are blended on one aretaic continuum and cannot be too finely individuated without being arbitrary. I argue that due to CT, there are no non-contentious criteria that

can stipulate the normative minimal extent of the virtuous person's moral development. One cannot say that it is enough to be fairly but not very virtuous, as others can ask: "why is it not enough to be almost fairly virtuous?", which leads to a slippery slope. This allows me to claim that reaching the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness is neither supererogatory nor optional.

Yet, since AE holds that virtuousness is necessary for and expresses eudaimonia, CT then entails that both being virtuous enough and being fully virtuous are on the same continuum that should track the increase of eudaimonia from the former to the latter. Few accept the implication nowadays. But if the highly virtuous like moral saints aren't flourishing, then CT and thus AE, are wrong (since CT is the essential feature of virtuousness, which is the central concept in AE, the wrongness of the former denies the truth of the latter). This is because, as my previous arguments show, if there are no criteria that can stipulate the normative minimal extent of the virtuous person's moral development, then, the normative minimal extent of flourishing cannot be stipulated either. One can't both accept CT and AE and say that since reaching higher degrees of virtuousness would be detrimental to flourishing, it is enough to be moderately virtuous. To say that, one must either deny the truth of CT, as well as AE, or limit the extent of the virtuous development and flourishing, which renders CT, as well as AE, incoherent. So my remaining task is to defend CT and AE by arguing that reaching maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness in moral sainthood is eudaimonic. To argue successfully, I must find and formulate first a conception of eudaimonia that can accommodate the results of the empirical studies of moral saints' happiness.

My arguments in chapters 2 and 3 are directed against what I call the structural argument against the bindingness of becoming moral saints (which, as I argue later, is identical to reaching some of the highest levels of virtuousness). The structural arguments, in my reading, are based on the conceptual examination of the concept of virtuousness. In contrast, the target of my arguments in chapters 4, 5, and 6 is the material argument

against the bindingness of becoming moral sainthood. The material arguments conclude that being highly virtuous or attaining moral sainthood is non-binding and non-recommendable, because it is inimical to human flourishing.

The fourth chapter initiates my argument against the material arguments. There I will clarify first some of the most important concepts (flourishing, happiness, etc.), identify the problem, and devise some criteria for solving it. After that, I will assess the empirical evidence for the psychic flourishing of moral saints, and finally, explain the inadequacy of that evidence, as well as its benefits and implications for my project.

In the fifth chapter, making the results of the empirical studies of moral saints' happiness my starting point, I try to find a suitable notion of eudaimonia that can defend moral sainthood, by capitalizing on the theoretical resources of the New Natural Law ethics (NNL), a theory that belongs to the AE family. Through NNL, I identify some basic goods that constitute human flourishing and formulate an objective conception of eudaimonia that can accommodate moral sainthood. In this process, NNL gives normative, basic guidelines for organizing goods and attaining eudaimonia, some of which are: (1) To live flourishingly, one must excellently promote basic goods, as they are intrinsically linked to the well functioning of human nature; (2) nonetheless, due to the limits of time and other resources, one must more fully promote basic goods that fit with one's talents and conditions. It's inevitable and natural that some basic goods are less promoted than others, but this need not imply that the less promoted others are intentionally destroyed or belittled. Here, basic goods are organized in a hierarchy, in which the pursuit of some goods must reasonably coordinate the pursuits of the others.

So there's no structural difference between an artist who can't fully promote some basic goods due to her devotion to the pursuit of the basic good of aesthetic enjoyment and a moral saint. *Pace* Wolf, moral saints can live flourishingly, as moral sainthood realizes a special hierarchy of basic goods. In line with empirical data, we can say that the

basic good that moral saints mainly seek is friendship, for they always identify themselves with those who need them, seeing these people's concerns as their own.

Nevertheless, there are some problems with identifying moral sainthood with the pursuit of the good of friendship, and I'll argue later that it is best to see moral sainthood as a participation in the basic good of religion. I start my argument by assessing the results of the empirical studies of moral saints, which strongly suggest that living as a moral saint can only be adequately explained as having a kind of religious experience. I then argue that being broadly considered, the basic good of religion and religious experience can account for the fact that some moral saints are not religious believers.

Further, I also argue that it is consistent with NNL that although basic goods are incommensurable and equally valuable, the basic good of religion functions as the objective coordinating good that regulates the participation in other goods. I also argue further that if this is the case, then the most fruitful result of the participation in the basic good of religion and the culmination of moral life might well overlap in moral sainthood. For that reason, moral sainthood is a sort of superordinate way of life that must be pursued by all and is compatible with vocational pluralism.

Finally, I argue that by regarding moral sainthood as the excellent pursuit of the good of religion, one can explain that it overlaps with the pursuit of the good of friendship, as moral sainthood is a form of friendship between the virtuous and the morally perfect being. I also point out that this conclusion can provide some explanation of the seemingly inescapable sufferings or evil that moral saints often might have to endure. As a result, it might be the case that since moral sainthood is the culmination of moral development, the ultimate reasonableness of morality, which is challenged by the fact that the virtuous often suffer in this world, is provided by faith in the existence of the moral governor of the universe.

2.4. On the Use of Empirical Studies in this Project

I want to justify a bit the use of empirical studies in my dissertation. One might think that since one of the main aims of ethics is to effect people's moral betterment, ethicists would naturally study those very people who extraordinarily embody moral values. But some might reply that as an *a priori* discipline, it is proper for ethics to be mainly done from the armchair, without paying too much attention to empirical cases. They might think that it is mistaken to say that our moral knowledge and endeavor turn on the study of moral exemplars, as our evaluation about them presupposes already the *a priori*-ness of moral standard.

But it is compatible with the *a priori*-ness of ethics to say that: (*1*) some moral knowledge *can* be acquired *a posteriori*; (*2*) investigating *a priori* moral principles must also consider their being applied through the agency of human psychology, the full study of which is *a posteriori*; (*3*) empirical cases can help assess the practicality of *a priori* moral principles or the extent of human ability to follow them (cf. Doris & Stich 2008). Further, in using empirical inputs in ethics, one isn't doing things purely *a posteriori*. In investigating and making use of moral sainthood, for example, I'll go back and forth *between* using *a priori* moral truths to examine moral saints *and* gleaning some normative insights from their empirical characteristics.

Now, points (a) to (c) above can make up the reasons for my use of the relevant empirical cases in this work. About (a), studies of moral sainthood might reveal some virtues or other moral concepts that haven't been seriously considered in ethics. Points (b) and (c) are interrelated: the examination of people's psychology in practicing certain moral principles will reveal the extent of human ability to follow them, and this at the same time helps to show the practicality or normativity of those principles. In the case of moral sainthood, however, the implementation of (b) and (c) is a bit unique: due to moral saints' outstanding morality, moral philosophers can examine whether moral saints can function as the concrete embodiment of the ideals of their moral theories. Every ethical

theory's moral ideal is just an incarnation, so to speak, of that theory's content; so in examining moral saints, ethical theorists want to look for the way moral saints exemplify their theories' concepts or principles. This attempt can thus provide valuable raw data for philosophical reflections (e.g., what sort of psychology or life that must be possessed and displayed to excellently embody the ethicist's moral ideals).

Lastly, I want to explain briefly the empirical studies on moral saints that I use in this project. Those studies are of two kinds: the first is on moral saints in general, while the second is related to the issues of moral saints' well-being. Studies that belong to the first kind are scientifically conducted by able psychologists, and some of them have become standards of reference. They are based on carefully conducted intensive interviews with figures whose moral exemplarity has been acknowledged and examined by academics, religious leaders, and the public (Colby & Damon 1992, 1993). Besides, the selection and investigation of those moral exemplars are designed to avoid gender, racial, socioeconomic, religious, and other biases. I also make use of biographical reports and analysis that are written by professional writers (Kidder 2003, Miller 1982), social scientists (Kleinman 2006), religious studies scholars (e.g., Hawley 1987), philosophers (e.g. Carbonell 2009), and scholars from other disciplines (Thorn & Mountin 2001). Those works discuss both widely recognized moral saints and some less famous ones like Paul Farmer, Dorothy Day, and others.

The second kind of study belongs to the burgeoning field of well-being psychology, which tries to reverse psychology's focus on psychopathology by investigating the psychologically defining features of well-being. However, there is a disagreement among well-being psychologists on the nature of well-being, which results in the field's being divided into the hedonic and the eudaimonic camps. Hedonic psychologists think that well-being consists of pleasure or happiness that comes from a positive judgment of the overall quality of one's life (Diener et al 1998). Many hedonic psychologists use SWB (Subjective Well-Being) assessment to evaluate well-being. SWB measures happiness on

the basis of its three constituents, which are: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood (Diener & Lucas 1999). Eudaimonic psychologists, on the other hand, think that well-being isn't reducible to happiness, for it is about the fulfillment of human nature (Waterman 1993) that not only can promote happiness, but also physical health, vitality, and integrity (Ryan & Deci 2001, pp. 146-47; Ryff & Singer 1998a, 1998b). Hence, eudaimonic psychologists evaluate well-being by measuring the fulfillment of the flourishing-conducive aspects of human nature, such as: autonomy, skill, relationship, etc. (Ryan & Deci 2001, pp. 146-47).

I cannot explain the details of the research methods and the psychometric assessments of both camps here (see: Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz 1999, Diener & Lucas 1999; Ryan & Deci 2001; Peterson & Seligman 2004, chap. III; for criticisms and defenses, see Haybron 2011, chap. IV; Tiberius 2006, p. 3; Ryff 2003). It is enough to say that whereas the hedonic camp's notion of well-being is self-consciously subjective, the eudaimonic camp's is quite perfectionist and aims at achieving more objectivity. The hedonic camp is often criticized for confusing well-being with happiness and so making well-being person- or culture-relative, while the eudaimonic strand is accused of being paternalistic and letting philosophers steer their research. Some psychologists, however, try to combine the assessment methods of both camps. Some hedonic psychologists adopt some eudaimonic approaches, as they accept that the fulfillment of human nature is a necessary condition for life satisfaction or happiness. The eudaimonic psychologists also use some hedonic methods, as they agree that happiness is either indicative of well-being or one of the eudaimonic aspects of human nature (cf. Ryan & Deci 2001, King & Napa 1998, McGregor & Little 1998). The methodological eclecticism can be seen in positive psychology (Lopez & Snyder 2009), an influential eudaimonic branch of well-being psychology. Positive psychologists aim to codify and promote positive traits, positive affects, and the institutions that support them, all of which are distinctive human strengths that lead to and constitute flourishing (Seligman 2003, 2009; many studies that I

will use are done by positive psychologists). I explain briefly now some other features of well-being psychology that I hereafter use:

First, most studies that I use come from the eudaimonic camp. But it will be clear that most of the quoted studies in this section talk more about happiness than flourishing (but see Lopez & Snyder 2009). This may be caused by the widely shared assumption that happiness is indicative of well-being or that subjective well-being is both a constituent of objective well-being and the result of the exercise of virtues that lead to objective well-being (cf. Ryan & Deci 2001, Peterson & Seligman 2004).

Next, the studies that I hereafter use are of two kinds. The first kind examines factors that lead to well-being in general, some of which are exemplified by moral saints, while the second directly investigates the eudaimonic characteristics of moral saints. My use of both kinds of works is based on their connection: the second uses data from the first, while the first sometimes uses moral saints as its supporting examples. This interrelationship may be premised upon the psychologists' findings that eudaimonic strengths or factors (e.g., positive traits and affects) are realizable in a variety of vocations. That is, when two persons from different vocations are truly flourishing, it is not arbitrary to say that some strengths or factors that lead to the flourishing of the first can be used to explain the flourishing of the second. That also implies that at least some psychological and other sorts of indicators of flourishing are quite universal. For instance, in Csikszentmihalyi's studies, one indicator of flourishing is the phenomenon of flow that results from deep engagement in intrinsically valued activities. He found that the flow and its causes are realizable in the lives of artists, moral saints, writers, etc. Thus it's not the case that when I use the aforesaid first kind of studies to explain moral saints, I just juxtapose some compatible but unconnected subject matters.

Third, many psychologists assume that the meaning of 'morality' in their works is the same as the common conception of it (cf. Lapsley & Narvaez 2004). However, it seems that in well-being psychology, especially in its eudaimonic strand, morality is best

understood in the framework of virtue ethics, for it studies moral action as a kind of habituation or expression of character that brings out well-being. This is more explicit in the works of positive psychologists, who clearly use aretaic language and openly express their indebtedness to Aristotle and other virtue ethicists (e.g., Peterson & Seligman 2004; cf. Nussbaum 2011). But how can one be sure that well-being psychologists' theories about moral agents in general and their flourishing are applicable to moral saints, seeing that, as some philosophers think, being unusually moral is detrimental to flourishing? Although this is a weighty issue, it is enough to say now that in the eudaimonic strand of well-being psychology, the continuity between the ordinarily virtuous people and moral saints is assumed (i.e., the second is the developmental terminus or the paragon of the first) and so the former's psychological underpinning and its ensuing flourishing is extendable to the latter (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1990, Haidt 2003).

3. The Significance of Moral Sainthood to Ethics in General

Before delving into the core content of this dissertation, I want to spell out some possible ways to benefit from reflection on moral sainthood in doing ethics. In other words, I want to show some advantages that moral philosophers can capitalize upon, if moral sainthood is philosophically defensible or justifiable, which this project aims to show. But from another angle, one can say that the content of this section (i.e. the advantages of using moral sainthood in ethics) can be the reason or stimulator for investigating whether, contrary to some philosophers' claims, moral sainthood is indeed an ethically defensible or even normative way of life.

Before deciding to write on this topic, I was startled by the paucity of the relevant philosophical works, seeing that moral sainthood is significant for ethics and ethical education. But more crucially, it is grossly unfair that people always wait for and witness passively those heroes or saints. Here, philosophers can show the practical significance of their discipline by defending a more heroic and committed moral life, and thus help get

rid of the mindset that creates and supports the very condition that makes moral sainthood a seemingly non-flourishing way of life. It is this practical problem, and not moral sainthood, that undermines the eudaimonia of both the saints and other human beings.

3.1. Moral Sainthood and Moral Education

One main advantage of studying moral sainthood concerns the way one uses moral philosophy in moral education that also—but not always exclusively—aims at moral betterment. Since moral saints' uplifting effect is a powerful means to put one's moral theory into practice (Haidt 2003), educators can use moral saints in their attempts to explain ethical principles or truths more effectively. Although the use of moral saints in that context is by itself insufficient, it can be a good start for cultivating moral commitment and passion.

A lecturer in ethics, D. Cooley, reports that without providing real moral ideals (and not the fictional archangel, the ideal self, etc.), students only theoretically understood ethics without grasping its spirit (Cooley 2004). Consequently, in their attempts to apply moral rules, they're under the spell of their biases and used the rules wrongly. Cooley then asked his students to adopt real moral ideals with whom they could create emotional connections as their moral guides. As a result, the students were more motivated to think and act ethically, as they desired to embody their ideals' moral qualities and did care for what their ideals would do in their shoes. Also, real moral ideals can challenge one's assumptions about one's power and the nature of the situation, which usually make up one's rationalization. Cooley mentions an interesting case of how his students rationalized their making personal copies from their employers' copy machine. But when they began to invoke their moral ideals, the emotional and cognitive impacts washed the rationalizations away, and they admitted the wrongness of the action. Thus, the pedagogical use of moral saints or ideals might well be able to invite people to cultivate a psychology that is more hospitable to moral values.

3.2. Moral Sainthood and the Humanitarian Role of Moral Philosophers

Another potential benefit of focusing on moral sainthood is seen in moral philosophers' humanitarian role for making their societies morally better places. What I mean is not that moral philosophers must become or do virtuous actions, but they can use their expertise or writings to contribute more to humanitarian causes. Now, if that is the case, then one of the most valuable and significant things that philosophers can do is to defend a more demanding or committed moral way of life, like that of moral sainthood. This sounds quixotic or obsolete. Many ethicists today think that doing ethics aims at finding the truth of moral claims, even if it ends up challenging morality. Presently, most moral philosophers do not think that they are the lawyers of humanity (Cicero) or responsible for defending morality against the attack of false, harmful philosophy (Kant). Let's call this view (that was advocated for the first time by Socrates) 'the Socratic Ideal of Doing Moral Philosophy' (SMP). SMP states that:

(SMP-1) Doing moral philosophy is internally related to moral endeavor, iff philosophers' doing moral philosophy necessarily involves their doing it for moral purposes.

SMP-1 seems true, since many philosophers wrote books that call people to eliminate injustice, animal cruelty, etc. But it might be more accurate to say that in doing philosophy for moral purposes, a philosopher does it *qua* being a moral agent, but not *qua* being a philosopher. Here we can say that the nature of an activity is decided by the agent's final goal in doing it, and thus, philosophizing and moral endeavor are just contingently united in the philosopher's being a moral agent. Yet, one may say that moral philosophizing is internally related to morality only very weakly. That is, irrespective of philosophers' aims, ethics is always relevant to moral goals. Thus, Rawls' theory of justice is pertinent to struggles against injustice, regardless of whether Rawls did his work for moral purposes. It's also important to note that SMP must only concern ethical

thoughts that are conducive for moral purposes (so nihilism must be excluded). Let's modify our statement of SMP accordingly:

(SMP-2) Doing moral philosophy is internally related to moral endeavor, iff philosophers' pro-morality moral philosophy is necessarily relevant to moral purposes.

But SMP-2 is awkward, for the so-called internal relation here doesn't depend on moral philosophers' awareness of their engagement in moral endeavor. Yet one can say that this is not a problem, for philosophers' pro-morality thoughts contain mind-independent normative truths that can always benefit moral endeavors. However, SMP-2 doesn't correspond to the Socratic ideal, which avers that being a philosopher directly leads to an engagement in moral endeavors. One can say accordingly that although philosophers can do moral philosophy, as long as they think that this doesn't require them to practice it, they haven't fully done moral philosophy. This doesn't ambitiously imply that in not practicing all that they know, they cannot be called moral philosophers. For this reason, SMP-2 can be modified as:

(SMP-3) Doing moral philosophy fully is internally related to moral endeavor, iff philosophers' doing pro-morality moral philosophy necessarily includes their doing it for moral purposes.

My basis for accepting SMP-3 may be simplistic: I believe that knowledge of moral truths cannot stop at the cognitive level. Just as the ability to explain an object's secondary qualities from a third-person viewpoint doesn't amount to the knowledge of it, theoretical understanding of moral truths isn't identical to the full understanding of them. Further, since normative truths are mediated or known through one's psychological apparatus, then, ethicists in their philosophizing can't help reflect on the working of their moral psychology, and thus, a psychologically deeper or more engaging moral reflection, which naturally happens in real moral contexts, will greatly aid moral philosophizing. I don't endorse Socrates' intellectualistic view that theoretical knowledge is sufficient to

move one to live morally, but I believe that due to the special nature of moral truths, fully understanding them is inseparable from being motivated by them. So it may be that while the virtuous understand moral goodness more fully than non-virtuous philosophers who can just understand it theoretically, the same can't be said with virtuous philosophers.

This doesn't mean that all philosophizing in ethics should be done in real moral settings, but, as SMP insinuates, moral philosophers are ideally more sensitive to morally pertinent situations or needs, and they, due to their somewhat richer cognitive resources, ideally should more proficiently embody their moral beliefs. Therefore, moral philosophers must view their philosophical skill and work as being very crucial for addressing moral problems in their societies or the world. This implies that moral philosophers need to extend their efforts beyond the academic community by transmitting their thoughts to the public.

Now, what is the significance of moral sainthood to moral philosophers' executing their humanitarian role? One possible answer is that, as Paul Farmer said in explaining the reason for his vocational choice, "life sucks." This world is not only morally dangerous (John Doris' phrase), but full of moral evils, many of which are preventable, but only with strenuous moral efforts and sacrifices. People usually wait for and witness passively those heroes or saints who often almost singlehandedly face and deal with the sources of evil. Against this background, an admirer of Paul Farmer soberly said, "One is tempted to call Paul Farmer's passionate sensibilities and loving ambitions otherworldly, but only in sadness that there are too few of him in the world" (in the back cover of Kidder 2003). Here, moral philosophers can help by using their theories to defend a more heroic and saintly moral life, and thereby call others to join the saints in their struggle. Seeing that many are still languishing and going to die in this extremely unjust world, moral philosophers might have to rethink their ambivalence on moral sainthood.

CHAPTER II:
"MORAL SAINTS AND VIRTUOUSNESS":
A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF MORAL SAINTHOOD

"My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good…or what ought to be done…To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not" (Taylor 1992: 27; 28)

1. Some Methodological Considerations of the Project

1.1 The Objective of this Chapter

In this chapter, I first argue for the use of a framework theory in my project, and then look for the place or basis of moral sainthood in that theory. To seek the normative basis of being moral saints in a theory is to philosophically justify moral sainthood, which is the aim of this dissertation. This is because, in saying that *p* is the normative basis of moral sainthood in a theory *q,* one claims that becoming moral saints is justified by *q* through their exemplification of *p*, a normative property[5] that *q* conceptualizes. This chapter aims at seeking *p*, on which the subsequent chapters base their cases.

A brief note: the investigation in this chapter goes both ways, i.e., via evaluating and synchronizing the relevant *a priori* conceptions of the theory and the *a posteriori* studies of moral saints. To be precise, I want to defend moral sainthood within the framework of a normative theory *through* arguing that the theory, as well as its central

[5] I will use 'concept' and 'property' interchangeably. Although they are clearly different, it suffices to say in this project that concepts are the mind-dependent correlatives of properties.

concepts, can be made better by incorporating some normative insights from the empirical studies of moral saints. As a result, the outcome of adopting this syncretistic approach is twofold: (*1*) bringing the framework theory and its pertinent concepts into line with the empirically informed moral psychology, which is provided by the empirical studies of moral saints; (*2*) defending moral sainthood within the framework of the theory, which, after the empirically informed improvement, becomes a more suitable justifying basis for moral sainthood. This strategy, I believe, is neither viciously circular nor conflates the normative with the descriptive, because: (*1*) it just extracts some normative data from the empirical studies of moral saints, and (*2*) moral saints in their highly virtuous life might have grasped or lived out some normative truths or principles that might escape the attention of moral philosophers.

Now, the present chapter just aims at defining moral sainthood philosophically, viz., in line with the framework theory. Accounting for moral sainthood in line with the ethical theory that becomes its theoretical framework is the first crucial step of the normative justification of moral saints. After finding the normative basis of moral sainthood in its framework theory, I can then examine whether becoming a moral saint is binding.

1.2. The Need for a Framework Theory

In this project, I try to justify or defend moral sainthood within the framework of a suitable ethical theory (so the strategy is also about making the theory a philosophical bastion of moral sainthood). The reasons are: *first*, studies of moral saints are mainly empirical and philosophically underdeveloped, so it's crucial to not overlook the *a posteriori* but perhaps essential features of moral sainthood. To philosophically filter and develop them, we need to use as a framework a normative theory that can best explain moral sainthood. *Next*, without the framework theory, I can just do the project either theory-neutrally or eclectically. The former is virtually impossible, as talk about

normative issues inevitably employ theory-laden concepts. The latter is extremely difficult to do, as many theories are mutually incompatible.

One can object that this project exploits a theory to defend a philosophically untested moral practice, and fails to consider that without passing a normative theory's test, moral beliefs and its sanctioned practices are roughly based on prejudices (cf. Kagan 1989, pp. 13-15). One might say that contrary to this project, which from the start clearly aims at defending moral sainthood, the defense of some beliefs through testing is just a by-product, for the tester must preclude any commitment to the examined beliefs. This stringent view seems to assume that moral theory's main function is to test moral beliefs (Williams 1985, p. 72), but it too demandingly implies that only moral theorists can have the most correct moral beliefs. The stringency is also unrealistic, as presently, normative theories have various standards of testing, some of which aren't mutually compatible.

But for those who think that most people can have moral knowledge and do it rightly, it is all right to defend very basic and widely accepted moral beliefs even without testing them first (cf. Scanlon 1992, p. 23). Also, it's legitimate to say that the defense is open to correction but not to total rejection of those beliefs, unless one thinks that her moral commitment isn't worth preserving. This is especially true with moral sainthood, which is widely seen as the most excellent embodiment of the widely accepted moral values. For this reason, one can even rightly question the reasonableness of a theory that rejects moral sainthood (cf. Zagzebski 2004, p. 41).

1.3. Virtue Ethics as the Framework Theory

Now, what is the most suitable framework theory for defending moral sainthood? I believe that virtue ethics is one of a few theories that qualify to be the framework theory.[6] Yet, not all strands of virtue ethics qualify, and I find that it is a group within

[6] Mellema thinks that moral sainthood's closeness with virtue ethics is so obvious "as to be hardly worthy stating", Mellema 1991, p. 139; cf. Trianosky 1986.

them, which I call 'aretaic eudaimonism' (AE; cf. Hursthouse 1999, Foot 2003, Russell 2011, Annas 2011, etc.), that most satisfactorily qualifies. Before going on, I want to note that the word 'virtue' in AE signifies either an individual moral disposition (courage, kindness, etc.) or a holistic personal character that organizes individual virtues. I hereafter call the latter virtuousness or being virtuous, and the former virtue or individual virtues. Allow me at this point to formulate AE more exactly, as I'll often use the term:

(1) *a theory* t *is a member of a group of virtue-based theories* AE*, only if in* t:
- a. *virtuousness or being virtuous is a central normative concept*,
- b. *being virtuous is both a necessary condition for and an expression of human flourishing*
- c. *the disposition to follow moral reasons is the locus of virtuousness*

To elaborate previous paragraph's main idea, I mention here some traditional features of AE that qualify it to be this project's framework theory:

First, in AE, virtuousness is the fundamental concept that becomes the basis for formulating and explaining the normative conceptions of right actions, moral reason, motivation, and other moral concepts. The centrality of virtuousness in AE is echoed in the studies of moral sainthood, which report that the most defining feature of moral saints is the permanent, rich inner source of their altruism, which consists of vibrant dispositions, moral intelligence, and psychic flourishing.

Second, according to AE and moral saints studies, it is the possession of the deep-seated, enduring, and psychologically rich responsiveness to moral reasons, which defines virtuousness, that makes one a morally excellent person.

Third, echoing AE, moral saints studies affirm that virtuous activities are both the condition for and the manifestation of human flourishing (eudaimonia).

Now let us consider some possible objections to the use of AE in this project.

First, AE might not be able to fully explain all of moral saints' characteristics. My reply: some hard to explain characteristics may just need further explanations that are

consistent with AE. What is more, I won't shy away from using some characteristics that can challenge AE. In my view, these characteristics either require the modification of AE or moral sainthood or aren't universally normative. Thus, defending the mainstream views of AE and moral sainthood isn't my main concern, and I'm willing to experiment with ideas that are quite alien to both, though they cannot contradict them.

Second, if it's really the case that, as its critics say, moral saints lead non-flourishing lives, can AE truly justify moral sainthood? It seems that it can't. However, the inability to solve this problem not only renders moral sainthood unjustifiable, but can also threatens AE. Why? Provided that moral saints are highly virtuous, then, in denying moral saints' flourishing, AE can only claim that either the growth of virtuousness to some high level is detrimental to human flourishing and so one must not be too virtuous or moral saints are not truly virtuous. Both disjuncts, however, are problematic. I will try to answer this second objection in the last three chapters.

2. Defining Moral Sainthood via the Concept of Virtuousness

What I'll do in sections 2 and 3 is to define moral sainthood within the framework of AE by (*1*) formulating first a schema or a formal definition of moral sainthood, (*2*) filling the schema with a normative property in AE that is exemplified by moral saints, and (*3*) trying to give a substantial or material definition of moral sainthood by finding the essential features of the normative property in AE that moral saints exemplify.

2.1. The Formal Definition of Moral Sainthood

At this point, we need to find the normative basis of moral sainthood in AE. In line with what I said in the beginning of this chapter, to look for the normative basis of moral sainthood in AE is to seek the normative property *p* in AE, which is exemplified by moral saints. This can be formulated in a formal definition of moral sainthood below:

(2) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, a person s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies p.

It is quite common to say that moral saints, who are seen as moral paradigms, exemplify the property of being the moral ideal or the fully virtuous in AE (cf. Trianosky 1986), which includes already the idea that moral saints are radically altruistic. The aforesaid definition of moral sainthood can then be modified as

(3) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies the property of being fully virtuous.

Yet, if, as many think, the moral ideal in AE is morally perfect, moral saints, who aren't flawless, can't exemplify the ideal. One must then say that moral saints only exemplify the ideal imperfectly**,** which is just like saying that *c* is an ice cube, if *c* exemplifies cubeness, albeit imperfectly. But seeing that moral saints are widely seen as moral paradigms, we can say that they also closely approximate the fully virtuous. Hence,

(4) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies the property of being fully virtuous nearly or almost perfectly

Nonetheless, the definition here is quite empty, since 'being the fully virtuous person' is still unexplained. I try to give a definition of moral sainthood in the first chapter, but it's mainly an empirically based definition. To justify moral sainthood via a framework theory, I need to see whether the empirically based definition of moral saints can be accommodated by or normatively grounded in the theory. Thus it's crucial for this project to define or explain the property of being fully virtuous informatively.

'Being fully virtuous' seems to consist of two properties: 'being virtuous', which encompasses all degrees of virtuousness, and 'having the highest degree of virtuousness', which is the distinctive property of the fully virtuous. So it seems that one cannot define the fully virtuous without explaining both properties. But this view is problematic. In AE, virtuousness cannot be understood without the notion of the fully virtuous, so to explain the second by the first is wrong and circular. In fact, AE is chiefly a normative account of

the fully virtuous person. Virtuousness, which is a key concept in AE, isn't just a behavioral propensity, but a deep feature of a person that reflects his or her commitment to moral living (cf. Annas 2011, p. 9). That's why in AE and virtue ethics in general, the accounts of virtuousness, virtues, and their related concepts are baptized into the moral psychology of the fully virtuous. This is to say that virtuousness is a conceptualization of and thus identical to the fully virtuous. Let us call this the ambitious conception of virtuousness. On this account, the so-called distinctive property of the fully virtuous, i.e., having the highest degree of virtuousness, is superfluous.

On the other hand, it is common to use virtuousness or being virtuous to refer to virtuous persons in general. People call both Gandhi and Lincoln virtuous, even though many think that their virtuousness differ in degrees. Here, virtuousness is not the same as being fully virtuous, and it is exemplified by the fully virtuous, the moderately virtuous, and all the other virtuous people. Let us call this the generous conception of virtuousness.

Briefly, the ambitious conception views virtuousness as a non-vague, non-calibrated concept (hereafter, virtuousness$_{NV}$), while the generous conception treats it as a vague and calibrated concept (hereafter, virtuousness$_{V}$). To define the fully virtuous and moral saints informatively, one must examine these conflicting conceptions first.

2.2. Being Virtuous as a Vague Concept

I start by probing virtuousness$_{V}$, which is a vague and calibrated concept. A calibrated concept is a concept that is exemplifiable in degrees, while a vague concept is a concept that admits borderline cases that resist neat classification. Here are the main features of virtuousness$_{V}$[7]:

First, virtuousness$_{V}$ can only admit approximate degrees that cannot be classified too finely without being arbitrary. This is to say, being virtuous is a vague term that can refer to some degrees of being virtuous, such as: being moderately, highly, or fully

[7] My account here is influenced by Russell (2011).

virtuous, and each degree can also admit of further degrees or more correctly, sub-degrees. On this account, one can coherently say that two persons are virtuous, although both are virtuous to different degrees. One can also coherently say that both persons are highly virtuous, although they are highly virtuous to different [sub-] degrees. Besides, there are no clear boundaries between degrees, as those boundaries can admit of borderline cases. For instance, the degrees of virtuousness that separate being moderately and being highly virtuous can only be borderline cases that are classifiable under both moderate and high virtuousness.

Next, virtuousness$_V$ and other vague concepts, especially those that denote excellence, possess quite definite lowest boundaries that cannot be extended at will. The lowest boundary of virtuousness$_V$ is not classifiable under different concepts that it demarcates. This is why the lowest boundary of virtuousness$_V$ cannot be extended to include being barely virtuous. To be virtuous, one must have robust moral dispositions that are consistently expressed for a significant period of time, and so the barely virtuous, who is virtuous only rarely, cannot be called virtuous. Likewise, being minimally wise and barely healthy is neither wise nor healthy. So we can say that for a vague, excellence concept *F*, the lowest degree of being *F* is being *F* enough, as degrees that are lower than being *F* enough might well be below excellence. Now, we can say that the degrees of virtuousness$_V$ roughly consist of being virtuous enough, being highly virtuous, and being fully virtuous. This doesn't mean that there are no other possible degrees or borderline cases between those degrees. My simple classification just reflects the difficulty of finely dividing the degrees of moral or any other kinds of excellence.

Third, predicates that are used without adverbs of degree function to identify the concept's instances or samples. To call Gandhi and Lincoln virtuous is to say that they exemplify virtuousness well enough to qualify as instances of virtuousness$_V$. Here, as I said earlier, saying that '*x* and *y* are virtuous' is consistent with claiming that '*x* is more virtuous than *y*', as the predicate 'virtuous' in the first doesn't preclude the possibility that

both persons aren't equally virtuous. Yet, while to say that '*x* and *y* are virtuous' is to treat them as samples, to say that '*x* is more virtuous than *y*' is to treat them as the exemplifications of the gradational instances of virtuousness$_V$.

2.3. Being Virtuous as a Definite Concept

In some contexts, virtuousness doesn't behave as a vague concept. For instance, in motivating oneself to act virtuously, a virtuous person doesn't think that the virtuousness that she wants to embody is to be exemplified in certain lower degrees only; she cannot even say that she wants to be more than just moderately virtuous and then stop there. This shows that, as friends of AE argue, moral deliberation and motivation in virtue-based ethics naturally aspire to the moral ideal, the perfection of which can give one normative, overriding guidance. In other words, to seek the normative account of virtuousness that can guide and motivate one to be virtuous is to look for an account that is neither modest nor accommodative to differences in degrees.

To motivate oneself by an 'imperfect ideal' ("what would a moderately virtuous person do in my place?") can easily justify one's moral weaknesses or vices. This doesn't mean that in using thought experiments in moral thinking, we mustn't imagine the ideal as having weaknesses. But those weaknesses must be non-moral, i.e. they aren't identical to but can potentially lead to vices, as they are used for thinking about what would the ideal do in some non-morally debilitating conditions, and not for excusing oneself or others from acting virtuously.

Briefly, virtuousness$_{NV}$ entails moral perfection that can't admit of degrees, so that 'being fully virtuous' is a redundant phrase. It's also inaccurate to say that one can become too virtuous. AE holds that to be virtuous, one needs practical wisdom or *phronesis*, but 'excessive virtuousness' is often rooted in fanaticism, priggishness, or sentimental outbursts, which are contrary to wisdom and cannot make one virtuous.

2.4. Concluding Points

First, in truth, the aforesaid conceptions are not two behaviors of one concept, but amount to two distinct concepts, so that it's not contradictory to say that while the second cannot admit of degrees, the other one can. More precisely,

a. Virtuousness$_{NV}$ is an ideal that sets up the normative standard for guiding one's moral endeavor, and determining the possible range of virtuousness levels.

b. Virtuousness$_{V}$ is a calibrated evaluative concept that is used to find out people's virtuousness levels. In common discourse, virtuousness$_{V}$ is often generically predicated to virtuous persons, irrespective of their virtuousness levels. Here, they are treated as instances of virtuousness$_{V}$, and the virtuous (as it is used in common discourses) is therefore definable in this manner:

> **(5) The virtuous** $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is virtuous, iff s exemplifies the property of having a degree that falls within the whole range of degrees of being virtuous$_{V}$.

c. Virtuousness$_{NV}$ belongs to the class of concepts that denotes perfections, while virtuousness$_{V}$ belongs to the class of concepts that denotes excellence. In contrast to the second class of concepts, the first class of concepts cannot be calibrated, as perfection doesn't admit of degrees.

It may be advisable to call virtuousness$_{V}$ virtuousness *tout court*, and virtuousness$_{NV}$ the ideal of virtuousness. Incoherence occurs when one thinks that there's only one notion of virtuousness or confuses both notions. For instance, if virtuousness is just a non-vague ideal, then moral saints are *either* not virtuous, as they aren't perfect, *or* the same as the fully virtuous, which is empirically false.

Second, virtuousness$_{NV}$ is subsumable under or an extension of virtuousness$_{V}$. So we can say that the former is a sub-concept or a property of the latter. Here, virtuousness$_{NV}$ makes up the highest boundary of virtuousness$_{V}$, and it's in this context that calling the first the fully virtuous isn't redundant. Moreover importantly, the

calibration of virtuousness$_V$ is made possible by virtuousness$_{NV}$, since to be able to identify the typical but varied instances of the virtuous, one must know first the normative, unvaried ideal of being virtuous (cf. Russell 2011: 117). Likewise, although being healthy admits of degrees, its calibration is based on the non-calibrated ideal of being healthy, which is an extension of the first. This shows that the set of perfection concepts belong to the set of excellence concepts, as perfection signifies the highest level of excellence. Accordingly, we can define the virtuous$_{NV}$ or the moral ideal this way:

(6) The virtuous$_{NV}$ or the fully virtuous =$_{df}$ for any person s, s is virtuous$_{NV}$, iff s exemplifies the property of having the highest degree of virtuousness$_v$.

Third, one can define moral sainthood informatively, if one treats it as an exemplification of an extension or property of virtuousness$_V$. This is because, real instances of virtuousness or other excellence concepts are mainly identifiable in terms of their excellence levels, assuming that all kinds of perfection aren't exemplifiable. Moral sainthood is thus definable very generally or rather weakly in this manner:

(7) Moral sainthood =$_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies virtuousness$_V$

(7) shows that all virtuous persons are united by the vague but essential property of virtuousness. That is, (7) functions to locate moral saints on the virtuousness$_V$ continuum.

But moral sainthood is seen as the closest approximation of the fully virtuous, i.e., moral saints are widely considered as exemplifying the highest degrees of virtuousness in the world. So a more specific and accurate definition of moral sainthood is:

(8) Moral sainthood =$_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies the property of having one of the highest degrees of virtuousness$_V$ that approximates full virtuousness or virtuousness$_{NV}$.

which is equivalent to the definition below (which I've mentioned above):

(4) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies the property of being fully virtuous (being virtuous$_{NV}$) almost perfectly.

Finally, I want to recap and elaborate the inquiry so far:

First, to justify moral sainthood is to identify its normative basis in AE, which is done by seeking the normative concept in AE that's exemplified by moral saints.

Second, many think that moral saints exemplify the concept of the fully virtuous. But since moral saints cannot fully exemplify moral perfection, what they exemplify must be a degree of virtuousness that approximates the fully virtuous. That is, moral sainthood cannot be identical to the perfectly virtuous, who exemplifies virtuousness$_{NV}$, since it only exemplifies a degree, albeit a very high one, of virtuousness$_{NV}$. Therefore, it is better to define moral saints in line with virtuousness$_{V}$ than by virtuousness$_{NV}$.

Third, to define moral sainthood or other degrees of being virtuous via virtuousness$_{V}$, one must use the fully virtuous, which is a virtuousness$_{NV}$, as the calibrating standard. To calibrate the degrees of being virtuous, one must find and use the non-vague, essential feature of being fully virtuous as the standard of reference. Similarly, to calibrate the degrees of healthiness$_{V}$ (the very healthy, the healthy enough, etc.), one must find and use as the standard the non-vague, essential feature of being fully healthy (say, an organism's being properly functioning, cf. Bloomfield 2001). More precisely then, all degrees of virtuousness$_{V}$ are defined in terms of virtuousness$_{NV}$.

Fourth, once the essential feature of virtuousness$_{NV}$ is found, one can use it as the calibrating standard by turning it into the essential feature of virtuousness$_{V}$. That is, the non-calibrated essential feature of virtuousness$_{NV}$ now becomes the calibrated feature that is shared by all degrees of virtuousness$_{V}$. Likewise, an organism's being properly functioning, which is the essential feature of full healthiness or healthiness$_{NV}$, becomes the calibrating standard through being turned into the essential feature of healthiness$_{V}$ and is thus exemplifiable by every degree of healthiness$_{V}$. Here we find that:

a. The essential features of excellence concepts are the calibrated and vague versions of the essential features of perfection concepts, which are non-calibrated and non-vague;
b. Because perfection concepts are one of the instances of excellence concepts, the essential features of the first are a member of the set of the essential features of the second (i.e., the essential features of all degrees in virtuousness$_V$).
c. The concept of excellence is like a continuum that *(1)* unites all degrees of excellence, and *(2)* is standardized by its highest degree, i.e., the concept of perfection. Similarly, although excellence is a vague concept, when it is placed on the goodness continuum (since goodness is broader than excellence), it becomes the standard for calibrating the degrees of goodness. The pattern is repeated until the fully bad, which is placed at the farthest point on the axiological continuum, is reached.

Last, I want to refine the formal definitions of moral sainthood in accordance with the previous concluding points. First, (8) can be restated as:

(9) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, only if s exemplifies being highly virtuous$_V$ or exemplifies virtuousness$_V$ excellently (given that being highly virtuous$_V$ or exemplifying virtuousness$_V$ excellently here already indicates that moral saints exemplify one of the highest degrees of virtuousness$_V$).

But in terms of virtuousness$_{NV}$, the point behind both (8) and (9) above can be restated as

(10) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s approximates virtuousness$_{NV}$.

(10) shows that all degrees of virtuousness, including that of moral saints, are definable via their distance from virtuousness$_{NV}$, which is the calibrating standard of virtuousness$_V$. This means that full virtuousness and all the other degrees of moral excellence are placed on the same continuum, whereon the first is the standard that can be approximated by the second in various ways (excellently or just good enough).

Therefore, no matter how one defines moral saints, the definition always deals with *(1)* the general property of being virtuous, which is like a continuum that underlies and unites all virtuousness levels, and *(2)* the calibrating standard (i.e., the fully virtuous) on the basis of which the extent of and the locations on the continuum are determined. Bringing up the first without the second is not always wrong, as they mutually imply each other. Consequently, contexts permitting, it is all right that in defining moral saints, one puts aside the difference of virtuousness$_{NV}$ and virtuousness$_{V}$, and that between (8), (9), and (10). The problem [of whether moral saints is definable via virtuousness$_{NV}$ or virtuousness$_{V}$] is thereby solved. Thus, contexts permitting, the word 'virtuousness' or 'being virtuous' that I will use can refer to either virtuousness$_{NV}$ or virtuousness$_{V}$.[8]

3. Seeking the 'Essence' of Virtuousness

The previous section's conclusion is the starting point of the remaining arguments in this chapter. What I'm going to do now is to seek the essential feature of virtuousness, which leads to a more substantial or informative definition of moral saints.

3.1. The Unity of the Virtues (UV)?

The virtuous seems to be defined by the possession of supererogatory power (Trianosky 1986). Since the virtuous is mainly contrasted not to the non-virtuous, but to the morally decent, it seems natural to define the virtuous this way. So while the morally decent person, contrary to the non-virtuous person, is brave enough most of the time, in contrast to the virtuous, she isn't brave enough to act supererogatorily most of the time.

However, since supererogatory capacity or its display in supererogatory actions can come from non-aretaic sources, in probing whether one's supererogatory power or action evidences one's virtuousness, we must show first that one's supererogatory strength or action truly stems from one's virtuousness, but not vice versa. The vicious

[8] But when I compare instances of being virtuous, I use the word 'virtuousness' or 'being virtuous' with adverbs of degree (e.g., fully, very, moderately). In the context of designating virtuous people irrespective of degrees, I usually add qualifying words like all, every, each, the other, etc.

circularity shows that using non-aretaic moral concepts like supererogation to define virtuousness won't work. The reason is: as virtue ethicists affirm, virtuousness signifies a robust, holistic, and enduring manner of being moral that naturally becomes the basis of the exemplifications of other moral properties.

Outwardly supererogatory or virtuous actions and attitudes do not manifest the essence of virtuousness, because it matters more whether one's apparently virtuous behaviors or attitudes are really rooted or *united* in the same moral disposition. So a more dominant view in AE attributes the essence of virtuousness to the unity of virtues (UV). In AE, UV is the basis for attributing one with moral excellence, as it is the essential feature of the virtuous. UV implies that there's only one virtue or disposition that is expressed in various modes that we call virtues (Cooper 1998: 233). So far, I've called this single disposition or character 'virtuousness'. The relation between virtuousness and virtues as being shown by UV is akin to the relation between, say, Obama and his modes of identity (the US President, a husband, a father, etc.). This doesn't mean that those modes are indistinguishable, for an entity's assuming a mode of expression might show some features that the other modes lack. Obama's being a president has features that are absent in his being a father or a husband. Yet, Mr. President = daddy = Barry (let's say that this is what Michelle calls him), for they, with their respective features, are just modes of identity of one person.

In line with a traditional account of UV in AE (Annas 1993, Cooper 1998), UV doesn't only refer to the virtues' being united in one single disposition, but also, the virtues' being united in one single disposition to *follow* phronesis. *Phronesis* is the practical wisdom that the virtuous rely on for making moral decisions or thinking, and it's also the necessary condition of virtuousness, as being virtuous is the excellence of human beings as rational animals. *Phronesis* gives rise to each virtue by disclosing morally salient factors in situations and directing one to respond rightly. So the plurality of virtues

turns on the working of *phronesis* in a variety of circumstances. Thus, we can define UV more clearly as follows:

(11) UV$=_{df}$ a condition in which all virtues are modes of expression of a single disposition to follow phronesis.

Moral sainthood is then definable in the following ways:

(12) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies UV or s's virtues are traceable to a single disposition to follow phronesis

(13) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies virtuousness, which is s's robust responsiveness to phronesis

3.2. Some Problems

Now let us consider some problems that plague UV. *First*, many friends of AE think that UV leads to the infamous completeness thesis, which states that one is virtuous iff in having or displaying a virtue, one has or displays all the other virtues. But UV is in truth consistent with the rejection of that thesis. Although the presence of a virtue may entail or necessarily require the presence of some other virtues, it doesn't mean that the presence of each virtue entails or necessarily requires the presence of all the other virtues. For instance, although courage entails or necessarily requires temperance, it does not entail or necessarily require generosity. Further, since the acquisition of virtues depends on demands of circumstances, and yet we cannot know and exhaust the total amount of morally salient circumstances, we cannot know the total number and kinds of virtues.

Next, why is it the virtues' unity, and not their other features, that demonstrates one's virtuousness? Reply: To say that one's virtues are united is to say that one's seemingly virtuous responses in various situations are traceable to one's robust moral

commitment or disposition, i.e., virtuousness. Imperfect unity means that not all seemingly virtuous responses are traceable to one's virtuousness.

But there are other more intractable problems that can't be easily solved without modifying UV in line with the results of some empirical studies on moral saints. The first problem, which I call the incompleteness problem, is: the way UV is defined does not seem to entail cross-situational consistency, without which one cannot be called virtuous. To say that every virtuous action that one performs or attitude that one has is traceable to one's virtuous disposition doesn't seem to entail that one's virtuous disposition can be activated in most or all morally salient circumstances. So there may be a more essential condition of virtuousness that becomes the basis of both UV and the cross-situational consistency of the virtuous and thus can link both of them more explicitly.

The next one is what I call the unity problem. Psychologically speaking, virtues develop from cognitive-affective compounds that are responsive to morally salient reasons or conditions. After frequent exposures, the compounds become firmly encoded as synaptically embodied prototypes (Churchland 1995), chronically accessible schemas (Lapsley & Narvaez 2004), or simply modules (Adams 2006) that can be activated from their dormancy by their precipitating factors. No matter what is the name of their psychological or neurobiological embodiment, instead of being a single disposition's modes of response, virtues are more like readily activated programs that work separately and automatically. It seems then that UV is just wrong. So the problem is: based on some very convincing results of scientific studies, not to mention the situationist challenge to virtue ethics, it is likely that the so-called virtues are not the modes of expression of a single disposition.[9] If that is the case, then UV, at least as it is being traditionally defined, is not the essence of virtuousness.

[9] I'm grateful to Patrick Kain for helping me to formulate this problem.

4. Finding the 'Essence' of Virtuousness

4.1. The Goal-Based Understanding of Moral Saints and the Virtuous Person

Let us consider now one way to solve the aforesaid problems, which can also help us rightly define moral sainthood. I want to do this by gleaning some significant insights from some empirical studies of moral saints.

Social scientists believe that there are at least two basic characteristics that can define moral saints: (*1*) their radical altruism, and (*2*) the psychological source of their moral power. The second one is more fundamental, as it produces and maintains the first, though the first can strengthen the second as well. William James (1902) observed that the saints' display of great deeds and perseverance seem to come from a psychological center of energy that can easily "[annul and hold their] natural inhibitions and lower cupidities in check" (p. 263, 271). Recent empirical studies on moral saints are motivated by the interest to locate that psychological source of exceptional moral energy. I'll utilize some results of those studies to philosophically refine UV. A preliminary note: in using or elaborating the results of the relevant studies, I sometimes do not differentiate virtuous persons in general from moral saints, for the studies assume the continuity between them (this corresponds to my view that people from all levels of virtuousness exemplify various degrees of virtuousness$_V$).

From those studies, I find and will elaborate the roles of personal, moral and final goals in the constitution of the virtuous person's self-identity, which is a focus of the recent empirical studies on moral saints. I will argue that in making moral self-identity the locus of virtuousness, AE can present a more feasible version of UV that eludes the tricky problems above. Another preliminary note: self-identity in those studies refers to a deep, authentic, and goal-based understanding or interpretation of oneself. It is about things that people say when they explain themselves to significant others or counselors or pastors, especially during moments of crisis or soul searching (e.g., "I'm a person who really wants to be a good husband", "If I cannot get this job, then my life would be

meaningless"). Self-identity in this sense usually reveals a system of goals or projects, in which the pursuit of some crucial goals organizes the pursuits of the other goals.

Both ideas above provide a basis that can refine both UV and the concept of virtuousness, in a way that closely intertwines AE and moral sainthood.

4.1.1. Moral and Personal Goals

An authoritative empirical study characterizes moral saints as individuals who see their moral goals "as a means of attaining their personal ones, and vice versa" (Colby & Damon 1992, p. 300). The study found that moral saints' extraordinary altruism can't be adequately attributed to those factors that have been most often associated with demanding moral life. Sympathy, moral judgments, perseverance, courage, environmental or social influences, religious or educational formation, etc., are inadequate to effect moral sainthood, for those who are neither saints nor heroes can have and show each of these characteristics. So there must be a special psychological mechanism that can bring forth great moral energy that leads to radical altruism. The study concludes that this is none but unity of personal and moral goals in moral sainthood, or the saints' making their moral goals the main contents of their self-identity. This finding has been widely studied and supported by other research. Psychologists report that the union of personal and moral goals is also shown by adolescents who are considered as moral exemplars in their communities (Hart & Begley 1995). The finding has also been developed as a framework to guide and interpret studies on moral psychology, moral development, and personality psychology (Bergman 2004, Pratt, Arnold, and Lawford 2009, Hardy & Carlo 2011).

However, what's the meaning of 'the union of personal and moral goals'? I try to answer by philosophically reconstructing and interpreting the result of those studies. Moral goals generally refer to altruistic goals. In those studies, to be a moral saint, one must have a moral project or goal that affects most aspects of one's life. This means that the goal should be the object of the saint's utmost or final concerns. But what does this

precisely mean? *x* is the object of one's final concern, if one's self-identity can be described in terms of the pursuit or the attainment of *x*. This also means that *x* is a main determinant of one's life meaning or the very goal that renders one's life worth living (cf. Metz 2001). Unless a moral saint sees her moral goal that way, she cannot attain and sustain the dispositional robustness that gives her cross-situational consistency. It's precisely this kind of goal, and not one's sex, race, etc., that one uses to introduce oneself more authentically (cf. Haybron 2008, chap. 9). *This is the meaning of personal goals.* Hence, the attainment of *x* can be the object of one's final concern and the content of one's self-identity, if *x* is one's personal goal. The word 'personal' in this context, therefore, refers to the property of being the content of one's self-identity or the object of one's final concern. So in truth there are not two goals (moral and personal) with distinct contents, but only one moral goal that has been *personalized* in the above sense. In this light, 'the union of moral and personal goals' is an inaccurate phrase, but for convenience's sake, let's retain its use for now.

My reading above can explain why moral saints frequently refuse to see their sufferings as supererogatory, because, for them, it is precisely avoiding the cost of being virtuous that would be the real loss, since it would disintegrate one's self. My interpretation, I think, also closely reflects the meaning of 'the union of personal and moral goals' in the empirical studies of moral saints. A study reports that radical altruism is always shown by "people who define themselves in terms of their moral goals", who are "likely to see moral problems in everyday events…[and see] themselves as necessarily implicated in these problems" (Colby & Damon 1992, p. 307). This means that, as a recent study (Lapsley & Narvaez 2004) shows, goals that define one's self results in a *Weltanschauung*, a special way to filter external inputs and evaluate the world. A necessary condition for this is the goal's becoming a determinant of one's life meaning and self-identity. Starting to embark on a virtuous life is then akin to religious conversion, for all in life, including one's life meaning and identity, are now drastically reevaluated in

accord with an overriding set of values that's embodied in one's moral goal (cf. Annas 1993, p. 440). This is clearly distinct from one who just wants to be morally OK, whose life goals aren't altruistic, although not always immoral.

4.1.2. First-Level and Second-level Goals

Nonetheless, there's one problem with the goal-based interpretation of moral sainthood above. In those studies, moral goals are identical to concrete moral projects, but making them the sole objects of moral saints' final concern is inapt. That is because moral goals in that sense, like vocations in general, are mutable. They are distinct from commitments that define one's self in such a way that their absence makes one's life not worth living. Moral exemplars who rescued the Jews in the Holocaust said that although they knew the danger, they couldn't do otherwise, as to avoid taking the risks is to betray one's own self. But when their projects failed, although they could be very saddened, they didn't 'lose their souls', which could happen only when they renounced their moral commitment. Hence, moral goals don't exhaust one's self-identity, and the latter must be defined then by a higher-level goal that's not easily affected by the vicissitudes of life.

Hence, we must supplant moral goals with a deeper, less mutable kind of goal, that I call a second-level goal. It is a feature of one's motivational structure that one needs second-level goals to make sense of one's life. A second-level goal is broad enough to structure or subsume all other goals, and fundamental enough to sustain the self when one's first-level goals are thwarted. These features explain the generality of second-level goals (living virtuously, etc.). Psychologists also found that due to their wider scope and basic nature, higher-level goals "are more self-defining…they carry vital information about what a person finds valuable, meaningful, and purposeful" (Emmons 1999, p. 54).

For this reason, even though one isn't always aware of her second-level goal, there are some crucial moments in life (life planning, adversities, etc.) that bring people's second-order goals to mind, as those goals are needed to sustain and guide them to examine their first-order goals. Let us say that one has a second-level goal to love and to

be loved, which is fulfilled when one is married. Yet, insofar as the relationship is imperfect, the longing isn't exhausted and can still inspire one to perfect her marriage. Similarly, although in living out their first-level goals, moral saints may not be directly aware of their second-level goals, as long as moral growth is still possible or there are people who need help, the saints' second-level goals are still there and functioning.

I think that one cannot be virtuous without having second-level goals. While first-level goals are concrete projects that become significant parts of one's pursuit of moral excellence, second-level goals are more directly related to one's self-identity. That is, for the virtuous, second-level goals make her becoming morally excellent the content of her self-identity. Therefore, although those goals are expressible in various ways, they are essentially about one thing, which is one's pursuit of moral excellence. For this reason, second-level goals seem to be the very reason that justifies or makes highly virtuous living and actions intelligible, and it is they that motivate one to attain virtues in the first place, and through first-level goals, organize the other goals.

As I said, the word 'personal' refers to the property of being the content of one's self-identity or the object of one's final concern. Therefore, in this context, the words 'second-level' and 'personal' are quite interchangeable, and to say that moral saints are marked by the union of moral and personal goals is to say that moral saints make some broad and fundamental moral goals their second-level goals. Now, when a second-level *moral* goal is abandoned, another goal will be sought and 'personalized'. However, in substituting a second-level moral goal with a non-moral one, one cannot be a moral saint, although this does not necessarily mean that one has become immoral.

In pursuing their first-level goals, moral saints are also pursuing their second-level goals, as the latter are only attainable through the first. This, I think, is necessitated by the nature of second-level goals (its generality or its being more an organizing sort of goal). That's why, without being translated into first-level moral goals, second-level goals

would stagnate or have unhealthy effects.[10] Further, first-level goals for moral saints are not the same as common vocational choices that are often not deep and fluctuate quite easily over time. Instead, the saints' first-level goals are more personal and stable life callings. That's also a reason why the virtuous person's pursuit of her first-level moral goals can often help her to strengthen her commitment to her second-level goals and even to refine it, especially if the latter isn't clear yet (cf. Brewer 2010). It may well be the case then that one cannot be virtuous if one doesn't have any first-level moral goals.

4.1.3. From Second-level Goals to Altruistic Love

What I have explained above are the structural features of second level goals, I will talk now about things that qualify to be the content of moral saints' second-level goals. We have noticed that second-level goals must be more stable and general in scope. Because many friends of AE prefer the notion of virtuousness that encompasses all sorts of goodness (Adams 1999, 2006), second-level goals can be defined as goals to appreciate, promote, or realize goodness in general.[11] However, this definition doesn't seem adequate. One can be excellently responsive to many good things without identifying oneself with their causes. Now, seeing that moral sainthood and many strains of AE stress the primacy of altruistic goodness, it is more correct to say that the second-level goals of the highly virtuous or moral saints are goals to appreciate, promote, or realize others' well-being.[12] More importantly, an altruistic goal is meaningful enough to be the content of one's self-identity, because, as I explain below, it is about love, one of the most undisputable indicators of life meaning and happiness. In other words, to be virtuous, one's moral concerns must affect her mindset and whole life, but this

[10] See my explanation of Carbonell's view of morality *de re* and *de dicto* in the previous chapter.
[11] These are the modes of virtuous responsiveness to the corresponding kinds of moral demands.
[12] Admittedly, many friends of AE do not seem to make altruistic goodness primary. Yet not only that in my reading I found that some friends of AE endorse the primacy of altruistic goodness (e.g., Trianosky 1986, Annas 2010), I also personally think that it is compatible with AE to say that although the virtuous is concerned with all expressions of goodness, the best and the most obvious of them is altruistic goodness.

demanding condition is made possible only if one's motivation for living virtuously hinges on the depth or the seriousness of her love for others.

In pursuing her moral goals, a moral saint unites herself with others, seeing their concerns as her own (Fisher 1990). This kind of union i*s one of the most basic features of love* (Helm 2010) that doesn't aim at affirming the 'I', but at forming a *we* and to "identify with it as an extended self" (Nozick 1989, p. 78). Thus, in the content of moral saints' second-level goals, the self is always pictured collectively. A moral saint's pursuit of her second-level goal is in fact a process to realize her loving union with others through ministering to their needs. This feature is representative of moral saints (cf. Fisher 1990). Moral commitment and integrity in moral sainthood can be understood then as a psychological and behavioral persistence in maintaining and developing this expanded self-identity.

4.2. Formulating the 'Essence' of Virtuousness

4.2.1. From Altruistic Love to Self-Actualization

Moral love, furthermore, brings forth self-actualization. Paradoxically, the self of a moral saint is made real, only when her individuality is relativized in a union with others.[13] Since moral saints' second-level goals, which consist of their union with others, define their self-identity, so their pursuing those goals, which is their putting their love into effect, actualizes the self. More fundamentally, *since* being a person presupposes the need of and the capacity for identifying oneself with other sources of value (cf. Helm 2010, p. 73) *and* persons are the final sources of value, one's self is then mostly defined through one's love of others. So it is likely that, as psychologists have discovered, altruistic goodness is universally good for all (e.g., Lyubomirsky 2007), and not just for moral saints, who, more than other people, might well be aware of the

[13] "Love is *selfless*, but it also enables us…to feel most truly ourselves" (Frankfurt 1993: 24).

benefits of altruism. It is the pursuit of this kind of self-actualization that enables one to live a very demanding virtuous life. For this reason, moral saints' refusal to view their suffering as self-sacrificial or supererogatory is not just out of humility, for what they avoid is the disintegration of their selves, which is more harmful than their sacrifices for their ideals. "There's nothing too difficult for those who love," said Augustine[14]; but we can add, "for in loving, they act for their best interest (i.e., self-actualization)."

Therefore, to be a moral saint or a virtuous person is to commit oneself to an end that is a morally self-actualizing one. Besides, since second-level goals constitute the content of one's self-identity, we can say that they are mainly about what one will become and not about what one will do. Further, although a moral saint's self-identity seems to be explicable in terms of her second-level goal, her self is more ideally defined by *both* second-level and first-level goals. Why? *First*, one's attachment to first-level goals is as strong as or even more concrete than that to her second-level goals, which is due to the nature of first-level goals as the main vehicle for pursuing second-level goals. As second-level goals are being gradually achieved through first-level goals, the former's import and motivating power are transferred to, but without being exhausted by, the latter. That explains moral saints' tendency to identify themselves with first-level goals (cf. Colby & Damon 1992). Nonetheless, in certain moments (e.g., upon reflection), they also describe themselves in terms of moral traits, life philosophy, religious beliefs and moral ideals that constitute their second-level goals (cf. Hart & Fegley 1995, p. 1346). *Next,* this has something to do with moral commitment, that depends on the congruence between one's ideal, which is found in her second-level goal, and one's present moral condition, which is shown by her pursuit of her first-level goal. The absence of either one would render commitment non-existent or unexaminable, as *either* one's so-called dedication to her ideal isn't expressed in her real life or one's apparent moral projects aren't rooted in one's supposedly moral self-identity. Now, due to the inextricability of first-level and

[14] I cannot find the source of this quotation, but I am quite confident that it comes from Augustine's pen.

second-level goals in the virtuous person's self-identity, I hereinafter call their combination *final goals*.

4.2.2. From Self-Actualization to the Self-Based Version of AE (SAE)

The studies of moral saints show that virtuousness is about the self's being actualized in line with its final moral goals. For them, the answer to the question "Why be moral?" is perhaps because that is "who I am", or "I can do no other and…[become] the person I am committed to being"; that's why during the Holocaust, "both rescuers of Jews and those who refused to take such risks…have explained their behavior in similar words: 'But what else could I do?'" (Bergman 2004, p. 37). This way of interpreting the virtuous is the basis for modifying AE into a self-based AE (hereafter SAE). In SAE, the self is identifiable in terms of one's final moral goals, the magnitude of which is conveyed by some phrases that are often used to characterize them (e.g., being self-perfective, the objects of one's final concern, key determinants of life meaning).

It's important to note that to incorporate the notion of self-identity into AE won't result in its becoming a kind of soul-care ethics that was espoused by Socrates or Plato. Since the self and one's life are inextricably lumped together, SAE doesn't merely talk about taking care of one's psyche, but also about promoting human goods that more fully actualize one's self-identity. One more thing to note: there seem to be two senses of the self: the self as a system of goals and as a person. Denoting the concept of a person, the self refers to the totality of the executive or agential functions that are universally shared by all properly functioning rational animals. As a system of goals, the self encompasses *both* the just mentioned functions of person and a system or organization of goals and commitments that constitute one's personal identity. I mainly talk about the self as a system of goals, and so it is better here to use the words 'personhood', 'person', or 'agent' for the self that denotes human person. Lastly, in this work, the words 'self' and 'self-identity' are often interchangeable, unless it's necessary to distinguish them.

Unlike the traditional AE, which claims that disposition is the locus of virtuousness, SAE claims that the self or self-identity of the virtuous is the locus of virtuousness or moral excellence. This may be the only main difference between SAE and AE, as SAE also affirms that virtuousness is a central normative concept and it is both necessary and an expression of eudaimonia. It may be that the difference between AE and SAE is merely terminological: the former's notion of disposition or responsiveness is just replaced by the latter's notion of the self or self-identity. Yet given that those terms are not synonymous, there are some conceptual implications that one's chosen term can inevitably bring to the theory, for better or worse. I think that there are some negative consequences if the disposition that constitutes virtuousness in AE is not specified in terms of the self or self-identity. Hence, locating virtuousness in the self is not merely a terminological change. Here are the precise reasons:

First, although the self is a sort of disposition (for it's defined by pursuits of goals), defining virtuousness exclusively as a disposition can't capture the self's narrative property.[15] As a system of goals, the virtuous self organizes its life goals to form a morally excellent life story. In this light, the self is a subjective representation of one's *planned* life or narrative.[16]

Second, virtuousness usually refers to a deep-seated disposition that involves the functioning of practically all psychological faculties in virtually all aspects of life. Such a disposition can only be adequately understood as the self. The traditional use of the term 'disposition' might misleadingly suggest that being virtuous, although important, isn't the most dominant organizing principle or doesn't pervade all aspects of life.

Third, strictly speaking, moral excellence is a quality of persons (cf. Russell 2009, Annas 2011). The notion of the self expresses this better than that of disposition, because

[15] I borrow the term 'narrative property' from Robert Roberts (see Roberts 2003).
[16] On the other hand, life is a space for implementing projects to achieve goals, the configuration of which must be in accord with one's self-identity.

the self is roughly synonymous with 'person' (yet with some distinct emphases, e.g., the notion of the self might be more individualized or subjective than that of person).

I believe that by assimilating the goal-based notion of the self, SAE presents a more satisfying account of UV that can help us define moral sainthood better. If my argument in this chapter succeeds, then the project so far results in both the refinement of AE and the initial justification of moral sainthood. This doesn't mean that the project tailors AE for the sake of supporting moral sainthood, since AE is refined into SAE in line with normative data or truths that are derivable from studies of moral saints.

4.2.3. The Final Destination So Far: the 'Essence' of Virtuousness

To conclude, in SAE, the essential feature of virtuousness is having a self that is identified by final moral goals. Therefore, in SAE, to say that UV is the 'essence' of virtuousness only makes sense if UV stands for *the unity of agency and final goals that is shown in the teleological organization of individual virtues*.[17] Here, the unity of agency refers to the coordination of virtues that expresses and maintains the integrity of the agent's self-identity, while the unity of final goals refers to the substantive ways or principles that the agent relies on in coordinating her virtues. The former, which is the formal side of the unity, is inseparable from the latter as the material aspect of the unity. The word 'teleological' just stresses that exercising virtues amounts to the actualization or perfection of the virtuous person's morally defined self and life, which entails the actualization or perfection of her agential powers. Let's reformulate UV accordingly:

(14) (UV*) UV is the condition in which the virtues are agentially and teleologically united, i.e., the virtues are organized by the self in accordance with its identity (whose content is final moral goals), for the purpose of the actualization or perfection of that identity.

UV* shows that the defining feature of the virtuous lies in self-integrity. Studies show that for moral saints, the motivating power of moral judgments is supplied by the

[17] Recall my definition of the self in the previous section.

basic but universal concern to express or maintain one's self-integrity (cf. Lapsley & Narvaez 2004). Also, the degree of the self-integrity of virtuous persons is proportional to the influencing extent of their final moral goals in their lives. In this light, the non-virtuous are those who maintain their self-integrity by subjecting their moral goals to their non-moral goals, which have become the contents of their final goals.

Let's see now how UV* addresses the problems that plague UV:

First, UV* can deal with the incompleteness problem (i.e., UV's failure to entail the cross-situational consistency of the virtuous). UV* shows that virtuousness entails the cross-situational consistency of the virtuous, only if the self is defined by moral goals. Virtuous people, especially moral saints, are naturally expected to show virtuous behaviors or attitudes "across a wide variety of trait-relevant situations, even where some or all of these situations are not optimally conducive to such behavior" (Doris 2002: 18). Not only that, for the virtuous, morality pervades virtually all aspects of life.[18] This indicates that virtuous living has now become the final goal that determines one's self-identity. The attainment of such a goal preoccupies one's mind all the time, for it has become, using Bernard Williams' phrase, one's categorical desire. For Williams, a desire is categorical if it's the condition of one's existence, without which one cannot make sense of his going on living (Williams, 1981: 12). We can moderate Williams' account and say that the stake is more about the preservation or integrity one's self. Thus, to put it a bit dramatically, UV* shows that virtuousness is a matter of 'to be [the self] or not to be [the self]'. It's obvious that such an understanding of virtuousness entails cross-situational consistency, considering also that categorical desires and self-integrity are just some psychological ways to say that one is engaged in the project of shaping one's whole life in accordance with one's central aspirations.

[18] Gandhi, for example, "lifted the minutiae of everyday life…into the realm of serious moral discourse" (Jürgensmeyer 1987: 200).

UV* also deals better with the unity problem, as it is compatible with the separability of virtues. I'm not interested in arguing for or against the separability of virtues. I just want to point out that if it is the case that virtues are just separated modules that can work independently from each other, as some ethicists and scientists now believe, UV* has resources to defend, albeit less ambitiously, the unity of virtues. If it's the case that each virtue is just a domain-specific module that can work in isolation, then it seems that the non-virtuous can have virtues (cf. Adams 2006). To avoid this too unorthodox a conclusion, one must say that the main factor that makes one virtuous is the presence of the virtuous self-identity, without which, the so-called virtues are just not-yet-virtuous modules or dispositions. Thus, instead of portraying virtues as modes of expression of one's virtuousness, UV* more modestly views virtuousness as a sort of central operating system that activates or organizes a plethora of modules. In other words, it is through the presence and the teleological coordination of the self, in line with its identity or final goals, that modules become full-blown virtues.

In SAE, the self can be pictured as a kind of cognitive-affective/volitional compound that puts forth and aims at final moral goals. Fodor's theory of the modularity of mind (Fodor 1983) is a good analogy. Fodor argues that the mind consists of many domain-specific modules that are embodied by their respective neural bases. The modules, however, can be used for cross-domain cognitive purposes (e.g., inference, planning, decision making) by the central system, which is domain-general and under voluntary control. Analogously, as the domain-general system of goals that aims at realizing its objectives in all domains of life, the self coordinates or directs individual modules or virtues, even beyond the situations that usually trigger those modules. That might well explain why some moral saints could respond excellently in new circumstances. They showed impressive courage or persistence during grisly ordeals that they had not faced before. Their concern to maintain their self-integrity might very well enable them to extemporaneously mobilize psychological functions that make up individual virtues.

But the fact that 'virtues' can work beyond voluntary control neither proves nor disproves that they aren't virtues but just modules. On the one hand, successful habituation turn modules into virtues that can work automatically. On the other, the automatic working of 'virtues' sometimes results in the 'virtues" being in conflict with other virtues or obstructing the virtuous person's efforts to attain her moral goals. That's why the virtuous like moral saints can impulsively exercise 'all-things-being-considered-not-virtuous-enough virtues'. This necessitates the role of *phronesis* in one's efforts to maintain and actualize her moral self-identity.

5. Moral Sainthood and Virtuousness: Some Concluding Points

At this point, I think that an informative definition of moral saints in SAE can be given. I don't think that we should be worried about how to precisely account for moral saints' degree of virtuousness, since, as I have said, dividing the degrees too finely here is virtually impossible. More relevantly, we can follow the widespread but sensible assumption that moral saints are the most excellent embodiment of virtuousness and as a result, it is quite safe to say that they are the closest approximation of the fully virtuous. I think that one of the main factors that make a moral saint unlike a virtuous enough person is the quality of the structural aspects of their virtuous life (the harmony of goals, the consistency of moral actions or attitudes, the self-integrity, etc.) and not their moral identity (i.e., their making moral causes the content of their final goals). This implies that to ask whether one is a moral saint is to inquire about the cross-situational consistency of one's virtuous actions or the pervasiveness of altruistic concerns in one's life.

Let us recall first some of the aforesaid formal definitions of moral sainthood:

(9) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies being highly virtuous$_V$ or exemplifies virtuousness$_V$ excellently.

(10) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s approximates virtuousness$_{NV}$.

Next, seeing that UV* is the essence of virtuousness, we can restate (8) and (9) more informatively in this fashion:

(15) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s approximates the full exemplification of UV*

(16) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies UV* excellently

we can also say in a more compete way that

(17) Moral sainthood $=_{df}$ for any person s, s is a moral saint, iff s exemplifies the property of having a moral self-identity or self that is defined by final moral goals excellently

For this reason, we can conclude that:

a. SAE reveals AE to be a very demanding ethical theory. Because, having a moral self-identity (or, more precisely, displaying the unity of personal and moral goals that defines the self) can only be adequately expressed in those who are deeply committed to live out a holistic or ambitious moral life. If virtuousness is defined in that way, then becoming virtuous is started by a quite demanding moral level that must progress to a more demanding level.
b. Studies of moral saints not only provide a coherent model of the psychology of moral excellence, but also, due to this model's role in modifying AE and redefining virtuousness, they suggest that moral saints are in fact an excellent exemplifications of virtuousness.[19]
c. Since, as I said above, the degrees of virtuousness$_{V}$ roughly consists of being virtuous enough, being highly virtuous, and being fully virtuous, one can say that moral

[19] I am thankful to Patrick Kain for clarifying this point to me.

sainthood exemplifies the degree of being highly virtuous. This presupposes that to approximate full virtuousness is to be more virtuous than being virtuous enough.

Now, we can also compare AE and SAE on the basis of the inquiries so far:

(1*) (AE) *a theory* t *is a member of a group of virtue-based theories* AE*, only if in* t:
- a. *virtuousness or being virtuous is a central normative concept*,
- b. *being virtuous is both the necessary condition for and an expression of human flourishing*
- c. *the disposition to follow moral reasons is the locus of virtuousness*

(18) (SAE) *a theory* t *is a member of a group of virtue-based theories* SAE*, only if in* t:
- a. *virtuousness or being virtuous is a central normative concept*,
- b. *being virtuous is both the necessary condition for and an expression of human flourishing*
- c. *a self that is defined by final moral goals is the locus of virtuousness*

However, in order to highlight the role of the traditional AE as the framework theory of this project, I still stick with the term AE in the remaining part of this work, unless the context requires me to use SAE. In any case, it is clear that to accommodate and justify moral sainthood, AE should be read in terms of or modified as SAE

Nevertheless, the conclusion above invites one intriguing problem: is every virtuous person (that is, every virtuous enough person) required to attain moral sainthood? But this problem assumes some more basic questions: is every virtuous person required to advance to the next degree of virtuousness? Is every morally decent but less than virtuous person required to advance to the higher level of moral life? Without solving these problems, the argument in this chapter cannot attain the goal of this project, which is the normative justification of moral sainthood. It is not enough to find the normative concept that moral saints exemplify, since without arguing that exemplifying that concept (or becoming a moral saint) is binding, the normative appeal of moral sainthood can always be diminished by its demandingness, and as a result, one is forced to go back to the very objections that start this whole project.

CHAPTER III:
"SHOULD ONE BECOME A MORAL SAINT?"
DEFENDING THE BINDINGNESS OF BEING MORAL SAINTS IN SAE

"…however virtuous someone is, all the good that he can ever perform is still merely [his] duty… [doing one's duty] is no more than to do what lies in the common moral order" (Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason,* 48-49)

1. Introduction:

1.1. Moral Saints and the Concept of the Moral Ideal in AE

I argue for the bindingness of being a moral saint in this chapter. Since the concept of the moral ideal or virtuousness$_{NV}$ in AE has a crucial role in my argument, I start by explaining some crucial points about the concept:

First, as I have said in the previous chapter, virtuousness$_{NV}$ in AE stands for the concept of the fully virtuous person. More exactly, virtuousness$_{NV}$ is the property of a person, as it is best explained in terms of person-based notions like life goals, the self, commitment, etc. It is also hard to overestimate the significance of the fully virtuous in SAE, as it functions as the calibrating standard for virtuousness$_{V}$, the main deliberative device for moral thinking, and the motivational basis to effect moral improvement.

Next, the role of the moral ideal in an ethical theory is basically to spell out the way a person may embody the theory's normative concepts and principles. The moral ideal of a theory *q* is then the epitome of *q* in a personalized form. For this reason, the ideal in SAE must be perfectly virtuous, as the formulation of ethical concepts or

principles in SAE and other virtue-based ethics presuppose the normative, most excellent form of the moral psychology that exemplifies those concepts or principles.

Lastly, my claim in this chapter is: it is a special feature of AE that the ideal isn't just a deliberative heuristic, but also the developmental terminus of moral development. Since the possibility of being morally perfect has been ruled out (2.2)[20], what the claim implies is that it is not the fully virtuous, but the approximation of it, that becomes the developmental terminus of the virtuous. Not all strains of AE espouse this ambitious claim, but if my arguments succeed, then they show that the ambitious reading of AE (especially as it is formulated in SAE) is more coherent and plausible than moderate AE.

1.2. The Objective of the Present Chapter

Now, since moral saints are widely viewed as moral paragons, it is sensible to say that moral saints are the closest approximation of the moral ideal. But the challenge is not about whether it is possible to be a moral saint, but about whether one is permitted to approximate the ideal less ambitiously or without being a moral saint, since moral sainthood is not an easy way of life.

Arguing for the bindingness (viz., the obligatoriness, having the force of moral duty) of being a moral saint is indispensable for justifying moral sainthood. Why? It is important to note that this project's justification process roughly consists of these steps: (*1*) finding the defining feature of moral sainthood, (*2*) seeking its counterpart or basis in the framework theory, and (*3*) probing the normative status or the bindingness of moral sainthood vis-à-vis its theoretical basis. Generally, in finding the theoretical basis of an empirical concept or a moral practice, one at the same time finds its normative status. For example, to find out whether it is justifiable to kill for self-defense, one must examine the defining features of the relevant action, and then search for its normative basis, say, in the

[20] It's more sensible to claim that it's virtually impossible to attain the ideal, although so far there are no proofs for the claim. Even if the ideal is attainable, we cannot say that attaining it without the ability to maintain it for a significant period of time is enough to prove that the ideal is *really* attainable.

principle of double effect. In finding it, one often naturally finds the normative status of the probed action, i.e., whether it is obligatory, permissible, or prohibited. But the normative status of some concepts like moral sainthood and their theoretical bases are controversial and hard to determine. That is why finding their basis and probing their normative status at times become separable. So, I must find out whether the basis of moral sainthood that I've found before, i.e., being highly virtuous or approximating the fully virtuous, is binding.

More specifically, the project is incomplete without arguing for the bindingness of being moral saints, for saying that moral saints exemplify the fully virtuous excellently is compatible with both strong and weak justifications, which turn on the different normative status of moral sainthood. I will argue that it is only strong justification, which turns on the bindingness of being moral saints, that can attain the project's goal. As I see it, moral sainthood is strongly justified, only when the bindingness of exemplifying the degree of moral saints' virtuousness is entailed by the framework theory. Therefore, if exemplifying the degree of moral saints' virtuousness is unreasonable or impossible to carry out, the theory would be rendered incoherent. On the other hand, moral sainthood is weakly justified, only when the bindingness of exemplifying the degree of moral saints' virtuousness isn't entailed by the framework theory, and so, even if exemplifying the degree of moral saints' virtuousness is unreasonable or impossible to do, the theory's coherence would be unaffected.

In my view, this project's success relies on strong justification, for weak justification would eventually question the overridingness of moral demands and the normative extent of moral development. If, as weak justification implies, being a moral saint is non-binding, then it is *either* non-binding but recommendable or non-binding and non-recommendable. The first assumes that moral saints' excellence outweighs the demandingness or the hazard of their altruism, but considering the greatness of the risks and the difficulties of becoming a moral saint, it is still inadequate to make the attainment

of moral sainthood binding. The second horn means that moral sainthood's hazard or demandingness outweighs its moral excellence, so that being a moral saint is non-binding and non-recommendable. In any case, both horns imply that the normativity of moral demands is limited by its demandingness and challenge to well-being.

Therefore, in contrast to weak justification, I will argue that it is binding or non-optional to realize moral sainthood and thereby approximate the ideal as close as possible. Actually, one of the concluding points of the previous chapter, namely, that SAE, due to its redefinition of virtuousness, is a very demanding ethical theory, implies already that moral sainthood must be strongly justified. To base virtuousness on one's moral self-identity makes it clear that for the virtuous, becoming increasingly virtuous in a more ambitious way is binding. However, this chapter will make the implication clearer by providing a more systematic argument for it, especially in the context of the debate with the moderate strains of AE. An important note: in this chapter, I want to argue for the bindingness of becoming moral saints chiefly through the examination of the concept of virtuousness, and not through the investigation of the eudaimonia of the virtuous, which will occupy the next chapters.

1.3. Conceptual Clarifications

In this chapter, I want to argue for the truth of this proposition or its equivalents:

(1) It is binding for the virtuous to be moral saints.

But (1) is rather problematic. It is admittedly certain that although it is impossible to be fully virtuous, being a moral saint, which approximates full virtuousness, is possible. As a result, it is not necessarily the case that moral sainthood is the developmental terminus for the virtuous. Otherwise, a virtuous person who has attained moral sainthood could say that there's no need to be more virtuous, as he has reached the maximally realizable stage of virtuousness.

In this light, (1) must be modified into:

(2) If it is certain that moral sainthood is the maximally realizable degree of being virtuous in this world, then it is binding to become a moral saint.

which is roughly equivalent to

(2*) Since moral sainthood may well be the maximally realizable degree of being virtuous in this world, then it is binding to at least become a moral saint.

It is clear that (2) and its variant is just another way of saying that

(3) It is binding for the virtuous to be maximally virtuous or at least as virtuous as moral saints.

So it seems that what the virtuous must aim at isn't moral sainthood *per se*, but being maximally virtuous, which at present happens to be most clearly exemplified by moral saints. Some might say that if this is the case, then, considering the 'crooked timber' out of which humanity is made, the most feasible way to avoid complacency is to say that although full virtuousness is impossible, one must strive to attain it as best as one can. Although I'm not against this idea, for clarity, I think it is better to just focus on the idea that for every virtuous person, it is binding to be maximally virtuous.

If it is neither certain nor necessary that moral sainthood is the maximally realizable degree of virtuousness in actuality, then being maximally virtuous should supplant moral sainthood as the binding goal for the virtuous. Some might reply that without moral saints, it is hard to conceive of the maximally virtuous person's disposition or way of life, which would hamper the efforts to develop in virtuousness. But this claim is disputable. The disposition of the maximally virtuous consists of realistic psychological components that are still imaginable and followable by the generally virtuous. For example, through obtaining the ability to control her passions well, a person might have experienced what it is like to be in the highly virtuous person's shoes.

So the question remains: is it true that what the virtuous must pursue isn't moral sainthood but being maximally virtuous? I don't think that moral sainthood here should be distinguished from the maximally virtuous. Let's review first some points from chapter 2: (1) the degrees of virtuousness$_V$ can't be too finely divided and it is best to classify them simply into the virtuous enough, the highly, and the fully virtuous; (2) each degree is like a sub-continuum (on the aretaic continuum), which consists of continuous sub-degrees that are hard to be finely calibrated; (3) moral saints seem to exemplify the degree of being highly virtuous, as they manifest virtuousness very excellently.

The aforesaid points imply that the degree of the highly virtuous, which is identified with moral sainthood, can be seen as a sub-continuum that spans from the sub-degrees that are most directly continuous with the virtuous enough, as the lower degree of virtuousness, all the way up to the verge of full virtuousness. Based on this, there are two possible portrayals of the place of the maximally virtuous. In the first, the maximally virtuous is interchangeable with the highly virtuous. Thus, the sub-degrees on the sub-continuum of the highly virtuous are all the maximally realizable degrees of being virtuous. This is shown in the illustration below, which divides the continuum into three sub-continuums:[21]

THE VIRTUOUS ENOUGH	***THE HIGHLY VIRTUOUS = THE MAXIMALLY VIRTUOUS***	***THE FULLY VIRTUOUS***

In the second portrayal, only a part of the sub-continuum of the highly virtuous, i.e., the range of sub-degrees that is closest to the full virtuous, is equivalent to moral sainthood and consists of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. So the part of the sub-continuum that is closer to the virtuous enough doesn't consist of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. Following our observation of the behavior of the axiological continuum in 2.2, we can say that the range of the highest sub-degrees on the

[21] I intentionally put the fully virtuous into a smaller column, just to indicate that it is a non-calibrated degree; strictly speaking, it is a point and not a sub-continuum.

sub-continuum of the highly virtuous (i.e., the maximally virtuous) becomes the standard that calibrates all sub-degrees of the highly virtuous. Here is the illustration:

THE VIRTUOUS ENOUGH	***THE HIGHLY***	***VIRTUOUS*** the maximally virtuous	***THE FULLY VIRTUOUS***

Since it is hard or contentious to divide each degree of virtuousness$_V$, I'm undecided on which one of the above portrayals is the accurate one. At any rate, this shows that it's better to identify moral saints not with the highly virtuous, but with those who have some of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. Further, since moral sainthood is now seen as a vague range of sub-degrees, the propositions (2) and its variant (2*) above are inaccurate. It is clear then that since moral saints exemplify a degree of virtuousness$_V$, moral sainthood cannot be regarded as a definite or non-vague concept as well.

To recap, I formulate the result of the aforesaid discussion in the proposition below:

(4) every virtuous person must exemplify one of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness.

in accordance with which, (3) is also explicable as

(3*) It's binding for the virtuous to realize one of the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. [22]

Since 'the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness' defines moral sainthood, (3*) implies the following propositions:

(5) every virtuous person must become a moral saint

Now, as our discussions in this and the previous chapter shows that moral sainthood is 'the closest approximation of virtuousness$_{NV}$', (5) can be understood also as:

[22] More precise formulations of (4) and (3*) should include the qualifying 'sub-' before the word 'degrees'. But for simplicity's sake, I omit it.

(5*) every virtuous person must approximate virtuousness$_{NV}$ as closely as possible

which can also be restated along the lines of (1) as:

(1*) It is binding for the virtuous to approximate full virtuousness as closely as possible

What is more, in line with the argument of chapter 2, we can say that to approximate full virtuousness as close as possible is to have a self-identity that is mostly defined by moral concerns or, more concretely, to live a life, the most aspects of which are controlled by moral values and altruistic causes.

Besides, it is important to note that this group of propositions practically does not add to the definitions that I gave in the end of chapter 2, for here, the propositions only manifest that moral sainthood is interchangeable with the property of having the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. Here, through being identified with the maximally virtuous, moral sainthood becomes a normative concept that, if my argument succeeds, must be exemplified by all virtuous people.

2. Against Moderate Strains of AE

2.1. The Continuity Thesis (CT)

Moral saints' allegedly anti-flourishing lifestyle constitutes the core reason of most of the arguments against the bindingness of being moral saints. But that reason is to be discussed in the next chapter. This chapter primarily deals with the normative implication of virtuousness, as being temporarily isolated from the notion of eudaimonia (viz., whether the account of virtuousness that is formulated in the previous chapter—bracketing its eudaimonic aspect—is consistent with strong or weak justification of moral sainthood). Is it possible to do this, given that virtuousness is necessary for and expresses eudaimonia? I think it is possible, for what I'll do isn't to re-conceptualize virtuousness, but to examine the implications of the structural property

of virtuousness (i.e., being vague and calibrated) for the normative status of each degree of being virtuous.

I have argued that virtuousness is a vague concept, a degree of which is exemplified by moral saints. This feature can be formulated in a way that facilitates our present discussion, i.e., in the form of what I call The Continuity Thesis (CT). CT states:

(6) (CT): Both the virtuous enough and the fully virtuous are on the same aretaic continuum.

CT pictures virtuousness$_V$ as a conceptual continuum that spans gradationally from being virtuous enough to being fully virtuous. Moreover, since all theories that belong to AE make virtuousness their central normative concepts and virtuousness can only be a vague and calibrated concept, then all strains of AE are committed to CT. Since this chapter deals with the bindingness of progressing more ambitiously in virtuousness[23], it is best to use CT to illustrate the developmental aspect of virtuousness$_V$, which can be stated as:

(7) (CT$_D$): The unity of being fully virtuous and all the other degrees of virtuousness on the virtuousness$_V$ continuum normatively entails that as long as a virtuous person is not fully virtuous, he or she ought to progress on the continuum in the way that increasingly approximates the fully virtuous.

CT$_D$ insists that the ideal regulates the normative extent of virtuous development and the open-endedness of that development, which means that

> "virtuous character traits, ethical ideals, or the goal of promoting human happiness have no fixed measure and can in principle be always improved and further perfected" (Heyd 2008; cf. Pincoffs 1986: 100).

Developing virtuously is then like continuously moving on the vaguely calibrated continuum. As a result, it may be arbitrary to say that there is a particular point at which

[23] Namely, the normative extent of the virtuous person's moral development (i.e., 'do all virtuous persons have to develop to the level of moral sainthood?').

one doesn't need to develop further to approximate full virtuousness. In the next subsection, I'll consider first the plausibility of some strains of AE that reject CT_D in favor of a certain kind of moderation. In the subsequent subsections and sections, I'll make a case for CT_D, which is the basis for strong justification of moral sainthood, by arguing against the moderate strains of AE.

2.2. Russell's Moderate AE

The structural argument against CT_D, in my reading, is based on the conceptual examination of $virtuousness_{NV}$, whereas the material argument against CT_D turns on the eudaimonia-related reasons. The main contents of both kinds of arguments are quite simple: while the first denies that the concept of the moral ideal entails the requirement to be maximally or fully virtuous, the second one objects to maximal virtuousness on account of its being inimical to human flourishing. Here I focus my discussion on a quite representative structural argument, which is offered recently by Daniel Russell. I try here to philosophically reconstruct Russell's argument, as he doesn't explain it in much detail.

Russell thinks that virtuousness is a vague, calibrated concept that can also behave as a model concept, namely, $virtuousness_{NV}$. $Virtuousness_{NV}$ or the fully virtuous, like other ideals, e.g., Hare's Archangel, is a conceptual device that functions as the reference point for calibrating the degrees of $virtuousness_V$ and finding out aretaic principles or rules in various contexts (cf. Hursthouse 1999). To accept the ideal, for Russell, is to follow its guidance or to make its principles one's own, which results in one's being more virtuous. On this account, to accept the ideal is also to undertake the project of moral development.

Nonetheless, it "leaves the question how far each of…[us] ought to take that project", for accepting the ideal entails moral improvement, if the improvement is necessary and isn't "unreasonably costly" (Russell 2011, p. 126). Especially when the attempt to be more virtuous can be detrimental to the very conditions that make virtues possible (e.g., psychological and physical well-being), one must be satisfied with

maintaining secure levels of being virtuous. Moreover, in Russell's view, considering the natural limits of human beings, trying to become fully virtuous is unreasonable and thus not virtuous. It is sometimes all right to be virtuous enough, for one's acceptance of the ideal neither imply nor require one to be like or approximate the ideal. *Accepting the ideal*, for Russell, *is unlike aspiring to it.* To make sense of this, I want to use an example of my own: let's imagine an amateur organist who cannot possibly be a virtuoso, as he lacks the talent and other requisite conditions. This doesn't mean that he can't make the techniques of top-notch organists his own. When he learns to play Bach, he accepts as normative Schweitzer's finger technique for playing Bach, which means that he makes it a standard that guides his practices. In doing so, he aspires to be a better organist, though he knows that he can't be as excellent as Schweitzer.

Russell argues that since the fully virtuous is just a regulative ideal, its use doesn't entail that the ideal or its approximation is the binding developmental terminus for the virtuous. Instead, for one who is barely virtuous, to accept the ideal is to aspire to be virtuous enough, but for one who has already been virtuous, it is to aspire to be more virtuous yet reasonably. It seems that for Russell, moral growth is essentially a gradual affair, and it's not right to have aspirations that ignore the measured nature of one's moral development. This doesn't mean that Russell doesn't leave room for moral sainthood. Yet, not only is reaching such a high level non-binding, it is also a natural, *phronesis*-guided result of one's making the ideal one's guiding standard. That is, it is through following the ideal's guidance, which includes wisely appraising one's conditions, and not by making the ideal the aim of one's development, that one can decide to be either a saint or just a virtuous enough person. Thus, accepting the ideal can *reasonably* lead to seemingly ambitious aspirations, only if one already attains a high level of virtuousness. Further, we can say that for Russell, a higher level of virtuousness is the level that one can *reasonably* aspire or try to reach, when and only when (*1*) it is binding to reach that level, as it is binding for the virtuous to be more virtuous; (*2*) that level is reachable in a realistically

paced way, in accord with one's conditions; (*3*) trying to reach and remaining on that level do not greatly compromise well-being.

But why is it the case that while reasonably aspiring to be more virtuous is entailed in one's acceptance of the ideal, aspiring to be so but excessively or unreasonably is not? For Russell, that has something to do with the difference between virtuousness$_{NV}$ and virtuousness$_{V}$. Russell doesn't explain this in satisfying detail, but I think it is very likely that his view is similar to my account of the calibration process in chapter 2. When one reflects on the ideal or virtuousness$_{NV}$ in the context of moral development, one is in fact calibrating the degrees of virtuousness$_{V}$, since one uses virtuousness$_{NV}$ as the standard to find out one's current degree of virtuousness$_{V}$ *and* the higher degree of virtuousness$_{V}$ that one can reasonably aspire to. Analogously, when the amateur organist starts to learn Schweitzer's technique, he becomes aware of his current skill level *and* the higher level to which he can reasonably aspire. To think that by learning from Schweitzer he's bound to be as excellent as Schweitzer isn't just unrealistic, but also to be unaware that accepting a virtuoso's technique as his standard isn't mainly about being as excellent as the virtuoso, but about reaching a level of excellence that suits his conditions. Likewise, one can be virtuous by accepting the ideal, but this isn't conditioned on one's emulating moral saints or the fully virtuous, for the kind of virtuousness that one tries to realize by following the ideal is an extension or a degree of virtuousness$_{V}$ that reflects one's conditions. In other words, to say that to accept the ideal is to aspire to realize or approximate the ideal/ virtuousness$_{NV}$ is to ignore that one can be virtuous by just reaching a level of virtuousness$_{V}$, even if that level is moderate. Reaching or approximating virtuousness$_{NV}$, which is impossible or extremely hard, isn't the only way to be virtuous.

However, even if one knows that one can be virtuous by just being moderately virtuous, and not only by reaching or approximating virtuousness$_{NV}$, one can decide to be very ambitious by, say, approximating the approximation of virtuousness$_{NV}$. This shows

that the only thing that prevents one from approximating or reaching the ideal is the impossibility or extreme difficulty of doing so, but that cannot stop one from being excessive or unreasonable in a less extreme degree. Russell doesn't consider this possibility, but it seems that he can deal with it. Russell emphasizes that accepting the ideal necessarily involves the use of *phronesis*, which enables the virtuous to realistically estimate their conditions and to decide reasonably. It is via *phronesis* that one realizes that the ideal doesn't function to spur them to be excessively virtuous. Thus, to express Russell's view more completely: reasonably aspiring to be more virtuous is the result of following *phronesis*, which is necessary for being virtuous or accepting the guiding ideal. In other words, in accepting the guidance of the fully virtuous, one would find that being realistic about one's conditions and improving one's virtuousness accordingly is what the fully virtuous person would advise one to do.

Therefore, in Russell's view, CT doesn't lead to CT_D, but must be read as CT_G (the subscript 'G' stands for 'guidance'), which states:

(8) (CT_G) The unity of being fully virtuous and all the other degrees of virtuousness on the $virtuousness_V$ continuum normatively entails that as long as a virtuous person is not fully virtuous, he or she ought to progress on the continuum in a reasonable way, i.e., in a way that is neither unrealistically demanding nor inimical to well-being.

CT_G shows that although the ideal contributes to moral improvement, the ideal doesn't regulate the obligatory extent of that improvement. In other words, the extent of moral development is conditional and it may not be arbitrary to say that there is a particular point at which one doesn't need to develop further to approximate full virtuousness. Also, while CT_D is goal-directed and seems ambitious, CT_G seems more lenient, since it lets one's being guided by the ideal, which includes one's following *phronesis*, determine one's developmental course. My main task in this chapter is to probe whether moderate AE (and CT_G) or ambitious AE (and CT_D), which respectively entail strong and weak justifications of moral sainthood, is more conceptually coherent.

2.3. Against Russell's Moderate AE

I'm going to present my objections to Russell's moderate AE in the following subsections. I want to note first that what Russell's moderate AE essentially argues against is CT_D. However, because I believe that

a. A more coherent reading of AE requires one to accept CT_D, and
b. SAE is a version of AE that *both* defines the essence of virtuousness or UV more coherently and so improves AE *and* due to SAE's redefinition of UV, SAE is more congenial to or more explicitly direct in its relationship with CT_D,

then, I will not only use some resources from SAE in my argument, but also will treat SAE as the representative of the ambitious versions of AE. This might add some pressure for friends of AE, especially the moderate strains of it, to adopt SAE.

2.3.1. Against Russell's Moderate View of Virtuous Aspiration

Russell stresses that to accept the ideal is not to aspire to be like it, but is to aspire to be more virtuous in a reasonable way. I contend that this view is neither empirically nor normatively accurate. It's not just possible, but may sometimes be normative too, that in accepting the ideal, a virtuous person has two sorts of aspiration: the short-term aspiration to grow in a reasonably paced way, and the long-term aspiration to approximate the fully virtuous. In fact, it is likely that the presence of the second sort of aspiration facilitates or even accelerates the fulfillment of the first sort. Why? One cannot make sense of one's short-term moral project without nesting it in a bigger, long-term project, but it's often the case that without making sense of one's projects, one cannot muster the needed motivational strength to even complete the short-term project. Without a clear and motivating kind of purposiveness, less ambitious moral goals or projects often cannot be accomplished satisfactorily. Therefore, different initial aspirations will eventually lead to different outcomes. More significantly, seeing that in SAE, virtuousness is defined in terms of one's self-identity that makes moral goals one's final goals, it is both natural and binding to have more ambitious aspirations from the

start. It is only such an ambitious goal that can suitably become the object of the virtuous persons' profound commitments, without which, cross-situationally consistent virtues are unattainable.

Also, Russell's view assumes that moral aspiration is manageable in a quite clearly calibrated way. For instance, since accepting the ideal's guidance when one is still on the level 1 of virtuousness would at most elevate one to level 2, one must aspire to reach level 2 or 3 and must not aspire to reach level 5, 6, or any levels that exceed one's ability to reach; when one is on level 8, which is 'dangerously close' to the risky or unattainable levels of 9 and 10, one must restrain oneself, lest one develop unrealistic aspirations. But this is psychologically implausible, as one cannot manage to have aspirations in a clearly calibrated or incremental manner. Besides, Russell's account implies that it is normative to manage one's moral aspirations in that fashion, or else one acts against the realistic judgments of *phronesis*. This claim, I think, is based on a faulty moral psychology, because:

a. Virtuous aspirations are not that simplistic, mechanical, or controllable, especially since being virtuous is a passionate, psychologically rich way of life;
b. if I'm not mistaken, so far, there are no compelling proofs or arguments for the claim that the virtuous can only grow incrementally or in step by step manner. I believe that it is not at all impossible that due to some psychological or circumstantial factors, they can just jump from one level to a much higher level of virtuousness. In this light, although the aretaic continuum of development or CT_D does require virtuous persons to be maximally virtuous, it doesn't regulate the normative speed or manner of one's moral development.

Lastly, one might think that talking about aspiration here is not in line with my aim to address the structural argument against the bindingness of being moral saints. My reply: it is not necessarily so, because the account of aspiration, as Russell himself suggests, is normatively implied by a certain understanding of the concept of

virtuousness. Therefore, considering also that the notion of aspiration is inseparable from moral commitment, which is a necessary constituent of being virtuous, a faulty account of aspiration likely indicates a conceptually wrong understanding of virtuousness.

2.3.2. Against Russell's View of the Extent of Moral Improvability

My second objection is directed to Russell's view that the extent of moral development is relative to people's natural conditions, so that the required growth in virtuousness is not necessarily open-ended. The so-called natural conditions here are roughly divisible into two: the external conditions that concern one's well-being, and the internal conditions that concern one's moral ability or strength. Since I will discuss the former kind of conditions in the next chapter, my argument now is focused on the latter kind. I believe that if Russell's estimation of the latter kind of conditions is inaccurate, then at least from that viewpoint, a more ambitious extent of virtuous development is required from the virtuous.

It is contentious to say that reaching the virtuousness level of moral saints isn't within everyone's power. Even if moral saints are moral prodigies, that doesn't mean that moral sainthood cannot be attained by those who think that they lack the required gifts. In contrast to musical, academic, and other kinds of excellence, virtuousness may have some distinctive features that make its ideals a more egalitarian and reachable goal. Even though people's moral sensitivities and strengths differ, some forms of strong attachments (e.g., family, nation, religion, etc.) can cultivate and mobilize enormous moral energy. Furthermore, as some studies (cf. Haidt 2003) and historical evidence (e.g., Schindler) show, moral sensitivity is more easily triggered, developed, and sustained than non-moral sensitivities. For this reason, it is risky and non-advisable to easily acquiesce to one's claim that he or she is not able to develop to the very high levels of virtuousness.

Moreover, the fact that reaching some level of virtuousness exceeds one's present condition doesn't always or shouldn't easily merit the attitude that Russell suggests, viz., learning to accept one's limitations and be satisfied with a moderate level of virtuousness

(Russell 2011, p. 128). Given that to be virtuous is to have a personal and deeper commitment to lead a more ambitiously moral life, it is natural and proper that one must aspire to reach higher levels of virtuousness, and in case one cannot reach the levels, one can still suspend the judgment that reaching them is impossible and strive to do it in some manageable ways (e.g., by habituating oneself more often and rigorously).

Lastly, while the truth of many beliefs depends on those beliefs' correspondence with the already obtained states of affairs, the truth of a class of moral beliefs, like belief in the success of one's moral development, depends on future states of affairs that are obtained through the strength of one's beliefs and moral efforts (cf. James 1979, Adams 1987). This doesn't mean that that sort of moral beliefs is delusional, for it is often probabilistic (i.e., it is not that I believe that it is certain that I will be more virtuous, but only that it is likely that I will be so). More crucially, the belief is intrinsically interrelated with the depth of one's moral commitment, namely, it is only when I am very committed to morality that it makes more sense for me and others to believe that I can be more virtuous. It seems that believing here fulfills a moral duty. In other words, to easily give up or refuse that class of moral beliefs is often to betray the lack of moral commitment. Belief in this sense is a kind of hope that combines one's refusal to accept moral defeatism and one's healthy skepticism of one's proneness to accept the moral status quo. For this reason, it is proper that moral development is marked by at least a willingness to postpone one's judgment of the limits of one's moral capacity. Elizabeth Pybus' instruction on this matter is worth quoting:

> "Clearly we cannot slide out of doing our duty by saying that we are not brave enough. Sometimes we may be excused for a loss of nerve, but we cannot remain cowards all our lives, and use that as an acceptable excuse for fulfilling only the basic requirements of morality" (1982, p. 198).

Of course, this doesn't mean that the virtuous must aim at the impossible (e.g., being morally blameless), but this means that the virtuous persons' deep commitment to moral

excellence somehow makes them more open to the possibility of a more ambitious moral development.

2.3.3. Against Russell's Moderate View of the Role of the Moral Ideal

Russell not only thinks that accepting the lofty ideal and living a moderately virtuous life can co-exist, but more importantly, he assumes that accepting the ideal mainly leads to a reasonable goal of aspiration. By contrast, for me, accepting the ideal can only lead to the lofty aspiration to reach the maximally realizable levels of virtuousness. In accepting the ideal, one can have a moderate goal of aspiration, insofar as it is the most effective but provisional way to reach the maximally realizable levels of virtuousness. On this account, accepting the ideal and living a moderately virtuous life can co-exist only provisionally. It may be that due to some uncontrollable or immutable factors, the virtuous, while accepting the ideal, couldn't help but permanently live in a modest level of virtuousness. Nonetheless, this is certainly undesirable or morally regrettable: it's not normal and shouldn't be something that the virtuous could feel satisfied about.

Contrary to Russell, Elizabeth Pybus (1982) contends that to authentically accept or commend the ideal is to be committed to be like the ideal. She says:

> "…my [genuine moral commendation] does commit me to saying that this really is how man ought to be. But if I do have a genuine moral view that this is how people ought to be, then I must think that I, and others, ought to live up to this, and regard those who do not as falling short of the moral standard" (p. 194).

For Pybus, to take the ideal seriously assumes that the ideal is achievable, irrespective of the degrees or the kinds of difficulties involved. I'm sympathetic to this view, although I believe that taking the ideal seriously is not inconsistent with admitting the unachievability of the ideal, provided that the virtuous must approximate the ideal as closely as possible. In acknowledging the ideal's unattainability, my reading aims to avoid the counterintuitive demandingness of Pybus' account, but in maintaining that by accepting the ideal, one must attain the maximally realizable levels of virtuousness, I

want to elude the moderate implication that Russell makes. Besides, Pybus' argument begs the question, as the desirability of becoming a certain kind of person doesn't entail that one is bound to be that.[24] Or perhaps, what Pybus wants to say is that there is a close or even necessary link between a deep moral commitment to a certain ideal and the effort to become like it. I think this reading makes more sense. But why is it the case that accepting the ideal implies being committed to become like the ideal?

Actually, it's not the case that accepting and being committed to be like the ideal go together in every kind of ethical theory. It is important to note here that the function of the moral ideal in virtue-based ethics[25] is unlike that of action-based ethics in general. In deontological or other action-based theories, the ideal merely functions as a deliberative heuristic that guides the agents to act in accordance with the proper procedure, as it were, of doing moral actions. That is, the ideals in such theories (e.g., the evaluating self in Smith 1995) assist the agents to fulfill the minimal criteria of actions that may be surpassed but cannot be reduced. The ideals there are depicted as having perfect reasoning skills, omniscience, or spotless moral disposition, but those superlatively conceived details are mainly useful for bracketing the morally irrelevant or misleading features of the agents and their situations. Without isolating the agents from such features, mutual accountability or objectivity, which is one of the rightness-making properties of moral actions, can be compromised. Briefly, the ideals aim at ensuring more vividly the procedural propriety and fairness that are required for moral action (bringing the requirements closer to intuition, as Kant would say). Echoing Russell, to accept the ideal here is to make the ideal's principles of action one's own, but not to aim at becoming like the ideal, which is simply irrational.

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[24] Thanks to Mark Murphy for pointing this out to me.

[25] I don't mean that all virtue ethics are like what I'm going to describe. I want to use the phrase 'virtue-based ethics' here as a roughly normative term, i.e., if the so-called virtue-based ethics is a class of theories that make the agent's moral excellence its focus or central concept, then one of the most consistent forms of it should be like the kind of virtue ethics that I'm going to depict.

By contrast, in virtue-based ethics, acting rightly and fairly, although important, is only attributable to the excellence of character or virtuousness. Owing to the fundamentality and centrality of moral excellence in such theories, the moral ideal isn't just a deliberative heuristic, but must also become a source of aspiration by providing the virtuous with a developmental goal that must be continually aimed at. That's why while the concept of the ideal isn't quite central or indispensable in action-based theories, it is the opposite in virtue-based ethics.[26] In the latter, the ideal assists the virtuous to attain something maximal that although it may not be attainable, but ought to be approximated as closely as possible. This is because, unlike action-based theories, the objective of the rules, principles, and concepts in virtue-based ethics isn't just to help one perform moral actions rightly, but also to enable one to embody moral excellence.

In short, the ideal in virtue ethics has more ambitious implications, for it's mainly about becoming and not just about doing. Becoming morally excellent in virtue-based ethics, however, can be adequately and consistently understood only as a dynamic and not a static notion. That is to say, every achievement of moral excellence is always surpassable, developable in more excellent ways (i.e., in ways that increasingly approximate perfection). To say that the virtuous can attain a particular stage of excellence and then stop there is to commit to a not so excellent way of developing moral excellence, which seems inconsistent.

Now, similar to action-based ethics, in virtue-based ethics, to accept the ideal is also to make the ideal's principles one's own, but more significantly, it is also to strive for

[26] Some versions of virtue ethics try to discard the moral ideal once and for all, focusing instead on living conscientiously according to one's moral dispositions (Slote 2001, Driver 2001). Yet, this option is problematic: *first*, one cannot avoid talking about moral standard or ideal without plunging gradually into subjectivism or relativism. *Second*, in reality, one's attempt to have a less perfect or more 'humane' ideal presupposes and demonstrates her knowledge of a more excellent or demanding ideal. If this the case, then, instead of intentionally lowering or disposing the ideal, it will be better to keep it intact and do as best as one can, for one may not be always clear about the developmental extent of one's ability.

living like the ideal. In action-based theories, making the ideal's principles one's own is separable from trying to become like the ideal, since the ideal only gives the agent a necessary or minimal standard for acting rightly. Whereas in virtue-based theories, making the ideal's principles one's own is inseparable from attempting to be like the ideal, because what the ideal provides is the standard for having excellent character, which is the defining feature of the ideal. For this reason, unlike action-based theories, in virtue-based ethics, making the ideal's principles one own is identical to trying to make the ideal's character one's own. That is, whereas in action-based theories, the ideal and the standard are kept distinct, as the standard doesn't substantially represent the ideal, in virtue-based based theories, the ideal and the standard are closely interrelated, for the standard substantially represents the ideal (i.e., it represents the ideal's character).

It is clear then that the analogy of the amateur organist cannot satisfactorily explain the virtuous person's acceptance of the ideal. Learning music, in some important respects, cannot be compared to the development of the virtuous person. The moral objective of approximating the ideal is more egalitarian and widely normative than the goal of becoming a virtuoso. What is more, the effort to learn from the virtuoso, in the analogy, is mainly or more directly about doing or performing and not about becoming. In these respects, the analogy is closer to the use of the ideals in action-based ethics. The old practice of apprenticeship might be a more suitable analogy for virtue ethics. In being an apprentice of an artist or master, in addition to mastering the relevant skills, one must also live together with the teacher, share his way of life and thinking, and eventually emulate him.

2.3.4. Against Russell's Moderate View of *Phronesis*

A key component in Russell's moderate AE is his view of *phronesis*. Russell (2011) thinks that the question of the extent of people's required moral development "requires *phronesis* to answer correctly" (p. 128). The answer that *phronesis* gives, for Russell and other moderate virtue ethicists, is basically based on the person- or

situation-relative mean between moral laxity and excessiveness. I'll focus my argument on *phronesis*' function to temper one extreme of the mean, viz., the proneness to extreme virtuousness. Moderate virtue ethicists seem to agree that virtues must ideally become "due and proper concerns" for goodness (Watson 1984: 58-59) that cannot be realized without the sensible judgments of *phronesis*. Briefly, the tempering effect of *phronesis* is the indispensable element in the moderate strands of AE.

Now, I'm going to present some objections to Russell's notion of *phronesis*, which is commonly found in the moderate strains of AE. *First*, Russell's *phronesis* doesn't seem to give enough room for extraordinary virtuousness or moral action. If the effort to reach higher levels of virtuousness really harms well-being or is extremely hard, then, the Russellian *phronesis* would render it non-advisable or prohibited, as it is unwise, and by implication, not virtuous. Consequently, doing extraordinary moral action, which is often the expected result of reaching high level of virtuousness and frequently results in sufferings or sacrifices, is non-advisable and prohibited. Russell might reply that: (*1*) the *phronesis* of those who are *already* highly virtuous (and can do extraordinary moral action easily) will advise or bind them to be morally heroic when they're needed to be so; (*2*) so, since every virtuous person must strive to be gradually virtuous, at the relevant moment and on the apt level of virtuousness, each virtuous person will be bound to do extraordinary moral action. What is discouraged then is trying to reach high levels of virtuousness unreasonably or hastily. Thus, it's not doing extraordinary moral action itself that's non-advisable and prohibited, but doing it as the result of trying to be highly virtuous hastily or unreasonably. The problem with this reply is: the challenge doesn't just lie in the difficulty of doing extraordinary moral actions, but also in the suffering or loss that are usually exacted by such actions. If *phronesis* aims at benefitting the virtuous (Russell 2011, pp. 128-29), then doing such actions at any levels of virtuousness would seem to be non-advisable and prohibited. It would be a lame response to say that the

highly virtuous are allowed to do such demanding actions, as long as the actions don't bring too much suffering or loss.

My next objection, which is related to but more basic than the first, is to a portrayal of *phronesis* as a roughly prudential faculty that guarantees, as Russell indicates, the cost-effectiveness of being virtuous. I want to note first that one classic English translation of *phronesis* is 'prudence', which can be quite misleading, for many have used this English word to refer to *phronesis* that Russell and other friends of AE use (e.g., Annas 2011), which is more than just 'prudence' in its contemporary use. *Phronesis* is actually a virtues-regulated practical wisdom that doesn't merely concern itself with self-interest, but more significantly, with moral excellence. I believe that Russell's use of *phronesis* might well tilt more toward the contemporary notion of prudence than the standard notion of *phronesis* in AE. One may say that this isn't Russell's own fault, as there's always a tension between prudential and moral interests in the traditional notion of *phronesis* in AE. But if that's the case, then it is better to make *phronesis* more explicitly in line with moral concerns or define prudential or self-interests more in accord with moral concerns, something that SAE has tried to do.

Within moderate AE, *phronesis* functions to temper moral reasons or motivations, whenever they become closer to either harming well-being or being too hard to do. Because this kind of *phronesis* also works to temper immoral reasons, it is apt to see it as a sort of prudentially-inclined moral thermostat, which views viciousness and extreme virtuousness as two different kinds of threat to eudaimonia. It is not farfetched to say that in accordance with this sense of *phronesis*, if, as some believe, moral sainthood is a *predictably* anti-flourishing level of virtuousness, then it is never reasonable to aspire to be a moral saint, even if becoming so *seems* binding or quite easy [for the *very* virtuous]. Nonetheless, this picture is hard to reconcile with the almost universal intuition that extraordinary altruistic sacrifices, regardless of the virtuousness levels of those who did them, are morally excellent. Those sacrifices must of course be done for the right cause

and not foolishly, but even after fulfilling those considerations, it is undeniable that they are extremely costly, and it often appears unreasonably so. We cannot say that the Germans who were stealthily anti-Nazi and helped the Jews only occasionally were wiser or more prudent than Sophie Scholl, a young, pacifist activist who dared to challenge Hitler and his policies, or that the Polish who just wanted to be 'safely moral' by abstaining from both joining the Nazis and saving the Jews were more virtuous than Irena Sendler, who risked her life several times for saving Jewish children. Although Scholl was guillotined and Sendler was badly tortured, it is counterintuitive to say that these tragic outcomes were caused by their disobedience to the judgments of *phronesis*. It is also too finicky to say that Sendler and Scholl's sacrifices are justified, only if they had properly high levels of virtuousness or if they had calculated that overall, their actions were not excessive or unreasonably costly.

This is especially so from the perspective of virtue-based ethics like AE, which is a species of moral realism that, more than any other theory, highlights the importance of nurturing and having excellent responsiveness to moral reasons. Admittedly, AE holds that being virtuous is inseparable from the eudaimonia of the virtuous. However, this doesn't mean that AE endorses egoism, as it believes that the objective goodness that people ought to pursue includes and results in their own flourishing. As Annas contends, virtue ethics is only self-regarding in its structure (Annas 2010), that is, the virtuous persons' consideration for living morally is inseparable from their basic pursuit of the best and most flourishing kind of life that they want to lead. But this doesn't mean that they want to put their interests first when the price for being moral is "unreasonably costly." For this reason, *seeing also that* for many friends of AE, the most crucial part of *phronesis* is the knowledge of right and wrong, and virtues are the applications of that knowledge in various situations (Annas 1993, p. 80), I think that it is correct and more in line with widely accepted moral intuitions to say that

a. *Phronesis* itself is rooted in the virtuous persons' deep-seated receptivity to moral goodness or reasons.[27] We can call this the virtuous persons' second-order receptivity, which is the basic receptivity to moral goodness or reasons in general.

b. Since the virtuous are deeply responsive to moral goodness or reasons, they are receptive to the judgments of *phronesis*. We can call this the virtuous persons' first-order receptivity, which is the receptivity to the perceived moral goodness or its absence in concrete situations.

c. Therefore, virtuous life in some sense can be understood as, borrowing from Frankfurt, the meshing of the second-order and the first-order receptivity of the virtuous persons. But the virtuous persons are first-order receptive, if they are second-order receptive. This implies that *phronesis* doesn't function independently from the moral commitment of the virtuous persons.[28] As a result, the judgments of *phronesis* are always 'biased' and directed by moral considerations or values. "*Phronesis* has its reasons, which prudential reason sometimes can't understand."

Lastly, to illustrate my arguments above, I incorporate here some studies and cases of moral saints. I want to show that on the one hand, moral saints do seem very wise or intelligent, but on the other hand, that is, prudentially speaking, they might not seem so. To begin with, recent studies show that moral saints possess above average 'moral intelligence'[29], which is displayed in the following characteristics:

a. Their exceptional sensitiveness to morally salient situations, i.e., their almost intuitive or non-discursive ability to make moral judgments or decisions. The sensitivity also

[27] This is just a convenient reconstruction. The relationship between virtuousness and *phronesis* is circular: not only that second is rooted in the first, the first is based on the second, which gives the rational valuation of moral goodness. But it may be accurate to say that while the valuation is indispensable, the volitional receptivity to moral goodness is more fundamental for the inception of virtuousness.

[28] Russell (2011) oddly says that although in the start, *phronesis* depends on virtues, "at some point in development…[it] must begin to take the reins" (p. 129).

[29] According to Howard Gardner (Gardner 1993, 1996), a human strength that qualifies as an aspect of intelligence must display an identifiable core of operation, a special pattern of development, evolutionary history and plausibility, potential isolation by brain damage, and support from experimental psychology. Psychologists find that morality can fulfill the criteria and qualify as a dimension of human intelligence (Emmons 1999, Peterson 2004), and that moral saints exemplify it well (Post & McCullough 2004).

contributes to moral saints' 'subversive' moral belief and life, as it enables them to expose their societies' moral problems, which are often widely taken for granted or seen as the upshots of the conventional values. It is very risky then to totally identify moral saints' practical wisdom with the conventional way of thinking.

b. Their having "different susceptibilities of emotional excitement and inhibitions" (James) that enable them to withstand adversities and pursue their ideal persistently;
c. The ability to devise creative strategies for dealing with moral struggles or problems;
d. The display of all the characteristics above from childhood (i.e. exhibiting the signs of being moral prodigies[30], cf. Post & McCullough 2004).
e. Showing remarkable, lifelong openness to morally conducive social and individual influences (Colby & Damon 1998, chap. 1).

In addition, many moral saints are 'worldly wise': they are levelheaded folks who can make compromises and adjust to changing realities. They can even look unprincipled in their willingness to work with or accept assistance from morally questionable people (cf. Carbonell 2009). Paul Farmer, for example, was willing to accept contributions from people whose beliefs he disliked or didn't share (as he said, "Capitalist, commies, and Jesus Christers" paid for his airfares, Kidder 2003, p. 184).

Be that as it may, it should be noted that almost all of them are very uncompromising and 'unrealistic' in their moral commitment, even to the 'unwise' point of sacrificing their well-being. Moral saints can display prudential flexibility or 'worldly wisdom', as long as it facilitates their altruistic duties or projects, but they show stubborn loyalty to their moral ideals when they find that their moral commitment or others' well-being is under fire. Arthur Kleinman (2006), Harvard anthropologist and psychiatrist, wrote a true story of the late Idi Bosquet-Remarque, a very bright French aid worker who led a life of a moral saint in some very impoverished areas in Africa. This adept young woman had to bear and face very heavy responsibilities and hardships virtually alone. But

[30] Many moral saints didn't acquire their unusual virtuousness from good family upbringing or education.

she showed a remarkable degree of professionalism, suppleness and smartness in navigating across distressingly difficult situations. She was by no means a moral fanatic (she bribed soldiers), and in some respects resembled a skillful diplomat. However, when her altruistic way of life was undermined by a calamitous failure and nervous breakdown, although she wisely chose to take a year break and stayed with her friends in the US, she doggedly refused her psychiatrist friend's suggestion to stop her work in Africa. Many stories of moral saints tell us that the practical wisdom that they rely on is not a neutral sort of practical reasoning that can put moral and prudential ways of life on equal footing. Not that this kind of reasoning is absent in them, but its persuasive power is often subdued by their faithful responsiveness to moral demands. The clearest form of wisdom that we can observe from their lives is a morally governed kind of wisdom, which is open to alternate ways of thinking, insofar as they don't impede their moral devotion. It is fully understandable then that for many moral saints, many times, the 'wisest' thing to do is to sacrifice their interests. If moral wisdom is based on the right appreciation of the unconditional worth of human beings, then it's not excessive to devote or sacrifice one's life for the sake of others. Foolish sacrifices are one thing, but superlative acts of virtuousness that may defy completely natural human needs (e.g. survival) are another.[31]

3. In Favor of the Ambitious Version of AE or SAE

3.1. the Nature and the Scope of the Bindingness of Being Moral Saints in SAE

3.1.1. CT and the Bindingness of Being Moral Saints

At this point, I want to make a case for the bindingness of being a moral saint (or realizing the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness). A preliminary note: what I want to argue for is that becoming moral saints or being maximally virtuous is not

[31] Another related issue is many moral saints' heavy reliance on their passions or intuition. How can this be the upshot of wisdom-guided virtues? This isn't just compatible with, but in some sense also required by AE. In AE, one crucial feature that can identify a highly virtuous person is her easiness in deciding and acting virtuously.

optional or supererogatory. More accurately, it is about whether the virtuous can still be virtuous although they aren't bound to realize the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. I argued in the last section that, contrary to Russell, factors that might seem to restrain the virtuous from developing in virtuousness more ambitiously are in fact not fully eligible to do so. To be precise, it's not the case that, as CT_G states, the virtuous ought only progress on the aretaic continuum in a realistically paced way, and reach the point that should be defined by the prudential dictates of *phronesis*, for the reasons that:

a. It's not necessary and in some sense not right that the virtuous can only have or at least prefer to have modest aspirations that are proportional to their actual conditions. Since to be virtuous is to have life-suffusing, self-defining moral goals, it's hard to understand why it's not right or at least not normative for the virtuous to have loftier aspiration that underlie and can heighten their smaller, 'more realistic' aspirations;
b. The extent of moral improvability isn't just elusive or difficult to determine, but due to one's being virtuous, the ways one judges the limit of one's moral ability must also be properly adjusted. For instance, instead of claiming first that becoming a moral saint surpasses one's ability, it's more proper to at least suspend the judgment until one tries to do it. I'll discuss this further in the next subsection;
c. In theories that pursue moral excellence and make morality more pervasive, to accept the ideal isn't just to be committed to make the ideal's principles one's own, but also to live like the ideal. Further, to accept the ideal isn't just to adopt the ideal's point of view, but also to make the character of the ideal one's own.
d. *Phronesis* should be morally governed. The practical wisdom of the virtuous might well overlap in many ways with prudential or worldly wisdom, but it is a different sort of wisdom that facilitates a different sort of way of life, in which concepts like cost-effectiveness and being realistic are sometimes irrelevant.

Admittedly, Russell's concerns and arguments for the limiting functions of the aforesaid factors are sometimes valid and useful. Yet, their moderating functions shouldn't be

regarded as the only or the main normative implications of being virtuous, but must be juxtaposed instead with their more ambitious functions, and placed within the wider purpose or project of being virtuous, especially if it is the case that, as I've argued in chapter 2, it's more consistent to regard AE or SAE as a very demanding ethical theory. Now, as the four 'barricades' (i.e., the moderate views of moral aspiration, the extent of moral improvability, the moral ideal, and *phronesis*) that allegedly protect the interests of the virtuous by limiting the extent of their journey on the aretaic continuum are removed, we have *prima facie* reasons for preferring CT_D to CT_G. At this point, I want to affirm, albeit provisionally, that the placing of all degrees of virtuousness on a single aretaic continuum normatively entails that every virtuous person must progress increasingly toward the top edge of the continuum.

If CT_D is right, then there is no normative basis for thinking that attaining some degree of virtuousness is already enough. That is to say, it won't do to claim that it is enough to be fairly but not very virtuous, as one can ask: "why is it not enough to be almost fairly virtuous?" , which can lead to a slippery slope. In fact, due to the vagueness of the concept of virtuousness, making normative claims that are only limited to certain areas on the aretaic continuum is risky: it invites arbitrariness and special pleading in one's own interest. When one attributes properties to some degree of the continuum, one must explain whether the properties are attributable to other degrees too (especially the contiguous degrees), for all degrees or parts of the continuum are directly interrelated but vaguely calibrated. If they aren't, then, to avoid inconsistency and arbitrariness, one must give reasons to justify that partial attribution (more of this in 3.1.3).

According to CT_D then, the bindingness of being virtuous suffuses every single part or degree of the continuum, so that the bindingness of reaching the level *n* of the continuum entails the bindingness of reaching the level *n*+1 of it, and so forth. Consequently, being virtuous, contrary to performing right actions, cannot be realized in occasional and isolated ways. This doesn't mean that the virtuous cannot have setbacks,

but to be virtuous is to be situated in the dynamic state of moral progress. In this light, to commit oneself only to the attainment of a incomplete certain degree of virtuousness is to misunderstand the nature of virtuousness, which likely implies that being virtuous is not something that one actually wants.

Moreover, one cannot progress on the aretaic continuum without paying attention to its direction, i.e., its highest point. I explained before that the highest point on the continuum is the standard to calibrate the degrees on the continuum. This means that one cannot reach or be in any degree of virtuousness without trying to resemble the ideal's state of character or at least thinking about what the ideal would advise her to do. This implies already that being virtuous entails the willingness to be increasingly virtuous or approximating the fully virtuous. Thus, the virtuous may start from various points on the continuum or progress at different speeds, but as long as they are on the continuum, they are obligated or required to reach its highest degrees. To conclude, the virtuous ought to reach the maximally realizable levels of virtuousness, which, as I argue in chapters 2, implies that they ought to be moral saints.

Lastly, it is clear that attaining moral sainthood is binding for the virtuous, but is it also binding for those who are neither virtuous nor immoral, i.e., the morally decent (those who think that morality is mainly about avoiding wrongs)? If being virtuous is not contiguous with being vicious but with being morally okay or decent, then it is binding for the morally decent to be morally excellent enough, i.e., virtuous enough.[32] But if this is the case, then it is naturally binding for the morally decent to be increasingly excellent

[32] This is particularly so if morality is, as Marcia Baron (1987) argues, is distinct from what she calls "yuppie ethics", the adherents of which like to say: "I have done 'my duty'…now my time, my choices are all mine…Ah, I have met my weekly quota; now I can relax" (p. 249, 250). In this light, the notion of the imperfect duties, which is naturally associated with moral sainthood, is not used to excuse one's lack of the commitment to be morally more demanding, as the imperfect duties "are indefinite in the further sense that what they demand is also without assignable limits. We can never say, 'There, I have at last done all that I ought to do for other people'" (Warner Wick, quoted in Baron 1987, p. 250).

in morality. Ergo, attaining moral sainthood or reaching the maximally realizable degree of moral excellence is binding for the morally decent. Briefly, since being moral and being virtuous are united on the same normative continuum, then if it is binding to be moral, it is also binding to attain moral sainthood. To say otherwise is to claim that being moral and being virtuous aren't placed on the same normative continuum, which, I think, is wrong. For those who aspire to live morally, "the best understanding of 'morality' is one which rejects the claim that one can be too moral" (Louden 1988: 363). What is more, if it is binding for the immoral to be less immoral and then to be morally decent, then it is binding for them to be morally excellent and eventually, to be moral saints. Therefore, borrowing from Annas (1993, p. 116), we can say that according to SAE, there is no "'floor' of minimal moral obligation for the agent to rise above; being a fully virtuous agent is an ideal for everyone."

3.1.2. Moral Self-Identity and the Bindingness of Being Moral Saints

I present here the basis for claiming that for the virtuous, it's binding to be moral saints, which comes from SAE. The basis is the refined account of virtuousness that I've argued for in chapter 2. In SAE, the 'essence' of virtuousness, as well as moral sainthood, lies not in supererogatory strength or the completeness of virtues, but in the moralized self-identity. In other words, being virtuous is only exemplifiable by the self that has final moral goals as its identity contents. To be *final* or *self-defining*, the goals or their attainments must be at least parts of the answers to some fundamental questions of the meaning of one's life, e.g., "who am I?", "what is the purpose of my life?", "how should I live?" This implies that to be a moral saint is, to use Williams' terms, to have categorical moral desires.[33] In SAE, having categorical moral desires is the developmental goal that must be reached and continually perfected by the virtuous. It may be clear already that SAE's account of virtuousness pictures a very ambitious moral life, in which the question of bindingness is not quite relevant, as it is natural that people will heartily try to fulfill

[33] Categorical desires condition, instead of being conditioned by, one's motivation to go on living.

their categorical desires. To make this point clearer, I describe below how in SAE, the ambitiousness of being virtuous may well make the issue of its bindingness superfluous. This doesn't mean that the bindingness issue becomes irrelevant in our discussion, for it just shows that in SAE, *it is more than just binding* to be maximally virtuous.

Since final or self-defining goals (e.g., religious, relational, moral goals) determine the meaning of life, they naturally preoccupy one's mind a lot and affect nearly all aspects of one's life. As a result, the pursuits of those goals govern the pursuits of the other goals. So to make moral goals one's final goals is to make and live out a virtuous life plan or narrative, in which the pursuit of final moral goals becomes the basic plot of the story. Explaining virtuous living in terms of life story here is to stress the meaningfulness of that life, which is mainly expressible in the form of a narrative. This assumes that having final purposiveness is necessary for living meaningfully. Also, to make and live out a virtuous life story, one must follow the normative rules that regulate one's ways of life in line with one's self-identity. It is only by following those rules that one's life can be narrated as a life of the virtuous[34], and not that of the morally decent, the self-seeking, or other sorts of person. Here, individual virtues are the ways the virtuous follow the rules, and thus we can call the rules aretaic or virtues rules (e.g., be courageous in *x* situations, etc.; cf. Hursthouse 1999). Since those rules aim at conforming the life of the virtuous to their self-identity, leading a life that is based on and thereby actualizes one's moral self-identity is necessary for the exercise of virtues.

What is more, the deeper one's virtues take root in one's self, the wider the scope of one's virtuous life narrative becomes. To be precise, it is only when one's outwardly virtuous behaviors are truly originated from one's moral self-identity and not only from, say, occasional outbursts of sentiments that one can be consistently virtuous in wider circumstances. So the depth of the root and the width of the scope of being virtuous are

[34] To develop virtuously is then to use as materials for the story one's attitudes or actions in various circumstances, which are regulated by rules that make them in line with one's moral self-identity.

parallel to the length of the moral development on the aretaic continuum. The linear progress that constitutes the length / height dimension of virtuousness reflects the parallel expansion of the width dimension, all of which depend on whether one's moral pursuit is deep enough, viz., whether it makes up one's most basic, self-defining pursuit.

To recap, seeing that being virtuous concerns one's self-identity and thus encompasses one's whole life, we can say that (*1*) SAE is a very demanding theory that can't just recommend altruism or moral growth only if it's not unreasonably costly; (*2*) the demandingness in some sense already implies—and is inseparable from—the bindingness, so that it may be superfluous to ask whether for the virtuous, it's binding to grow virtuously and attain moral sainthood. It may well be beside the point to ask whether for the virtuous, it's binding to be moral saints or to be maximally virtuous, since: *first*, according to SAE and studies of moral saints, being moral and living meaningfully, which is necessary for happiness (Emmons 2003), are inseparable. To construe virtuous life as a life story isn't just to highlight the centrality of its development, but also to show its purposiveness, that entails its meaningfulness (cf. Metz 2001). So being increasingly more virtuous, which leads to moral sainthood, isn't chiefly about accomplishing herculean moral tasks, but to live most meaningfully or to live out a life story of one's self, the basic plot of which is one's pursuit of moral goals.

Second, doing everything that flows directly from one's concern for self-actualization is normally relatively easier or very natural, for the process of self-actualization directly concerns everyone's fundamental interest. Moral saints or the highly virtuous not only desire others' well-being, but also desire to be the persons who promote others' welfare. The desire is anchored in the need for achieving self-integrity and self-actualization, which, like the need for being rational or sane, is fundamental and necessary for one's well-being. For this reason, the failure to actualize and live up to their moral self-identity is clearly not in the fundamental interest of the maximally virtuous or moral saints: it is like contradicting themselves. Hence, the fundamental self-interest that

motivates the very virtuous isn't just morally harmless, but is requisite for a very ambitious moral life. That explains why the problem of whether it is binding to be more virtuous generally doesn't vex the virtuous or moral saints.

Third, to be virtuous, as I've argued above, is to be committed to reach the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness. So to ask whether for the virtuous it is binding to live such a comprehensive moral life is to ask whether the virtuous can still be virtuous if they don't persist in being virtuous. More exactly, it is to ask whether the virtuous can be committed to reach the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness without actually trying to reach those levels. SAE's obvious answer for each question is "No, it is impossible." This is especially so, since being virtuous in SAE entails being heartily engaged in the pursuit of self-defining goals that give one reason for living. If, even after being virtuous in that way, one constantly needs to be pushed by the sense of bindingness, then it is likely that one suffers from *akrasia*.

The three arguments above may well be the reasons why in living virtuously, a moral saint's life is marked by naturalness or ease. As long as she is committed to be virtuous or responsive to moral reasons, she doesn't preoccupy herself with the need to know her exact developmental stage. Moral saints generally are very sensitive to things that can undermine their moral commitment, but almost none of them are obsessed with being more virtuous. It is very likely then that moral saints and the very virtuous, due to 'the depth, the width, and the length' of their virtuous living, are not concerned about the harmless extent of their moral development. To conclude, to ask whether it is binding for the virtuous to develop in the above way and then attain moral sainthood isn't particularly apt or relevant. It is more pertinent, however, for those who just enter the initial stage of being virtuous or people who want to take morality more seriously. For them, it is binding to be increasingly virtuous and attain moral sainthood. At any rate, SAE helps us to see that becoming a moral saint is not optional or supererogatory.

3.1.3. The Extent of Excuses

Even so, there are some contexts in which the sense of bindingness plays a weighty role, even for the virtuous. The ambitiousness of SAE doesn't imply that it should counterintuitively reject all sorts of excuses. It's only reasonable that moral theories in general can excuse innocent lack of power. Hence, although I think that there are reasons why the virtuous cannot or must not easily say that they are unable to be more virtuous (2.3.2), I by no means exclude the possibility that they can justifiably say so. But by making room for excuses, it seems that in principle I agree with Russell that the virtuous can reasonably excuse themselves from reaching higher levels of virtuousness.

Let us suppose that in principle, Russell is right that the virtuous should only be as virtuous as their natural conditions (i.e., conditions that are beyond their intentional control) permit. If this is the case, CT_D should be accordingly modified into:

(9) (CT_D*) Being fully virtuous' and all the other degrees of virtuousness' being united on a single $virtuousness_V$ continuum normatively entails that as long as a virtuous person is not fully virtuous, he or she ought to progress on the continuum in the ways that are in accord with his or her respective natural conditions.

Therefore, in CT_D*, it is no longer the case that, as CT_D prescribes, every virtuous person must develop in the way that increasingly approximates the fully virtuous. It seems also that CT_D* is reasonable and still retains some degree of demandingness.

Be that as it may, CT_D* isn't in accord with the account of virtuous living that I've explained in the preceding subsection. Briefly, I explained before that in SAE, (*1*) one is virtuous, if one is committed to be virtuous, but (*2*) one is committed to be virtuous, iff one is committed to be increasingly virtuous.[35] But if this is the case, then, when a

[35] The reason is: being virtuous is only consistently expressible in the wider scope of circumstances, as it concerns the actualization of one's self-identity in all aspects of living. The wider the scope of one's virtuousness becomes, the higher one's level of virtuousness turns out to be (that is, as I argued in chapter 2, the increase in virtuousness level is the matter of maintaining self-integrity across situations). In other words, the increase of one's virtuousness levels is entailed by cross-situational consistency, all of which are entailed by the depth of one's moral pursuit (that is, the moral goals' being the content of one's self-identity).

virtuous person says that she can't help but end her attempt to be increasingly virtuous, she at that time must cease to be virtuous too. In other words, it seems that virtuous persons who give up the goal of being more virtuous are inconsistent, for they think that although they are committed to becoming maximally virtuous, they can be content with being less than maximally virtuous, which belies their commitment.[36] This seems true, despite the reasonableness of their excuses. However, insisting that the virtuous must not give up the prospect of being more virtuous sounds too harsh. So how can SAE consistently say that the virtuous sometimes can be exempted from growing more virtuously?

Before answering the question, let's look first at two common, equally plausible, but seemingly clashing intuitions. Like Kant, we think that "the harder a man finds it to act virtuously, the more virtue he shows," and yet, like Aristotle, we find that "the harder a man finds it to act virtuously, the less virtue he shows" (Hursthouse 1999, p. 95; Foot 2003). How can we explain the clash of these intuitions? Foot thinks that both are correct: Aristotle is right, for the virtuous must find it easier to follow their moral reasons. But Kant is right too, for when the virtuous are placed in the ordeals that greatly undercut their moral powers, they show more virtuousness if they do their best to persist in being virtuous. Foot claims that whereas the Aristotelian intuition explains non-supererogatory actions or attitudes, the Kantian intuition accounts for the supererogatory ones.

Yet virtue-based ethics in general, including its moderate strains, are not supererogationist.[37] A supererogationist reading of virtue ethics assumes that moral sainthood is an optional goal or cannot be required of those who don't have the relevant strength and willingness (cf. Heyd 2008). But virtue ethicists, including the moderate

[36] Of course, she is not inconsistent if she totally abandons her commitment to be virtuous, but the point of Russell and other moderate AE's claim is that one can still be virtuous, although one gives up the prospect of being much more virtuous.

[37] Supererogationist ethical theories hold that there is a class of moral actions, the performance of which is optional or non-binding, as it is very hard or demanding huge sacrifices. The ethical theories that hold the opposite view are usually called as anti-supererogationist theories.

ones, think that there are aretaic reasons that make both abstaining from and striving for being a moral saint non-optional. For those who lack the power, being moral saints is unreasonable and so not virtuous and non-optional. But for those who have the power and find that the costs aren't unreasonably high, being moral saints is virtuous and so non-optional too. This shows that virtue ethics can't accommodate supererogationism (cf. Annas 1993; *pace* Hursthouse 2006),[38] since supererogationism focuses on the necessary or minimal conditions for doing morally, while virtue theories is more about robust or stable moral disposition for being and doing morally, which incur different or higher moral requirements.

If the seemingly conflicting intuitions cannot be explained by supererogationism, how should we explain them? It's likely that the conflict can be explained away when the intuitions are used to solve our problem. Specifically, I believe that the Kantian intuition can adequately explain why those who are only able to grow virtuously to some extent, can still be virtuous or even highly so. Unlike Aristotle, Kant defines virtue in terms of the moral agents' volitional strength or determination to be true to their moral identity in the midst of situational and psychological challenges to it. Aristotelian virtue ethics, however, can accommodate Kant's understanding of virtue in these respects: (*1*) Kant's account of virtue can be treated as the account of an individual virtue: it can be about the particular virtue of conscientiousness (cf. Adams 2006), perseverance, fortitude, etc.; (*2*) Better still, Kant's definition of virtue can be accommodated as the account of the structural virtue in general.[39] Structural virtues (e.g., courage, perseverance, self-control) function to uphold, regulate, or mobilize the other kinds of virtues. All of these functions reveal the role of the structural virtues as the sustainer of the self-identity or self-integrity

[38] For many, moral saints are the only people who are always willing and able to go the extra mile. Yet, associating moral saints with supererogation doesn't work, as many of their efforts aren't supererogatory. One might say that the supererogatoriness doesn't lie in moral saints' actions, but in their decisions to embrace altruistic lifestyles. But many moral saints do not forgo their vocations. Although some did, they thought it's demanded by urgent conditions, and ignoring others in such conditions is just betraying their conscience, so they don't think that it is about going the extra mile.

[39] Adams' terms, see Adams 2006.

of the virtuous, especially during duress. For this reason, structural virtues are crucial for bringing about and conserving the robustness or cross-situational consistency of virtues.

Now, those who, due to inhibiting but excusable contingencies of life, cannot reach the higher levels of virtuousness, can still be virtuous by possessing or displaying the Kantian virtue. When a virtuous person lacks a particular virtue that enables him to perform some required virtuous actions (say, enduring grisly tortures), he at least could display some Kantian virtues. For example, although he never succeeded in his whole life to overcome his natural weakness, his doggedness to maintain his moral beliefs and goals demonstrated that he was virtuous throughout his lifetime. There are other possibilities as well: he could abstain from trying the impossible but pursue his moral goals in different ways; he could try the impossible (i.e., overcoming his natural weakness) through being courageous and persistent, which could help mobilize enough moral energy or other sort of virtues; he could even show his steadfast commitment through being sad, regretful of his failure, although this shouldn't cause him to relinquish his moral identity.

As a result, even though our miserable virtuous man in one sense failed to reach a higher level of virtuousness, in the other sense, he not only maintained his virtuous commitment and self-integrity, but also developed his character. Moreover, since in SAE every virtue can be defined as a mode of self-expression of the virtuous, in displaying the Kantian virtue in the midst of weakness, a virtuous person still actualizes his self, and thus can reach a somewhat higher level of virtuousness (he becomes more excellent in some virtues, although he cannot excel in the others). Thus, at least in some respects and circumstances (e.g., during the unendurable ordeal), an excused virtuous person can still be increasingly virtuous. Accordingly, CT_D* is not needed, for CT_D can sufficiently account for this sort of phenomena. Hence, SAE can accept excuses, although they must be qualified in a way that doesn't lead to inconsistency.

3.2. Objections and Replies

I'm going to answer now some possible challenges to my claim that SAE or a highly coherent AE requires CT_D or the bindingness of becoming moral saints.

3.2.1. The Objection from Over-Demandingness

The first objection states that I've interpreted AE very demandingly in SAE, which can result in the theory's losing its appeal. My reply is basically biting the objector's bullet, as my arguments so far aim to justify the very thing that he complains about. If my arguments succeed, then SAE truly belongs among those ethical views that try to justify the demandingness of morality. Also, one issue in this project is not about the unattractiveness of a highly demanding ethics, but the rational consequence of an ethical view that aims to make morality more pervasive in one's life.

One of the most common objections to very demanding ethical theories is that they are inhumane. Namely, they do not give room for exempting conditions or personal freedom and can exact some insensible demands like abandoning one's leisure time or personal pursuits, since resources that are channeled for those purposes can be used more fruitfully for the benefits of others. Admittedly, moral theories that always prohibit or at least discourage one from reading newspapers or taking a brief daily nap are counterintuitively harsh. But it is highly doubtful that SAE is really overdemanding in *this* particular way.

As I said in the first chapter, high degrees of virtuousness should not be identified with bizarre moral asceticism. I believe that SAE's demandingness doesn't oddly imply that there shouldn't be one single moment at which a virtuous person doesn't devote herself directly to altruistic causes. Nor does it lead to a harsh demand that the virtuous must always meticulously search for opportunities to greatly sacrifice their interests for others who have the direst possible needs. It is one of the advantages of SAE, I think, that these unacceptable conclusions are avoidable by showing that:

a. Being highly virtuous is not to be realized and assessed in terms of episodic heroic or unusual actions, but in the context of one's whole life. It is basically about the growth of one's moral self-identity and not about what kinds of actions that one must do;
b. To be genuine, every moral virtue must be based on *phronesis*, which provides necessary constraints to one's proneness to extreme or fanatic behaviors. Although *phronesis* can justify or recommend extraordinary moral actions like self-sacrifice, it can also help virtuous persons differentiate a genuinely moral way of life from moral fetishism, fanaticism, or pathological behaviors, which, due to their detrimental effects on one's virtues and their development, are clearly not the excellent ways of being responsive to moral reasons.
c. Also, altruistic reasons are not the only moral reasons, and thus their normativity and execution sometimes may have to be moderated by other moral reasons or guidance. For example, 'being as altruistic as possible' sometimes can be balanced by moral guidance like 'one must not confuse authentic altruism with zealousness or moral OCD, which mask psychological insecurity'. In other words, if one wants to strive to be both as altruistic as possible and realistic about one's proneness to unhealthy extremism, then it may be the case that the best decision to make is to be industrious in one's altruistic endeavors without unrealistically overburdening oneself, unless one is really required to make that kind of sacrifice.

3.2.2. The Objection from Supererogationism

Friends of supererogationism contend that in denying the non-bindingness of very demanding ways of life like moral sainthood, SAE disregards the common intuition that such ways of life have greater moral merits than the ordinary ones (cf. Heyd 1982). Admittedly, a theory that denies the higher value of, say, being a prisoner of conscience in a repressed society, is counterintuitive. But admitting the extra worth of such actions doesn't necessarily commit one to supererogationism. Anti-supererogationist theories like SAE can explain the axiological superiority of the so-called supererogatory actions

without adopting supererogationism. SAE and other virtue-based theories hold that the possession of any degree of virtuousness is already excellent and eligible for recognition, since virtues or being virtuous are intrinsically good or show a more excellent and committed way of being moral. CT_D also implies that the degree of moral excellence is proportional to the developmental degree of one's virtuousness. From this viewpoint, people who are willing and able to do the allegedly supererogatory moral actions deserve more praise and admiration than people who are not, as those actions often indicate very high degrees of virtuousness. Thus, what people admire from those who go beyond the call of duty is mainly their moral excellence.

However, how about those who went the extra mile but were seemingly not virtuous (e.g., Oskar Schindler)? There are two possible replies: *first*, for ethicists who think that the virtuous can live a morally inconsistent life or have incomplete or disunited virtues (e.g., Adams 2006), Schindler was in fact virtuous, although not highly so. What we admire from Schindler is really his moral excellence, as one couldn't protect thousands of Jews in such a hazardous condition for some years without some measure of character stability. *Second*, Schindler wasn't virtuous, but what he displayed was an admirable moral excellence that approximates virtuousness. According to this reply, moral excellence may be a greater category than virtuousness, as it incorporates both virtuousness and the less excellent degrees that are close to it. Presently, I'm not sure which of these replies is more satisfactory.

3.2.3. The Objection from the Unity of Reasons or Goods

Many strains of virtue ethics refuse or downplay the dualism of prudential and moral reasons. However, if moral saints are the maximally virtuous, then, seeing that moral saints indubitably affirm the primacy of altruistic goodness, won't it imply that *either* virtue-based ethics is not right or moral saints are not truly virtuous?

I do not think that it is crucial for the success of this project to affirm the truth of some main claims of virtue ethics. Be that as it may, considering prominent virtue

ethicists' acceptance of the primacy of altruistic goodness or moral virtues (Foot 1992, Annas 1993 & 2008, Sherman 1997, etc.), I believe that instead of regarding virtue-based theories as prudentializing morality, it is much more accurate to see them as moralizing prudence and thereby making morality more pervasive and demanding. Denying the superficial moral-prudential dichotomy shouldn't be always contrasted with asserting the primacy of the moral. In fact, as evidenced by the defenses of strong altruistic concerns in virtue ethics against the charges of egoism (e.g., Annas 2010), as well as arguments in favor of the moral demandingness of virtue ethics (e.g., Trianosky 1986, Louden 1988), this primacy seems to be widely taken for granted in virtue ethics.

It is likely that in virtue-based ethics, prudential reasons are a species of moral reasons. The rejected dualism therefore stands for a narrow view of morality that holds that morality should be mainly or exclusively altruistic, and many sorts of reasons that aim at promoting one's self-interest are not moral and must be delegated to the realm of prudence. Against this, virtue ethics not only thinks that morality admits of many seemingly egoistic prudential reasons, but also, being altruistic shouldn't be contrasted to the pursuit of one's fundamental self-interest. In virtue ethics, morality is about the more basic and holistic evaluative outlook of one's life that facilitates excellent responsiveness to various kinds of objective and intrinsic goodness. Now, if morality is understood in that way, how can it be reconciled with the primacy of altruistic reasons that the aforementioned virtue ethicists espouse? I just mention one sort of reply here: the so-called objective and intrinsic goodness refers to the perfective goodness of human nature in oneself and others, the most consistent and complete responsiveness to which is based on altruistic reasons. This is because, fulfilling others' human nature (viz., promoting the flourishing of others) *both presupposes and promotes* one's own flourishing. I'll discuss more about this in the last two chapters.

3.2.4. The Objection from Vocational Pluralism

The last objection is: if being a moral saint is the developmental goal of the virtuous and, ideally, all others who want to take morality more seriously, then, since moral saints' vocations are uniformly altruistic, having altruistic vocations must then be the goal of the virtuous and all others who want to take morality more seriously. But this sounds too narrow and paternalistic, for it forces people to have vocations that don't reflect their talents and professional aspirations. It doesn't feel right to say that the virtuous must work like Gandhi or Mother Teresa. Mellema (1991) uses a similar reason for arguing against making moral sainthood a binding goal (p. 148).

However, conceptually speaking, moral sainthood can accommodate vocational differences, since the critical condition for being a moral saint is an internal one, i.e., the degree of one's self-identification with moral causes (Colby & Damon 1992, p. 301). Not only that, empirically speaking, it is clear that many if not most moral saints do not abandon their occupations or vocations. Many of them, while becoming moral saints, also continue to develop their talents and pursue their professional interests. A few years ago, Chinese people found out with astonishment that an old rickshaw driver had used most of his income to finance the education of orphans. To exclude him from the candidacy for moral sainthood on account of his being a rickshaw driver is surely misleading. For this reason, it is not right to confer the status of moral sainthood only to those whose vocations are outwardly altruistic.[40]

Nevertheless, it is also obvious that having deeply altruistic concerns that greatly affect or shape their vocations is one of moral saints' distinguishing marks. Hence, although moral sainthood is not vocationally paternalistic, it imposes certain conditions on the ways moral saints do their work, and more importantly, on the final purposes of

[40] But I don't agree with Adams, who thinks that the sainthood status can be given to remarkably talented people who excel in non-moral fields like music, arts, or sciences (Adams 1987). If those people can be called 'saints', then either the word 'saint' here is used metaphorically or we should change its strong ethical connotations. Furthermore, Adams's view cannot explain the unique depth of being *moral* saints, which usually elicit more respect and admiration than the so-called musical, scientific or arts saints.

their vocations. I want to suggest two of them. *First*, regardless of their vocations, moral saints make altruistic causes their final passion or goal. One can say, using Aristotelian jargon, that the altruistic *telos* is the form that imbues various vocations with moral significance. Thus, although a saint who works as a rickshaw driver may be interested in the advancement of his career or everything that's related to rickshaw-hood, his main life 'ambition' is decidedly altruistic. Moral saints can pursue their vocational or professional interests, but these must be finally directed to and sometimes sacrificed for the promotion of others' well-being. *Second*, moral saints' professions or occupations typically won't result in the excessive accumulation of external goods that are just used for personal purpose (e.g., wealth, leisure time). So it's not an exaggeration to say that considering moral saints' radical altruism, a very wealthy moral saint isn't only unusual, but also not quite right. To conclude, moral saints' vocations are flexible but must aim for and be subjected to others' well-being. In other words, while moral saints' vocations aren't always overtly altruistic, their final goals or main passions are necessarily so.

Some might still find the conclusion unacceptable, as it implies that the virtuous aren't free to promote their vocations to the full, and even worse, they must forgo their vocations, if their altruistic concerns require them to do so. There are at least two replies:

a. The full development of all talents and vocations always involve to some degree or another their being directed to the well-being of others. This shows that human flourishing doesn't exclusively consist of the perfection of potentials or the realization of vocational aspirations, but also the fulfillment of the need to be united with others through friendship, altruism, etc. What is more, some aspects of human flourishing are more universal and fundamental, so that they must be included in all sorts of life plans or vocations, or else flourishing won't be attainable, at least not completely. If one's love for or solidarity with others is one such aspect, then it's likely that moral saints pursue their vocations in a flourishing-friendly way.

b. It may be the case that the ways moral saints pursue or treat their vocations are not ideal. But this doesn't mean that they are ascetic or masochistic, as many of them might find it regrettable or even tragic. Schweitzer was aware that serving others in Lambarene, Africa, resulted in the loss of the treasured opportunities to be a great musician and theologian. Besides, it might be helpful to see moral sainthood as a way to practice "interim ethics".[41] That is, becoming a moral saint, in spite of its disadvantages, is the best provisional or urgent way to deal with enormous sufferings in one's community. Moral saints might be aware that their ways of life are not too ideal with respect to vocational fulfillment, but it is the only ideal, albeit provisional, way in emergency situations. Many moral saints, for instance, did not self-consciously decide from early on to be engaged in highly altruistic ways of life. They simply found that clinging to their personal fulfillment while letting others suffer or die miserably was intolerable.

4. Concluding an Incomplete Argument

If my argument in this chapter succeeds, then my previous conclusion, i.e., moral saints exemplify the property of having the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness, should lead to a strong justification of moral sainthood. As I say in the beginning of this chapter, moral sainthood is strongly justified, only when the bindingness of exemplifying the degree of moral saints' virtuousness is entailed by the framework theory. This is especially so when the theory is anti-supererogationist (viz., doesn't have the obligatory-supererogatory dichotomy) and perfectionist (viz., prescribes a maximal condition of being moral, which consists in the perfection of one's moral nature). Here, the theory's perfectionism entails anti-supererogationism, for the scope of moral demands in it is defined by the seemingly inexhaustible possibilities or opportunities for moral

[41] Albert Schweitzer's coined phrase. Schweitzer used it to explain what he thought [mistakenly, I think] as the temporary or emergency character of Jesus' radical moral teachings in the Gospel.

growth. In other words, such a theory entails that the domain of moral bindingness overlaps with the domain of all realizable moral behaviors and attitudes. My argument in this chapter shows that SAE is not only perfectionist, but also anti-supererogationist, and therefore justifies moral sainthood strongly.

Nevertheless, the argument for the justification of moral sainthood in this chapter is still incomplete, since I haven't addressed the most critical attack upon moral sainthood, which is based on the claim that the life of a moral saint is not a flourishing life. Without arguing against this, the conclusion (that becoming moral saints for the virtuous is more than just binding) is unsustainable. If moral saints are truly not flourishing, then virtuousness, which is regarded as the necessary condition for flourishing, is *either* unable to 'deliver its promise' or brings about flourishing only if it is possessed in a moderate degree. The first disjunct threatens to refute AE, while the second disjunct threatens to invalidate SAE in particular, both of which are definitely unappealing.

CHAPTER IV:
"ARE MORAL SAINTS HAPPY?"
A PROLEGOMENA TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY OF MORAL SAINTS' EUDAIMONIA

1. Introduction: Conceptual Clarifications

This chapter is a prolegomena to my attempt to refute the material argument against moral sainthood. Here, I want to initiate my argument by (*1*) clarifying some frequently used concepts (flourishing, happiness, etc.), (*2*) identifying and formulating the problem and thereby showing how the problem and its solution affirm the conclusion of the third chapter (i.e., moral sainthood needs to be strongly justified by AE/SAE), (*3*) devising the criteria for solution, and then, (*4*) assessing the empirical evidence, which is mainly about moral saints' psychic flourishing. Finally, I will (*5*) explain the inadequacy of the empirical studies of moral saints' psychic flourishing, as well as their benefits for this philosophical inquiry, and, (*6*) state briefly the implications of those studies.

1.1. Eudaimonia

I said in the previous chapter that one of the most telling objections to moral sainthood is the saints' apparently anti-flourishing way of life. But to begin with, it is very crucial to understand the meaning of "flourishing" and some related concepts.

Flourishing is often confused with the meanings of some different but apparently similar concepts (e.g., happiness). I treat flourishing as being interchangeable with well-being and eudaimonia, although this isn't always the case in philosophical literature.

A more contentious and weighty issue, however, is the definition of flourishing, particularly within the AE family, which is a big church. In spite of their broadly Aristotelian outlook, different AE theories define eudaimonia by relying on insights from Thomism (DeYoung, McCluskey, & Van Dyke 2009), Platonism (Adams 1999), sentimentalism (Slote 2001), consequentialism (Driver 2001), Nietzschean perfectionism (Swanton 2003), and so on. Facing this variety of choices, I decide to use a conception of eudaimonia that is not too controversial, i.e., it is basically still in line with the Aristotelian tradition, which holds that eudaimonia is (*1*) the highest good or the final goal that includes and organizes all the other goals in human life; (*2*) identical to the objective and normative fulfillment of human nature[42]; (*3*) a moralized concept that has moral virtues as *both* its necessary condition and its partial realization; (*4*) encompassing the whole life and is best implementable via reasonable life planning; (*5*) mainly realizable through following the principles of practical reason, and (*6*) insufficiently realized without external or non-moral goods.

Besides avoiding irrelevant controversies, my choice of this broadly Aristotelian conception of eudaimonia aims at a direct defense of moral sainthood, since those who criticize moral sainthood as incompatible with eudaimonia often rely on commonsensical or broadly Aristotelian views of eudaimonia. But this doesn't mean that I will remain bound to the Aristotelian tradition in all of its details in my argument.

1.2. Happiness

In line with most philosophical work nowadays, I differentiate happiness from both flourishing and pleasure. Happiness should be understood instead as the subjective aspect or psychological expression of eudaimonia, and so it is interchangeable with psychic flourishing (cf. Haybron 2008). This conception of happiness implies that

[42] Admittedly, it's because of the lack of external goods and the difficulties to develop some aspects of their well-being that moral saints' inner strengths become their most conspicuous and admirable feature. Yet, psychological excellences are more than the signs or products of something objective and normative.

genuine expressions of psychological well-being can track or help one identify some aspects of objective flourishing, which includes but is not limited to psychic flourishing or happiness. Yet, since certain aspects of objective flourishing cannot be directly expressed and identified through affects, happiness cannot exhaust eudaimonia.

Moreover, contrary to the popular view, happiness is distinct from pleasure, which is very impermanent and easily satiable to some limit only. Psychological research almost universally affirms that relentless pursuit of pleasures backfires badly, for pleasures are very fleeting and best pursued when they are satiated proportionally or moderately and variedly (cf. Seligman 2002). The impermanence of pleasure and its nearby feelings (excitement, delight, etc.) cannot reliably indicate its possessor's subjective or objective state of well-being. By contrast, happiness is a rather stable and deep inner peace or contentment that is dispositional and not constantly noticeable, as it underlies a plethora of psychological reactions. Compared to pleasure and other positive affects, happiness is then more pervasive or cross-situational psychological state or condition. As explained by Haybron, this is because happiness is more about the authentic affirmation of one's self-identity than about the occasional experience of pleasant events (cf. Haybron 2011). Understanding happiness this way fits with SAE, which defines virtuousness as a form of self-actualization. But whether the self-actualization that defines virtuousness really brings happiness as the other sorts of self-actualization do, one needs to probe first the real relationship between being virtuous and flourishing.

1.3. The Relationship between Virtuousness and Eudaimonia

According to the standard account of AE (see chap. 2, 1.3), being virtuous is both necessary for and an expression of eudaimonia. This implies that, as many friends of AE often underline, virtuousness alone is insufficient for flourishing; there cannot be flourishing without non-moral goods and luck. Let us unpack this proviso. There are two kinds of things that are necessary for eudaimonia, in addition to virtue: external goods (in

the Aristotelian sense of the terms, which include health, wealth, reputation, etc.) and good luck. Nonetheless, because the set of states of affairs that obtain only through virtuous actions is a subset of the set of states of affairs that obtain only through voluntary actions, the attainment and the use of non-moral goods, insofar as it is both morally salient and voluntary, depends on virtuousness. Briefly, one is flourishing, only if one attains and uses sufficient non-moral goods virtuously. However, attaining and using external goods virtuously is necessary but insufficient, as the set of states of affairs in which the virtuous attain and use goods, overlaps only partially with the set of states of affairs that are only obtainable through voluntary actions. So, strictly speaking, it's the virtuous attainment and use of non-moral goods, provided sufficient luck, which constitutes the sufficient condition for eudaimonia.

What is more, eudaimonia in AE is an avowedly moralized concept (Hursthouse 2009). The Aristotelian conception of eudaimonia is non-prudential, i.e., it is not about attaining eudaimonia in general, regardless of one's moral commitment. The successful exercises of moral virtues accordingly become the main causes, constituents, and indicators of an unfolding eudaimonia. Thus, not only will the exercises of virtues bring forth harmonious social and personal life that make up eudaimonia, the virtuous persons' use or enjoyment of those goods is itself an exercise of virtues. Morality is then basically self-rewarding: one is virtuous not in order to get richer or happier, but in order to persist or grow in virtuousness; to be exact, through one's virtues, one can attain affluence, happiness, and health, all of which enable one to persist and grow further in virtue. On such an account, it seems that non-moral and luck-dependent goods are significant insofar as they can secure or support the full exercise of virtues. Therefore, attaining and using non-moral goods, as well as the luck that can partially actualize them, are the *instrumental conditions* of eudaimonia. Amoralists like Thrasymachus would not think that this kind of life is enviable.

Now, assuming that 'goods' in this context can refer to the eudaimonic states of affairs, it follows that, strictly speaking, there are no non-moral goods, as the so-called non-moral goods refer or belong to the states of affairs that consist of and obtain through the exercises of virtues. For example, one must exercise virtues to attain bodily health and other allegedly non-moral goods, the use of which requires virtues too. The qualifier 'non-moral' refers then to the immediate targets of one's virtuous actions that do not seem to be directly related to altruism or non-controversially moral causes. However, this kind of qualification might well be not in accord with the spirit of AE. For this reason, the non-moral aspect of virtuous living chiefly refers to the luck-dependent attainment of goods or states of affairs. In that case, it is likely that it is only the luck-dependent attainment of eudaimonic goods (or the luck itself) that constitutes the instrumental condition of eudaimonia.

The clarifications above provide the conceptual resources needed to respond to the claim that moral sainthood is incompatible with flourishing. While I'll refine and modify a few of the details of this discussion as we proceed, I won't stray too far from it, so that my argument remains consistent with my chosen framework theory, AE.

2. Setting Forth the Problem and Formulating the Criteria of Solution

2.1. In what Sense are Moral Saints (Allegedly) Non-flourishing?

At this point, let us discuss the main problem of this chapter, which is the allegedly non-flourishing life of moral saints. I believe that it is just scandalously troubling for our sense of justice to say that it is not only the case that the morally best kind of life is not the best kind of life, all things considered, but is also one of the most undesirable (worst?) kinds of life.[43] I think that instead of disregarding this intuition of scandal, virtue ethicists should try to rethink their conception of eudaimonia, so that it can accommodate the virtuousness of moral sacrifice. Besides, in my view, the intuition

[43] Given that moral saints' sufferings are among the most tragic miseries in the world today.

that a sacrificial way of life is morally excellent is one of the most basic and common moral intuitions that we have. Before going on, however, we must answer this basic question: precisely in what sense are moral saints supposedly non-flourishing?

Allegations of moral saints' non-flourishing life are classifiable under two categories. The first category concerns what I call the saints' anti-perfectionist lifestyle. Wolf claims that from the perspective of personal perfection or human fulfillment, moral saints are found very wanting: moral sainthood isn't "a model of personal well-being toward which it would be particularly rational or good or desirable for a human being to strive" (Wolf 1982, p. 419). To say that moral saints' way of life is anti-perfectionist is to say that due to their radical altruism, moral saints lack resources and even determination to promote their talents and the other goods that make up human flourishing. For example, people regret that Schweitzer's dedication to the Congolese cost him the development of his exceptional musical talent (he was an expert on Bach's organ works) and bright academic career (he was one of the leading biblical scholars of his era). From Wolf's standpoint, had Schweitzer stayed in Germany, he would have led a flourishing life that could have also contributed to the well-being of more people in the world. The same can be said about Farmer: had he devoted his life to medical studies at Harvard, he might not just have developed his potentials more fully, but would have contributed more to the physical well-being of many, not just the poor that he has actually helped.

The second category of allegations concerns the moral saints' hazardous way of life. Since moral saints often put themselves at the frontiers of struggles against injustice, poverty, and other moral causes, they basically make their own lives unpleasant, dangerous, and not enviable (although admirable). Moral saints' unusual courage and moral beliefs often make them the easy targets of social isolation and disparagement. It's not merely a coincidence that many moral saints have been martyred for their ideals, while many others have been deprived of their career, family life, social status, and welfare. Killings, harassments, and tortures that they have endured in many different

societies in the world provide more than enough evidence for this grim portrayal. Although observers are impressed by moral saints' imperturbability, courage, and even joy in the midst of severe hardships, few are willing to let their family members embrace this 'extremely' virtuous lifestyle. Furthermore, a highly altruistic lifestyle often drains moral saints' psychic and physical energy and renders them more vulnerable to stress, depression, or nervous breakdown.

To recap, to say that moral saints' way of life diminishes their well-being, as their critics think, is to say that they (*1*) do not properly actualize their potentials and (*2*) endanger their life. Through endangering their life, moral saints necessarily undermine the fulfillment of their nature, although in living anti-perfectionistically, they do not necessarily jeopardize their life. At any rate, either living anti-perfectionistically or struggling dangerously for the oppressed doesn't seem to be an attractive picture of human life. Using Stephen Darwall's rational care test (Darwall 2002), it seems that no mother would wish such a life for her newborn child. So far, most critics of moral sainthood like Wolf tend to emphasize moral saints' anti-perfectionism more than their dangerous struggle, but I feel the need to emphasize both on equal footing, because the second category (hazardous lifestyle) is implicit in the arguments of these critics, since moral saints endanger their lives not only by confronting oppressive systems, but also by exhausting themselves in living an extremely altruistic life, which is inseparable from their anti-perfectionism. Also, both friends and foes of AE highlight the importance of moderation in virtuousness, due to the dangers that high levels virtuousness can inflict on the well-being of the virtuous (cf. Tessman 2005).[44] In any case, the critics believe that living non-flourishingly is a necessary effect of embracing moral sainthood. It is not just accidental, but an inseparable part of the package of becoming radically altruistic.

[44] In this respect, investigating moral sainthood is a more pertinent way to address the issue of whether being moral is compatible with preserving one's self-interest, for it's not episodic moral actions but extraordinary moral life that consistently and truly endangers one's well-being.

2.2. Formulating the Eudaimonic Variant of the Continuity Thesis (CT_E)

If it is true that moral saints, due to their radical altruism, imperil their well-being, then, assuming that my arguments in the previous chapters are successful, it would pose a big problem for AE. In a nutshell, the problem is: if being virtuous is both the necessary means to attain, as well as the expression of eudaimonia, how can its consistent and full development result in the way of life that is inimical to eudaimonia?

Realizing this, some friends of AE try to weaken the extent of the virtuousness requirement, something that we have discussed in the previous chapter. Another way to deal with the problem is to get rid of the eudaimonism of AE. A virtue ethicist, for instance, asks friends of AE to admit the obvious fact that

> "it is not *only* and not even primarily because of moral deficiencies that one is denied the possibility of flourishing…the relationship between virtue and flourishing is a contingent one, and that the insufficiency of virtue for flourishing is often more salient than its necessity" (Tessman 2005, p. 57, p. 160).

Now, since heroic virtuous actions often benefit others, it may be that some kinds or levels of virtues can just contribute to the virtuous persons' goodness rather than to their eudaimonia, "indeed it may be the case that at least some virtues are inimical to personal flourishing while making that contribution" (Swanton 2003, pp. 80-81).

In short, while the first kind of approach holds that curbing the developmental limit is all right, the second group of approaches believes that it is better to abandon the eudaimonic aspect of AE.[45] However, it is important to note that the position of the latter group doesn't necessarily imply that being virtuous cannot bring any degree of flourishing at all. It might be hard to make such radical a claim. What they seem to

[45] Similarly, seeing the troubles of maintaining both the 'A' and the 'E' in AE, some critics believe that friends of AE have committed the obvious mistake of confusing the notion of good or meaningful life with that of flourishing life (Haybron 2011, Feldman 2010). But to split the goodness and the flourishing of virtuous life, as what the proponents of the second approach tries to do, is to demolish AE.

suggest is that in some situations or at some virtuousness levels, being virtuous and flourishing go in different directions (cf. Adams 2006). Hence, both approaches assume that to ensure the eudaimonia of the virtuous, there must be some limit to the purportedly open-ended development of virtuousness in AE.

Although I said in chapter 2 that in this project, I'm open to the modification of some features of moral sainthood and AE, it doesn't mean that I can easily forgo their core claims. Amputating the extent of either the 'A' or the 'E' in AE isn't an option for me, as it compromises the success of this project. Also, if AE is an attempt to reflect the richness of moral life, as its friends claim, and moral saints outstandingly develop that life or have their normative basis in AE, then, to be consistent, AE must be able to account for moral sainthood, along with its allegedly non-eudaimonic life. Considering also that the aforesaid approaches try to undermine both AE and moral sainthood by limiting the open-endedness of being virtuous, to justify moral sainthood vis-à-vis AE is essentially to defend the coherence of CT.

In formulating the problem and finding the criteria for its solution via CT, I want to show that on the one hand, CT, which articulates a core claim involving the main concept in AE (virtuousness), is indispensable for the justification of moral sainthood; on the other hand, without accommodating highly virtuous or morally ambitious ways of life like moral sainthood, AE would compromise the coherence of CT, which in turn can only result in compromising AE's own consistency. In other words, the tenability of moral sainthood may well decide the consistency of a normative theory that currently attracts many philosophers, who themselves do not consider moral sainthood seriously. On this account, due to CT, AE, which is the most dominant strand of virtue-based ethics, can only be portrayed as a very demanding ethical theory. Portraying AE this way, however, might render it more difficult to accept or defend, since AE is not only a theory that prescribes ethical dispositions and behaviors, but, more controversially, their being necessary for human flourishing.

Let us now formulate the eudaimonic variant of CT (hereafter CT_E) in accordance with its aretaic counterpart (CT_D):

(1) (CT_D): The unity of being fully virtuous and all the other degrees of virtuousness on the $virtuousness_V$ continuum normatively entails that as long as a virtuous person is not fully virtuous, he or she ought to progress on the continuum in the way that increasingly approximates the fully virtuous.

(2) (CT_E): The unity of being fully virtuous and all the other degrees of virtuousness on the $virtuousness_V$ continuum entails that the progress of virtuousness that increasingly approximates full virtuousness brings the growth of eudaimonia in the way that increasingly approximates full eudaimonia.

Unlike CT_D, CT_E is not formulated as a normative precept, as the virtuous doesn't normally or directly aim at becoming as flourishing as possible.

I want to note some relations between AE and CT, especially CT_D and CT_E. According to the standard formulation of AE, a theory belongs to AE, if it endorses that virtuousness is a necessary condition for and an expression of eudaimonia. Now, since CT is just a formalization of the nature of virtuousness as a vague, calibrated concept, then, AE cannot be without CT, as virtuousness is a central concept in AE. Further, since CT_D is the normative implication of CT, then, as my arguments in chap. 3 show, a coherent reading of AE must imply CT_D. Since AE holds that being increasingly virtuous isn't only binding, but is also an expression of eudaimonia, albeit partially, then, the increase in virtuousness should always bring the corresponding growth in eudaimonia, and not only does CT_D imply CT_E, but also, both AE and CT imply CT_D and CT_E.

In other words, since in AE, being virtuous, which is within one's control, is not only necessary for full eudaimonia, but is in itself always an expression of eudaimonia, then, if one cannot determine the normative minimal extent of the virtuous person's moral development, then, the normative minimal extent of flourishing cannot be determined either. Here, one cannot maintain AE and CT without maintaining both CT_D and CT_E, but

one cannot maintain CT_D and CT_E and say: "it is enough to be moderately virtuous, insofar as being maximally virtuous would destroy one's flourishing." To say that, one must either deny the truth of CT_D and CT_E, as well as AE and CT, or limit the extent of the virtuous development and flourishing, which renders CT_D and CT_E, as well as AE and CT, incoherent. So the prospect of AE hinges on whether CT_D and CT_E are true, which is to say that if moral saints are not highly flourishing, then AE cannot 'deliver its promise', namely, being virtuous doesn't pay.

2.3. Some Problems with CT_E

I want to address now a worry about AE's dictum that virtuousness is necessary for and an expression of eudaimonia. According to CT_E, it should be the case that

(3) the more virtuous a person becomes, the more flourishing he or she deserves to be.

If it is the case that (CT_D & CT_E) and CT is true, then it must be true that moral saints are more flourishing than the virtuous enough. Yet it seems that although being virtuous is necessary for eudaimonia, it is not necessary that the growth on the aretaic continuum brings the corresponding increase on the eudaimonic continuum, since unlike being virtuous, attaining eudaimonia is not fully within one's control. Without the ability to precisely calculate the luck factor (but that implies that there's no luck!), the claim that the rise of the aretaic level always brings about the corresponding rise of the eudaimonic level, although desirable, seems unrealistic.

But if this is so, then it seems that it is not always true that moral saints are more flourishing than the virtuous enough. There are two possible responses to this concern:

First, in line with AE orthodoxy, since being virtuous is the integral or the *main* part of eudaimonia, one could argue that the development of virtuousness is already a progress in human flourishing. One might say then that the eudaimonic level fully matches the aretaic level, as long as the former refers to the level of the main part of

eudaimonia, which is being virtuous itself. But this response in fact roughly affirms that virtuousness is now necessary and completely constitutive of eudaimonia and basically transforms AE into Stoicism. In this project's context, they can only beg the questions of the critics of moral saints.

Second, although luck is instrumental for eudaimonia, one can say that luck shouldn't be underscored in a way that undermines the reliability of virtuousness to promote eudaimonia. If the link between virtuousness and eudaimonia were constantly breached by luck, then *either* such invasive luck isn't luck or one's virtuousness or eudaimonia isn't genuine or full-blown. Emphasis on virtues for attaining eudaimonia has been motivated also by its reliable success, and it's likely that, as the ancient friends of AE generally affirm, diminishing the reliance on luck is a significant contribution of virtuous life. Thus, it's reasonable to say that in reality, the difference between the aretaic level and the eudaimonic levels cannot be that great. Also, it may be acceptable to say that assuming that normal situations, in which luck is on the side of the virtuous, obtain, the eudaimonic level can't fail to be fully proportional to the aretaic level. However, one can challenge it and say that there are no such situations, for in reality, there is always a certain degree of luck or imperfection that make it impossible for the eudaimonic level to fully correspond to the aretaic level. This challenge is still compatible with CT_E, for it won't be damaging to CT_E if in fact, the eudaimonic level can only roughly but not fully reflect the aretaic level. The most important thing for this second response is that the difference of both levels cannot be too distant. So conceptually speaking, it's safe to assume in philosophical inquiries like this that *either*

(4) given that AE is true, the more virtuous a person becomes, the more flourishing he or she deserves to be.

or, to reflect the pervasive and uncontrollable imperfection in this world,

(4*) given that AE is true, the more virtuous a person becomes, the more flourishing he or she deserves to be, although the increase in the degree of the person's flourishing only roughly corresponds to his or her aretaic growth.

I want to challenge the second response above in the next section.

2.4. The Remaining Strategy

Now, in accord with the second response above, one might say it is all right if the eudaimonia of moral saints doesn't correspond to their aretaic level, for this is owing more to bad luck than to their radical altruism. But this inference is obviously mistaken, since not only does the discrepancy between moral saints' aretaic and eudaimonic levels seem to be too great, but also, as noted above, the role of luck shouldn't be stressed in ways that undermine the effectiveness of virtuousness in bringing eudaimonia. Therefore, if moral sainthood *predictably* threatens moral saints' well-being, as seems to be the case, then it is more likely that it is not a virtuous way of life after all. More disastrously for AE, if to attain moral sainthood is to exemplify the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness, then sufferings that often befall moral saints show that the maximal growth of virtuousness ironically brings about a correspondingly dramatic decrease in eudaimonic level, i.e., it is now only by luck that moral saints can go on unharmed! If this is true, then moral sainthood compromises AE in a very fundamental way. To solve this trouble, it appears that AE must *either* shorten the aretaic continuum, so that it only includes the degrees of virtuousness that are eudaimonia-friendly *or* bite the bullet by arguing that, despite appearances, moral saints are really flourishing.

If the first disjunct is chosen, then AE must define the boundary that separates the 'safe' from the 'risky' virtuousness that moral saints exemplify. This is actually to deny the conceptual consequences and hence the truth of CT_D in particular, since it assumes that having the maximally realizable degrees of virtuousness doesn't bring the maximally realizable degrees of flourishing. As I argue in chapter 3, due to the vagueness of the

concept of virtuousness, one cannot just say that it is enough to be virtuous enough without non-arbitrarily explaining why is it not enough to be nearly virtuous enough. The situation at present, however, is different, since one here divides the degrees on the continuum on the basis of well-being considerations. Hence, finding out safe degrees of being virtuous isn't arbitrary, seeing also that one can do it without dividing the degrees too finely. Be that as it may, throwing away the higher and risky degrees of virtuousness would turn AE into, using Augustine's terms, a self-centered ethical 'athleticism' (Finnis 1980, p. 378). Ethical systems that get rid of sacrificial moral virtues or actions are impoverished and counterintuitive. To think that one can just attain a safe degree of virtuousness that rules out the possibility of moral heroism is to assume that being excellently moral is less excellent than being excellently prudential. This is inconsistent with most strains of AE, which doesn't endorse the primacy of the self-seeking sort of prudential reasons over moral reasons.

But perhaps one can find the safe degrees of being virtuous that do not rule out the possibility of occasionally doing self-sacrificial actions. In the Second World War, many moderately virtuous people could perform heroic but very dangerous deeds by hiding and saving the Jews (Oliner 2003). Thus, the concern to preserve the value of and the need for moral heroism can still be addressed by cutting off the risky degrees of being virtuous. But this is problematic: as long as long as the possibility of moral heroism isn't discarded, one can always say that having any degrees of virtuousness that can necessitate self-sacrifice in some demanding situations isn't safe enough, because:

a. one cannot be certain about the frequency and the timing of such situations in one's life. The problem here isn't just about the degrees of one's virtuousness, but the pervasiveness of evil in the world;
b. even if one grants that such situations rarely happen, the fact that the occurrence of just one tragic situation can damage one's eudaimonia shows that the problem lies more in the unpredictable scale of tragic happenings.

Thus, bad luck might be either more pervasive or more unpredictable than we think, or it may be the case that "obstacles to good lives appear to be matters of luck only because we lack the capacity to understand and control them" (Kekes 1990, p. 14). The root of the problem is that the world doesn't seem to be friendly to the moralized notion of eudaimonia. Also, without excluding the possibility of unusual moral actions, it is hard to find out the safe degrees of being virtuous that also enable one to perform heroic actions, as that kind of degree is already high enough (and thus unsafe) or can be easily stimulated by some situations to develop into the higher and more risky levels of virtuousness.

On the other hand, maintaining CT_D while admitting that moral heroes or saints are not flourishing would be costly: it commits one to saying that AE is revealed, in some situations, to be internally inconsistent, although in other situations it may not appear to be so. What is more, *if*, as I think the right reading of AE or CT_D and CT_E, which presupposes its moral realism, entails (*1*) the bindingness of being increasingly virtuous cannot be arbitrarily limited, *and* (*2*) the demanding nature of the bindingness is objective or real, *then*, the failure of the virtuous to flourish would generate an 'error theory' argument (cf. Joyce 2006) against AE. Here, the virtuous persons' ingrained awareness of the bindingness of being virtuous, which, according to AE, is a mark of being genuinely virtuous, in reality constantly misleads them, and thus happiness that results from living virtuously can hardly be called authentic. In other words, assuming that AE depicts the actual moral phenomena, in the absence of flourishing, the so-called objective and subjective well-being that allegedly results from or accompanies one's virtuousness would sooner or later be demolished or proven not to be the case. Hence, 'being as virtuous as possible' turns out to be not a virtuous thing to do. To preserve one's belief in moral realism, it may be better then to regard AE as a "beautiful but false hypothesis that is slain by an ugly fact" (borrowing from T. H. Huxley's memorable sentence).

What I've argued so far is that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to maintain AE by changing CT, that is, by altering either CT_D or CT_E. In other words, it is

self-refuting to accept the proposed definitions of virtue and virtuousness in AE but refuse their both very demanding and undesirable consequences. That is, CT makes it impossible to curb *either* the demand for virtuous development or the supposition of a consistent increase of the flourishing of the virtuous in the course of that development. This will also show that the solution that this project is seeking, provided that it wants to maintain AE as its theoretical framework, cannot reject either CT_D or CT_E. It seems then that one can only grasp the second horn, i.e., bite the bullet and insist that despite contrary appearances, moral saints are flourishing. This is basically my strategy, and to do that, I need to seek a conception of eudaimonia that is still within the framework of AE and yet is congenial to moral sainthood.

What is more, to explain the flourishing of moral saints without compromising the AE framework, one must not only find a conception of eudaimonia that works, but it is also important that one carefully steers a middle path between the extreme of fully accepting folk intuitions and the other extreme of flouting "too many strong intuitions…[that] risks changing the subject" (Haybron 2008, p. 53). Besides, there is a criterion that needs to be fulfilled by the chosen conception of eudaimonia, which is used to solve the above problems.

The chosen conception of eudaimonia should be able to explain the compatibility between well-being and radical altruism, which involves confronting the allegations of anti-perfectionism and endangering personal well-being. That is, the used conception must be able to answer this question: is it possible to say that radically altruistic human beings are generally flourishing? To answer this, the conception of eudaimonia should:

a. give some reasons that can justify the lack of the other goods or aspects of human flourishing, which is caused by moral saints' way of life (in Schweitzer's case, that was the failure to develop one's talents); or provide substitute goods that can constitute their flourishing in a different way.

b. provide some eudaimonic reasons that can lessen and compensate for the risks or dangers that constantly threaten or even damage moral saints' well-being. In other words, it should explain or justify moral saints' valuation that it is better or even more eudaimonic to persist in their ideals in the midst of the privation of familiar goods. This is distinct from (a), for while (a) concerns with the justifiability of moral saints' self-chosen 'poverty' (i.e., pursuing one particular good at the expense of abandoning many others), this is more about the rationality of living or being persistent in the midst of the loss of goods that they do possess.

These criteria, especially (b), pose a particularly daunting task, for there seems to be no limit on what moral saints can sacrifice or lose.

3. Assessing the Empirical Studies of Morality and Happiness

3.1. The Recent Empirical Support for the Eudaimonist Hypothesis

In this section, I start my attempt to address the material argument against moral sainthood by presenting some empirical evidence for moral saints' psychic flourishing.

Contrary to the prevalent skepticism among philosophers, many social scientists hold that there's a strong degree of correlation between moral sainthood and well-being. More than a century ago, philosopher-cum-psychologist William James reported that contrary to the puritanically grim caricature of moral saints, they were in fact marked by enduring joy, excitement, and other powerful positive emotions (James 1902: p. 271, p. 279). A half-century later, Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin concluded from his studies that in many societies, moral saints were among the most serene, creative, lively, and happy people (Sorokin 1950, p. 199).[46] Things apparently don't change much after a hundred years, as numerous psychologists recently have given more sophisticatedly researched evidence for James and Sorokin's claims. They show with ample empirical

[46] Sorokin writes, "Unselfish love is not only a life-giving force, but is also the best therapeutic method for securing real peace of mind, meaningful happiness, real freedom, and creative power…Love's dividends are infinitely greater and more lasting than those of any selfish enterprise." (Sorokin 1950, p. 200, p. 213).

support that highly virtuous people really seem to make up the happiest and healthiest segment of the society (e.g., Piliavin 2003, Peterson & Seligman 2004).

Many contemporary psychologists believe that the happiness of the very virtuous demonstrates the truth of the eudaimonist hypothesis, which avers that morality brings happiness or flourishing. Jonathan Haidt (2006) writes, scientific research supports the eudaimonist hypothesis, "even when it is reduced to the claim that [disinterested] altruism is good for [the agent]" (p. 175). This view has been echoed by other psychologists (cf. Astin & Sax 1998, Van Willigen 2000, Peterson 2011, etc., to mention only a few), and it has been argued recently that from a naturalistic viewpoint, happiness cannot be obtained or maintained without the presence of moral commitment (Tiberius 2008). Interestingly, empirical studies also consistently show that people who strive for wealth, prestige, and physical attraction are less happy and prone to psychological and physical problems (Kasser & Ryan 1996). On the other hand, virtuousness, religion, and personal relationship decisively defeat wealth, honor, power, and health in their contributions to well-being (Emmons 2003). Not only do these happiest life goals often overlap, they are also marked by their pursuers' devotion to causes that transcend their self-interest or make others' concerns their own.

Psychologists have isolated 'transcendence' or generativity (Erikson 1963, Emmons 1999, Peterson & Seligman 2004) as one of the main virtues that contribute to flourishing. Transcendence enables its possessors to transcend their self-interest and discover the ultimate meaning of life through moral values. Although the possession of transcendence is not limited to moral saints, they have it more permanently and exceptionally than others (cf. Post & Neimark 2007). Since transcendence frees people from smaller preoccupations or worries of their life by providing them with wider and secure sources of meaning, it is unsurprising that, as psychologists have found, many of those who excel in it, like moral saints, live longer and happier. Sorokin discovered that moral saints' typical lifespan is longer than the longest average lifespan in the US

(Sorokin 1950, p. 200). Recently, Haidt (2006) reports that "even after controlling for factors such as health at the beginning of the study", old people who give more help to significant others "went on to live longer than those who gave less…whereas the amount of help that people reported *receiving* showed no relationship to longevity" (p. 174; for detailed empirical studies that link altruism and longevity, see Post 2007; for an impressive study on the connection between aspects of eudaimonic well-being [some of which overlap with moral life] and biological health, see Ryff, Singer, & Love 2004).

3.2. Explaining the Happiness of Moral Life

Now let us see the theoretical basis of the eudaimonist thesis from some recent studies of well-being psychologists. Well-being psychologists discovered two principles from their research that undermine the common conception of happiness (see Seligman 2002, Haidt 2006, Biswas-Diener & Diener 2008):

The Progress Principle (PP): *pre-goal achievement positive affects usually are more intense and long-lived than post-goal achievement positive affects*.

The Adaptation Principle (AP): *high and low affects in positive and negative experiences will fall and rise to an affective equilibrium, which is likely universal and hereditary*.

There are some interrelated points between PP and AP: (*1*) the short-livedness of post-goal attainment's positive affects in PP is the effect of AP; (*2*) pre-goal attainment affects are not subjected to AP. We will see below why these are so. But first, here are some striking consequences of both principles:

a. Due to PP, people are often disappointed by success (Haidt 2006, p. 83): they invest so much to attain allegedly great happiness, just to find that their goals are not worth the price. PP shows that people are bad at estimating the strength and duration of their affective response to future events (cf. Wilson & Gilbert 2005);
b. Due to AP, the poor are roughly just as happy as the rich, for "good things and high accomplishments…have astonishingly little power to raise happiness more than

transiently" (Seligman 2002, p. 49). That is, we are biologically wired to take our fortunes and misfortunes for granted (but there are exceptions: people can't recover quickly from the loss of spouses or children and the sadness of extreme poverty).

PP and AP can explain why people are disappointed by [their view of] happiness. They do not know that some popular goals that they energetically pursue (wealth, power, honor, good looks, health) are very subjected to AP. The problem is, after they find that these goals cannot give lasting happiness, they aim at other popular but AP-subjected goals (in fact, most popular goals are like that) or pursue the same goal but with either higher or lower expectations. Consequently, they are disappointed again, or at least unsatisfied by the fleetingness of their pleasures, and then aim at the other goals. This scientifically confirms the ancient wisdom that some pursuits of happiness are vain and trap people in a never-ending Sisyphean cycle, which is but a misery in disguise. There are some reasons why despite all of these, people keep "stumbling on happiness" (Gilbert's phrase, Gilbert 2006):

a. people mistake the intensity and length of pre-goal attainment positive affects as an indicator that post-goal attainment positive affects would be more intense and lasting;
b. people confuse pleasures with happiness, and pleasures are subjected to AP;
c. most popular goals, although they aren't AP-resistant, are driven by evolution-designed passions that seek to affirm one's superiority over others (Frank 1999). Yet, this almost instinctive concern or anxiety to win the arms race of life actually strives for prestige and not happiness (Haidt 2006, p. 101).

Positive psychologists believe that by knowing AP, PP, and other truths of human nature and happiness-making factors, we can find that there are some life goals and conditions that are not subjected to AP. That is, some goals or conditions are such that we are never well adapted to the loss of them, while their fulfillment will bring more lasting happiness. As a result, we can learn to use and 'cheat' AP and PP, and increase our happiness accordingly.

To delve into this, let us take a look first at positive psychologists' happiness formula (see Seligman 2002, Haidt 2006), which is: "*H* (happiness level) = *S* (biological set point) + *C* (life conditions) + *V* (voluntary activities)." This formula shows that although our normal affective equilibrium is biologically set (which causes AP), we have freedom to increase our overall subjective well-being above *S* by choosing and combining wisely the appropriate *C* and *V*.

While some kinds of *C* are clearly uncontrollable (gender, age, etc.), some others are controllable but can't increase *H*, due to their being subjected to AP (health, wealth, physical look, etc.), but some sorts of *C* (noise, commuting, lack of control, shame, personal relationships) are AP-resistant (Haidt 2006). Research show that wealth increases lead people to buy large and beautiful houses in suburbia, which causes longer commuting time and finally decreases their *H*. Intriguingly, people remain annoyed about their commuting, even after they have already settled down for years. But the most effective kind of *C* is personal relationship (Reis & Gable 2002), the loss of which resists psychological adaptation for a long time. Similar with *C*, not all *V*s are created equal. For example, although, due to PP, many pre-goal achievement activities are more satisfying, activities to achieve wealth or prestige are overall less satisfying than others.

Psychologists have found that the most effective kinds of *V* are *flow*-like. Chicago psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi found that one of the main expressions of happiness takes the form of 'flow', which isn't identical to pleasure or other surface feelings. Instead, it is a state of "enjoyed absorption" or gratification that consists of

> "a loss of self-consciousness as action and awareness merge…a sense that time has passed more quickly or slowly than normal; and an experience of the activity as rewarding in and of itself, regardless of the outcome" (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2003, p. 88-89).

Csikszentmihalyi found that flow is universally displayed by creative people who excel in their respective fields, including moral saints in morality. In contrast to pleasure-seeking

activities, gratifying activities that result in flow engage one's self much more fully and actualize one's potentials (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Although flow is not domain specific, it is likely that moral saints experience more lasting and exuberant flows than others. Csikszentmihalyi writes that moral saints, insofar as they devoted "the totality of their psychic energy to an all-encompassing goal that prescribed a coherent pattern of behavior to follow until death, turned their lives into unified flow experience" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 218). Moral saints have more robust flow, since the breadth and the greatness of their life goal and their moral commitment liberate them from smaller preoccupations or worries, and sustain them with more secure sources of meaning.

More importantly, psychologists concluded that people who have flow value their activities or goods for themselves and not for the sake of external rewards or pleasures (Frank 1999). This is confirmed by studies that were conducted by Tim Kasser and his colleagues. Kasser found that activities that notably promote well-being always aim at *intrinsic* goals (i.e., intrinsically valuable goals; e.g., self-discipline, social dedication, physical fitness, Kasser & Ryan 1996). Those goals are human goods that are "intrinsically motivating to pursue," and satisfy one's inherent needs "to grow and actualize, to desire feelings of competence and autonomy, and to be connected to… others" (Kasser 1999, p. 224). Activities that aim at intrinsic goals can also capitalize on PP, because perfecting one's self or life is a lifelong project that transcends the pre- and post-goal attainments dichotomy. Thus, AP-resistance seems to be caused by or is at least closely related to the perfective nature of one's goals, which requires or produces flow-like activities. In contrast, *extrinsic* goals (e.g. wealth, look, reputation) cannot be valued for themselves, namely, they are not intrinsically valuable. Pursuing them exclusively reflects psychological insecurity and results in stressful egocentric behaviors that diminish well-being (Schmuck et al 2000: 226, Kasser 2002).

On this account, very altruistic people, including moral saints, are very happy, because they chose the right *C* and *V*, and thereby raise *H* considerably. Seeing that moral

saints often have strong community support and are well-liked, they have chosen, albeit unintentionally, the right *C* of rich personal relationships. Moreover, moral saints, owing to their unusual confidence in their moral beliefs and causes, display strong self-control, which is an AP-resistant *C*. Also, moral saints, thanks to their *elevations* (see 4.1), are fully engaged in gratifying activities or flow, and since gratification is naturally antithetical to self-indulgence, it is unsurprising that altruistic activities become the obvious example of *H*-increasing *V*s (cf. Haidt 2006, p. 97).

Thus, what moral saints mainly get and savor is inner peace or gratification, which is deeper and more permanent than pleasures. Clearly, compared to securing huge profits, finding that one's efforts have ensured that there are no people who are dead or ill due to unclean water results in more lasting and deeper positive affects. This shows that happiness is not just a matter of good affect or mood, but more like inner peace or psychic affirmation (Haybron 2011), which reveals that one's self is getting closer to its ideal or goal and thereby becomes more perfected.

Further, moral saints' activities pursue intrinsic goals like virtuousness, communal belongingness, etc., the attainment of which capitalizes on PP and so ensures more permanent positive affects. This is because intrinsic goals are naturally non-static, that is, they are perfective and thus open-ended, i.e. they can always be or even ought to be surpassed by their more perfected forms and for this reason, pre-goal attainment activities and their concomitant affects are indefinitely prolonged. This is consonant with Aristotle's dictum that happiness lies in activities, which implies the overlap between goals and their pursuits. Now, due to their intrinsically valuable goals and activities, moral saints' happiness is secured from exhausting competitiveness that looks for the recognition of others and narrow psychological security. That explains why many moral saints have notable or above average positive affects, even in the midst of adversity. On the other, extrinsic goals are in the forms of quite fixed states of affairs or things (e.g. one's being pretty or healthy, prestige, money, power, etc.), the obtainments of which

must be subjected to the promotion of intrinsic goals, or else they would considerably diminish one's positive affects and point to nothing beyond themselves.

3.3. A Brief Critical Assessment

Before interacting further with the results of the studies above, I want to mention some of their methodological and theoretical limits:

First, due to the methodological constraints of their discipline, psychological studies that support the eudaimonist thesis focus more on happiness than objective well-being. Even in a recent ambitious tome that catalogs character strengths in a roughly Aristotelian way (Peterson & Seligman 2004), positive psychologists define the way each virtue contributes to flourishing in terms of its accompanying or resulting positive affects. Although some efforts have been made to link morality and biological health, biological advantages are mainly viewed as the effects of one's happiness. Many psychologists believe that happiness is indicative of eudaimonia, but understanding eudaimonia from happiness alone is clearly inadequate, since some eudaimonic factors like autonomy and knowledge are not necessarily expressible or measurable by positive affects. Happiness surely cannot be exhaustively indicative of eudaimonia.

Second, the studies explain the happiness of the virtuous enough and moral saints rather indiscriminately. Even if, due to the developmental continuity between them, those studies are applicable to both, we need to know more precisely whether moral saints are happier than the ordinarily virtuous. This issue needs to be addressed scientifically.

Next, these studies are mainly descriptive, so to use them in ethics, one must ponder first some normative issues like: whether morality is necessarily or only contingently linked with happiness, whether the notion and practices of morality contribute to *or* constitute *or* both contribute to and constitute the happiness of the agent (Hooker 1996), and so forth.

Lastly, although empirical findings affirm the happiness of moral saints, they beg the critics' question, as the main problem, which is whether moral saints are objectively flourishing, is still largely unaddressed. The concept of objective flourishing[47] mainly belongs to the domain of philosophy, as it is about the value-laden or morally based understanding of human fulfillment. Due to its being saturated with moral and other normative reasons, the concept of eudaimonia formulates the standard for human excellence that can (and must) be realized to one degree or another by all, regardless of their vocations. That is why eudaimonia is an inclusive notion that philosophers use to assess various types of vocations or ways of life. Clearly, such a notion can be formulated mainly through philosophy.

3.4. Arguments for Incorporating the Results of Empirical Studies

Be that as it may, there are some good reasons too for incorporating the relevant results of those studies in this philosophical project:

First, moral sainthood is basically an empirical concept, namely, it is based on the actual moral phenomena that are systematized and reported by social scientists. For that reason, it is important in this project to incorporate or consult the relevant empirical data, which is also useful to avoid reading too much into moral saints. More importantly, some distinctive features of empirically based concepts like moral sainthood can enrich philosophers' understanding of eudaimonia. As I said, since access to moral knowledge doesn't depend on philosophical expertise, the justification process in this project goes both-ways: the framework theory, including its normative concepts, and the empirical studies of moral saints can evaluate and complete each other.[48]

[47] Since the phrase 'objective flourishing or eudaimonia' is redundant, I omit the word 'objective' from now on, unless the context requires me to reuse it.

[48] That is, non-philosophers can acquire knowledge of normative truths or principles that are sometimes missed by others, including philosophers.

Next, many modern Aristotelian theories hold that since basic aspects of human flourishing and their regulative norms are in principle rooted in human nature, AE theorists should be open to use the results of scientific inquiries of human nature, provided that one neither uncritically renders all scientific findings normative, nor is one easily satisfied with one's incomplete intuition (cf. Murphy 2008). I'm not fully sure whether the psychological studies of moral sainthood qualify to be the scientific findings of human nature, but I assume that they do, not only because the reliability of their method has been verified (although some of their methodological assumptions are questioned by some, see Haybron 2011), but also, some of them have been conducted in close cooperation with other scientific disciplines (cf. Ryff, Singer, and Love 2004).

The last reason is the role of happiness or psychic flourishing in tracking eudaimonia. Many of the studies that I use concentrate their experiments not on surface feelings or mood, but on happiness as a deep and personal emotional state, which is more reliable in tracking objective well-being. Those studies investigate happiness not only by exclusively relying on the measurement of affects, must also by assessing those factors that can reveal the meaning of one's life, such as: life narrative, life goals, overall life satisfaction, resilience factor, etc.

4. Bridging the Empirical and the Philosophical Studies

In this concluding section, I want to point out some helpful insights that are revealed by the empirical studies of morality and happiness. These insights can give us some hints to construe a normative conception of eudaimonia, which can be used to address the material arguments against moral sainthood.

The first insight that we can glean from those studies is the close connection between happiness, well-being and self-actualization. Happiness can track well-being, because, as Haybron argues, contrary to pleasure, happiness is more personal and deeper in nature. Haybron (2011) says, "happiness is not merely a state of one's consciousness. It

is more like…*psychic affirmation* or, in more pronounced forms, *psychic flourishing…Why*? The answer lies mainly in the connection that happiness makes with the self" (p. 182). Hence, happiness doesn't come from some trivial events that can just induce pleasure, but is based on the actualization of one's self-identity (Haybron 2008, p. 180). Borrowing from Martha Nussbaum's Neo-Stoic account of emotions (Nussbaum 2001), one can say that happiness is saturated with eudaimonist concerns, as it is about the fulfillment of one's self-identity and human nature.[49] It is quite clear that happiness as being understood here can track eudaimonia. Yet it is also clear and quite indisputable that happiness is only a necessary condition for and thus a weak indicator of eudaimonia. However, it might be the case that happiness is not too weak an indicator, only if happiness in the above sense is most of the time manifested in the life of the authentically flourishing people. Some psychologists believe that authentic well-being and happiness depend on the kinds of goals that people pursue, which I will explain below.

The second insight is the importance of understanding happiness and well-being by using a goal-based approach. This approach, which becomes the normative framework of those studies to organize and interpret the empirical data, displays a broadly Aristotelian character. The approach examines the nature and the degrees of well-being on the basis of the nature of the goals that people pursue, and the ways they plan their lives to attain those goals. Goals in these studies, as well as in some AE theories, are best understood as reasons for actions and living that make life meaningful and well-off. That is why in some AE theories, those goals are called '[human] goods'.

Next, more significantly, psychologists found that happiness and well-being can only be secured by certain life goals and certain ways to attain them, since "not all goals *are* created equal, and not all goal attainment is equally healthy" (Emmons 2003, p. 114). It is likely that, as psychologists point out, it is mainly the following types of goals that

[49] Haybron (2011), explains that happiness is a disposition that consists of at least three affective categories of endorsement (e.g., joy), engagement (e.g., the flow, vitality), and attunement (e.g., tranquility, confidence). It may be that happiness is actually a kind of cultivable disposition toward those groups of emotions.

can bring deeper and more stable inner peace, which enables one to be more engaged with or attuned to various kinds of reality in life. The first is intrinsic goals, the attainment of which requires one to transcend self-interest and thereby free one from the insatiable pursuits of power, wealth, honor, and pleasure. Summarizing the results of many studies, Emmons (2003) writes that there are three types of goals that "consistently relate to subjective well-being", i.e., "intimacy, generativity, and spirituality" (p. 110). All of these goals have the same characteristic: they require selfless dedication to others' well-being (although by doing so, one doesn't necessarily abandon one's self-interest).

The second one is self-perfective goals, which aim at the actualization of one's self and its excellences. Some psychologists call these goals intrinsic goals (Kasser & Ryan 1996), as they are related directly to the development of one's fundamental skills and excellences (e.g., autonomy, moral growth, responsibility, communal contribution). Besides, intrinsic goals that aim at self-actualization are rightly or best pursued, when they are pursued for their own sake and not for pursuing ulterior goals. These intrinsic goals or goods are often contrasted to extrinsic goals or goods (e.g., financial success, look, power), which should be used for the sake of intrinsic goals as long as they are necessary. Well-being and happiness are severely damaged when extrinsic goals are treated as, using SAE terms, second-level or final goals. In doing so one unreasonably views things that should merely be means to actualize oneself as the main content of one's self-identity. As a result, one doesn't feel at one with oneself, as one's false second-level goal cannot satisfy one's natural desires for self-actualization. It is clear that the goal-based approach to well-being is very relevant to this project, for, as I argued before, in SAE, virtuousness that leads to eudaimonia is exemplified, only if the pursuits of all goals in one's life become more harmoniously coordinated in line with the pursuit of the final moral goals, which define one's self-identity.

It seems that if happiness is indicative of objective flourishing, then it is likely that the pursuits or the attainment of the aforesaid goals contribute to or are the

ingredients of objective flourishing. Besides, one can say then that as long as moral sainthood is a pursuit or the attainment of one of the aforesaid goals, it is reasonable to say that moral saints are at least psychically flourishing or happy. Things, however, are not that simple. In the next chapter, I will make the aforementioned insights the starting point of my philosophical conceptualization of eudaimonia that hopefully can accomplish the objective of my project.

CHAPTER V:
"ARE MORAL SAINTS FLOURISHING?"
AN INQUIRY OF MORAL SAINTS' EUDAIMONIA (PART I)

"Your prayer is...ambiguous. Are you just praying that the child has a life high in welfare?—that things go well for him in terms of prudential value? Or are you praying that the child has a life high in moral value?—that he leads a thoroughly virtuous life? The problem is that we can arrange for either one of these prayers to be answered, but we cannot arrange for both" (God's purported answer to a mother who prayed for her child's good life; Feldman 2010, p. 164).

1. Finding the Normative Basis of Moral Saints' Eudaimonia

In this chapter, I will: (*1*) introduce the New Natural Law Theory's (hereafter NNL) account of human flourishing; (*2*) discuss some fundamental rules for organizing basic human goods for attaining eudaimonia; then, in sections (*3*) and (*4*), examine some ways to accommodate moral saints' eudaimonia in NNL and their failures; and lastly, (*5*) present and argue for my own suggestion.

1.1. Introducing the New Natural Law Account of Human Flourishing

Solving the final problem of this work requires me to choose a philosophical conception of eudaimonia that functions as a theoretical framework of my arguments. I find that the NNL conception of eudaimonia can do the job. Briefly, NNL is an Aristotelian perfectionism that defines eudaimonia as the objective and inclusive fulfillment of human nature, which is realized through the reasonable organization of basic goods, the very materials of flourishing. The reasons for my choosing NNL's theory of eudaimonia as my final arguments' framework are:

a. It is one of the most suitable conceptions that can account for the results of the empirical studies of moral saints' psychic flourishing. Similar to the conclusion of those studies, NNL's theory of eudaimonia is based on the right pursuit of perfective goals or goods. NNL holds that human goods that should be the ingredients of flourishing "are *not* extrinsic to us but instead are elements of what human fulfillment—the fullness of being a human person—is all about" (Grisez & Shaw 1988: 78). Thus, I believe that NNL is one of the AE theories that can most suitably accommodate the results of the empirical studies of moral saints' psychic flourishing.
b. It belongs to the less controversial but more Aristotelian conceptions of eudaimonia. It understands flourishing as the fulfillment of human nature, the standard for which is objectively normative and doesn't depend on one's pro attitudes toward it, nor does it mainly consist of or become identified with one's psychic flourishing.
c. It has concrete and sophisticated theoretical resources,[50] which result from its account of human flourishing as the fulfillment of basic human goods. Compared to many strands in AE, NNL makes eudaimonia more pervasive in ethics by consistently defining the virtuousness and the rightness of actions in terms of their contributions to the realization of a reasonably planned human fulfillment.
d. It is inclusive or includes all necessary aspects of flourishing (e.g., life, friendship) and forbids the devaluation and the intentional sacrifice of any aspect of flourishing, even for the sake of any other aspects. The inclusiveness is incompatible with the narrowly moralized idea of well-being, which fully identifies flourishing with altruistic life.

I hope that in this final part of the dissertation, I can capitalize on NNL's rich resources to argue for the compatibility between moral sainthood and human flourishing.

[50] As a critic says, NNL is "conceptually richer and..[subtler] than the consequentialist and deontological theories that dominated most…[analytical] ethical theory in the 20th century" (Richardson 2004, p. 70).

1.2. The Definition and Classification of Basic Goods

1.2.1. Basic Goods: A Brief Philosophical Account

Unlike most branches of AE, in NNL, the notion of basic goods is more essential than virtues or virtuousness. NNL theorists define basic goods as the fundamental aspects or constituents of human flourishing that are rooted in human nature. As stated by John Finnis (1980), basic goods are like "opportunities of being; the more fully a man participates in them the more he is what he can be. And for this state of being fully what one can be, Aristotle appropriated the word *physis*, which was translated into Latin as *natura*" (p. 103). I want to explain some of the main features in Finnis' insightful account, which are important for a fuller understanding of the notion of basic goods in NNL.

Let us start with the concept of nature. It's not hard to notice that in scholarly literatures on this topic, flourishing is often defined as either the *fulfillment* or the *actualization* of human nature. Yet these phrases are not strictly speaking interchangeable, as they involve two distinct senses of human nature, which can result in two different senses of eudaimonia too. In saying that eudaimonia is the fulfillment of human nature, the notion of human nature that the phrase conveys refers to the perfected humanity. Here, the fulfillment of human nature signifies the final attainment of eudaimonia.[51] But when eudaimonia is defined as the actualization of human nature, the concept of human nature refers to human potentials that are being perfected. Thus, the phrase the actualization of human nature signifies more the pursuit of eudaimonia.

Next, how can we understand the concept of human nature? It is enough to say that the concept of human nature in NNL is not an ordinary scientific term, but a value-laden and normative one. That is, human nature refers to humanity as it is viewed from the axiological point of view. This doesn't imply subjectivity or relativism, since in NNL, axiological (including moral) assessments are inseparable from and objectively

[51] But it is different when the gerund 'fulfilling' is used. In this case, fulfilling human nature is the same as the actualization of human nature.

grounded in human nature.[52] From that perspective, people can intuitively grasp the differences between becoming a good, excellent, and perfect human being, which is the same as the differences between displaying good, excellent, and perfect humanity or human nature. This axiologically perceived concept of human nature is a normative one, as its respective axiological degrees entail the corresponding levels of desirability. For instance, excellent humanity is worth pursuing, and more so than good humanity, while being a bad human is to be shunned. Also, owing to its Thomist heritage, in NNL, terms like being worth-pursuing and desirability are interchangeable with the term 'goodness', provided that it is the perfective goals that are being desirable or worth-pursuing.

But why is it the case that actualizing one's nature is always good for one? In NNL's view, goodness is species-related, that is, goodness is always the goodness *of x*, which involves the actualization of *x*'s species nature. For each organism, to live is to be engaged in the actualization of its nature. This assumes that living beings have a kind of instinctive desire to seek the fulfillment of their natures. For them, the goodness or desirability of the fulfillment of their species nature is a brute fact. The desirability or goodness can also imply that some aspects of the species-nature are still not realized and need to be pursued. In other words, the pursuit entails already that its target is *good*, or more precisely, 'being perfective of one's nature'. In Aquinas' thought, which formatively influences NNL, while goodness in general supervenes on the actualization of a being's potentials regardless of degrees, ultimate goodness supervenes on the full actualization of a being's whole potentials in accord with its nature.[53] So, an organism that lives is already good, but if it achieves the perfection of its functions and becomes the perfect

[52] NNL's unique blend of intuitionism and naturalism is rooted in Aquinas' metaethics, which holds that "goodness is convertible with being (*bonum cum ente convertitur*)" (*ST* Ia. 5. 1). Aquinas' identification of being with goodness, in Stump and Kretzmann's reading (Stump & Kretzmann 1991, p. 101), means that "the actualization of a thing's specifying potentialities is, to the extent of the actualization, that thing's being whole, complete, free from defect…it is in this sense that the thing is said to have *goodness*. Like the designations 'morning star' and 'evening star,' then, 'being' and 'goodness' refer to the same thing under the two descriptions and so have different senses but the same referent."

[53] As said by Aquinas, "since each thing seeks (*appetat*) its own perfection, what someone desires as an ultimate end is what he wills as his own perfect and complete good" (*ST* 1-2, Q. 1, Art. 5).

specimen of its kind, then it is ultimately or finally good. Hence, goodness in its fullest sense of the term is perfective and teleological.

Be that as it may, how can one know the *content* of human nature? What are the aspects of that nature that need to be perfected? If it is the case that the value judgment of one's nature is objectively grounded in reality, shall then one consult first with the scientific disciplines that investigate human nature (e.g., biological and social sciences)? Admittedly, scientific knowledge can aid or even somewhat ground moral reasoning and actions, given that there are both-ways influences between both scientific knowledge and moral beliefs. Nevertheless, NNL holds that people in general can think about, know, and be intuitively attracted to the aspects of human flourishing, so that there is no need to find their instances or infer the 'ought' from the 'is' of human nature through scientific inquiries. The knowledge of the basic aspects of eudaimonia has always influenced people's assessments of the reasonableness of their (and others') actions and ways of life. That doesn't mean, however, that people's commonsensical belief about the basic aspects of human fulfillment is infallible or complete. That is why consulting with philosophers and scientists is very beneficial.

It is important to note that in NNL, the aspects of human nature that need perfection are discoverable through reason. Why? *First,* although scientific studies can help one be clearer on or even find out the aspects of human flourishing, the values and status of those aspects as *basic goods* can only be found by reason. It's through reason that one attributes basic or intrinsic goodness to features or goods that directly complete or become the integral aspects of human nature and non-basic or instrumental goodness to those goods that can just promote or aid those intrinsically good things or goods. Thus, in NNL, the requirements and judgments of reason, goodness, and human nature coincide (cf. Finnis 1980, p. 103).

Secondly, due to their generality level and concrete functions, the kinds and instances of basic goods are more directly discoverable by reasoning. Not only that, basic

goods themselves are explicable as or in some sense identical with basic reasons for action. In NNL, practical reasons are fundamentally explicable as reasons to promote the ingredients of well-being, since in their most primitive or non-derivative forms, reasons for action can only target basic goods themselves. Chappell thinks that one can easily find this via entertaining a chain of subsumptive explanations (Chappell 1996). In constantly explaining or seeking the foundational reasons for an action, one would eventually find the most basic reason, the further questioning of which would be unnecessary or could just elicit redundant replies. There is no need then to justify the pursuits of basic goods on the basis of more basic reasons or principles, although for theoretical purposes, one can say that reasons for pursuing basic goods are derivable from the first principle of practical reason[54], which tautologously states that one must pursue the good and shun the bad. In light of this, an action is practically justified or rational, only when it is rightly done in pursuit of either basic goods or non-basic goods that promote, either directly or not, basic goods. All of these show that NNL is a welfarist theory (Murphy 2001, p. 46), which means that in NNL, moral reasons and norms are fundamentally expounded and assessed in terms of their role to promote and defend the fulfillment of the aspects of well-being.

Thus, all existent goods are explicable in terms of the objective and factual aspects of human nature (e.g., social life, psychological and physical functions, etc.), and those aspects are 'good', insofar as they are judged by practical reason to be worth-perfecting. What is more, every basic good should not be understood merely as a means or an instrument to attain flourishing, but also as an essential expression of flourishing. This means that each basic good can also reveal humanity, albeit in one of its excellent dimensions only. Let's take the basic good of knowledge. Defining humanity solely in terms of the excellence of knowledge cannot work, but the excellence of knowledge itself reveals not an excellent part of a human being, but an excellent

[54] In a different formulation, one cay say that, following Aquinas, the first principle of practical reason is the form of the principles or reasons for pursuing basic goods (cf. Finnis 2008).

dimension of human nature. In addition, in line with Finnis' arguments (Finnis 1980), strictly speaking, one cannot say that one pursues basic goods, but participates in basic goods, not only because one cannot perfectly promote basic goods in this world, but also, one cannot portray basic goods as a means, the use or enjoyment of which can stop when the ends are achieved. Since each basic good is an integral dimension of human flourishing or the final end itself, it is something that can be always enjoyed and developed inexhaustibly.

Hence, according to NNL, one must actively participate in one's basic goods, but if one can't participate in them, one must respect them, and in any event avoid devaluing or destructing them (cf. Chappell 1998: chap. 3). This assumes that one's attitudes to basic goods, including one's respect, must not be based on one's subjective interests or preference, but on the rational acknowledgment of the objective, intrinsic values of the goods, which directly reflect the dignity of human nature that they represent.

1.2.2. The Taxonomy of Basic Goods

But what are the kinds or the instances of those basic goods? NNL theorists' answers to this question are not unanimous, although their differences may be insignificant. Here are a variety of catalogs that have been suggested by some prominent NNL theorists: (*1*) "Life, knowledge, aesthetic appreciation, play, friendship, practical reasonableness, and religion" (Finnis 1980); (*2*) "Self-integration, practical reasonableness, authenticity, justice and friendship, religion, life and health, knowledge of truth, appreciation of beauty, and playful activities" (Grisez 1983); (*3*) "Friendship; aesthetic value; pleasure and the avoidance of pain; physical and mental health and harmony; reason, rationality and reasonableness; truth and the knowledge of it; the natural world and people; fairness and achievements" (Chappell 1995); (*4*) "Life, knowledge, friendship, work and play, the appreciation of beauty, religious belief and practice" (Oderberg 2000); (*5*) "Life, family, friendship, work and play, beauty, knowledge, and integrity" (Gómez-Lobo 2002); (*6*) "Life, knowledge, aesthetic

experience, excellence in work and play, excellence in agency, inner peace, friendship and community, religion, and happiness" (Murphy 2002).

I think that happiness and inner peace or harmony are not basic goods, for they indicate the achievement of eudaimonia or the success of one's life plan.[55] That is, they are not individual aspects of flourishing, as they are more about some conditions that accompany or ensue from one's overall flourishing. Although happiness or inner peace can be the basic reasons for actions, they are so because one can be motivated not just by the promotion of basic goods, but also by one's successful arrangement of the participation in basic goods. Pleasure can't be considered as a basic good, as it is mainly consequent upon the attainment of all kinds of goods, whether they are basic or not.

David Oderberg (2004) objects to the inclusion of practical reasonableness, authenticity, excellence in agency, etc., for they are not basic goods but individual virtues. Oderberg argues that since virtues are capacities or excellences to participate in basic goods, they cannot be confused with basic goods themselves. But I don't agree with Oderberg, since: (*1*) along with one of the defining tenets in AE (see chapter 2, 1.3), friends of NNL can say that virtues are not only a necessary means for attaining some basic goods, but in themselves are the instances of basic goods; (*2*) practical reasonableness and other kinds of virtues can perfectly become the basic reasons for action. One can act solely for developing his or her virtues, as they are clearly one of the ingredients of his or her flourishing. Nonetheless, I do think that the aretaic goods in the list above (reasonableness, authenticity, rationality, etc.) are subsumable under the basic good of excellence in agency. It is fitting, I think, to consider virtues, as well as the habituations that aim at them, as being constitutive of the excellence in agency.

Now, considering that some other basic goods in the list are either too specific or subsumable under other basic goods (family, physical and mental health, self-integration,

[55] As Oderberg (2004) says, "one must not confuse structural or higher-order properties of the pursuit of the good, or of the life plan in which that consists, with the basic goods themselves" (p. 137).

avoidance of pain), I prefer the following catalog of the basic goods: *Life, knowledge, aesthetic experience, excellence in work and play, excellence in agency, friendship and community, religion.* Therefore, my discussions about the basic goods in the remaining parts of this work will always refer to the aforesaid seven goods.

However, knowing the taxonomy of basic goods is by no means enough, for eudaimonia in NNL is neither as simple as the aggregation of all basic goods, nor is it to be achieved by maximizing all those goods[56], but is a matter of reasonable organization and actualization of basic goods in one's life. For this reason, one of NNL theorists' main tasks is to think about principles or rules that enable people to realize their eudaimonia realistically or in accord with their respective conditions, and rightly, i.e., without devaluing or destroying basic goods. Organizing basic goods rightly and realistically, which constitutes the *reasonable* configuration of the aspects of flourishing, aims at realizing eudaimonia in the midst of various challenges and limitations of life.

1.3. The Configuration of Basic Goods and the Structure of Eudaimonia in NNL

1.3.1. The Need for the Principles of Configuration

It seems that rationally promoting well-being is as simple as promoting every basic good or its related non-basic goods, for one doesn't need further reasons to justify it. However, although the pursuit of basic goods does not require justifying reasons, it does need another sort of reasons or principles that are necessitated by some feature of basic goods, which make the pursuit of them a complicated matter. Now, every basic good is a human potential or capacity, the development of which is by nature open-textured and can accommodate multifarious conditions or contexts. In short, there are practically countless ways and opportunities to promote basic goods (cf. Finnis 1980, p. 100-101). Nonetheless, this feature of basic goods is challenged by the following facts: (*1*) the

[56] In advocating the maximization of basic goods, consequentialists mistakenly think that goods are countable as "simple quantities"; but the truth is that basic goods are essentially "units of meaning", the maximization of which doesn't make sense (see Chappell 1998, p. 157).

finitude of human existence, the limits of talents or interests, and other vicissitudes of life that time and again reduce or constrain the opportunities to promote every basic good; (*2*) the opportunities or the ways to pursue each basic good to the full would inevitably conflict with the opportunities or the ways to pursue other basic goods. Taking these undeniable facts seriously is already a reasonable, fitting response to basic goods, as it assumes that all those goods are valuable and the inevitable failures to attain some of them doesn't show their inferiority. This response, moreover, requires one to adopt a regulative sort of reason or principle (to be precise, practical wisdom) that helps one promote basic goods effectively but also rightly (i.e. without devaluing or destroying those basic elements of human flourishing).

So promoting basic goods can only be done through designing a life plan in accordance with the guidance of reasonable principles. Since human flourishing is what one aims at when one plans one's life, eudaimonia is definable as the successful execution of one's reasonable life plan (Murphy 2001, p. 133). In this case, '[being] eudaimonic' or 'flourishing' is the structural property of a successfully implemented and reasonably designed life plan (cf. Oderberg 2004). Because basic goods can be understood as basic goals, we can say that basic goods are lower-level goals, while eudaimonia is the higher-level goal that consists of the reasonable attainment of basic goods (see Cooper 1986, pp. 96-97). It may be important to note that, as Aquinas points out, due to the vicissitudes of life that one must reckon with in the first place when one reasonably plans one's life, the eudaimonia that one can attain is an imperfect one (*imperfecta beatitudo*). But this doesn't necessarily mean that imperfect eudaimonia is not eudaimonia, for eudaimonia can be seen as a vague, calibrated concept, and thus imperfect eudaimonia can be read as a level of eudaimonia$_V$.

Let me mention and explain now some reasonable principles of life planning, which are essentially the principles for configuring basic goods (see rich accounts of the similar

principles, which greatly influence my account, in Finnis 1980, pp. 105-125; Grisez & Shaw 1991, pp. 86-98; Murphy 2001, pp. 198-219; Gómez-Lobo 2002, pp. 41-47).[57]

1.3.2. The Incommensurability or the Equality Principle

The principle is based on the NNL's doctrine that all basic goods are incommensurable and thus equally valuable. To say that basic goods are incommensurable is to say that the choice for participating in one or some basic goods is practically significant (Murphy 2001, p. 184). That is, each basic good poses a fundamental reason to choose that cannot be replaced by or subjected to the fundamental reason to choose any other goods. Thus, one cannot choose to participate in one basic good without having reasonable regret for the irreplaceable loss that is caused by one's failure to participate in the other good, which one doesn't choose.

Consequently, as stated by this principle, one must not promote some basic goods by intentionally ignoring, devaluing, or damaging all the others. This principle also entails the following sub-principles:

First, one must not regard some basic goods as the objectively overriding goods, the participation in which should always outweigh the participation in other goods (cf. Gómez-Lobo 2002, p. 40). To claim that, for instance, knowledge is the overriding good is to see it as being more valuable than the other goods like friendship, so that it is always rational to intentionally sacrifice friendship or the other goods for knowledge. The overridingness claim justifies the devaluation of some of the fundamental aspects of human flourishing, which amounts to the devaluation of one's own well-being and the welfare of others, whose basic goods can be promoted through one's participation in those devalued basic goods.

Second, one must pay attention to the inclusion of all basic goods in one's life plan. That is, one must become a responsible steward of one's capacities for living more

[57] It is important to note that considering the complexity of life circumstances, the set of principles or rules for configuring basic goods is by no means closed or definite (see Murphy 2008).

flourishingly by promoting them, whenever possible. Although this doesn't mean that one must unrealistically promote every basic good with equal measure in one's lifetime, one's appreciation of the intrinsic goodness of each basic good, as well as their equality, must at least be reflected in the management of one's desires or attachments: realizing the unpredictability of life, one must not be unhealthily attached to one's vocation or the pursuit of a particular basic good. Lack of detachment would result in the neglect of other basic goods or the inability to cope with losses, which prevents one from flourishing. A healthy detachment is requisite for the wise ordering of one's life (cf. Gómez-Lobo 2002, p. 43). Also, one must have openness to all kinds of basic goods. One can adopt here a kind adventurous spirit to explore those goods that one hasn't either adequately promoted or been especially interested in. The openness is also shown through the use of one's leisure time, which shouldn't be monopolized by the pursuits of certain goods only. But to ensure all of these, it is crucial that in planning one's life, one avoids over-specificity (see Murphy 2001, p. 209), so that some room can be allocated for the promotion of the basic goods that one hasn't satisfactorily considered before.

Third, due to the limits of time and other resources, one cannot help but fail to participate in or pay more attention to some basic goods. But one is required to respect or appreciate those goods, which is usually expressed in one's realization that his or her unintentional failure to promote some goods is something to be regretted or at least not to be celebrated. NNL theorists often accentuate the need to respect and appreciate basic goods, for this attitude is inseparable from or even identical to the respect for humanity. Respecting basic goods is based on the fact that basic goods are *human* goods (Finnis 1991, p. 11), so that devaluing or destroying basic goods is tantamount to attacking human well-being in oneself or others, which, in the Kantian language, is the intentional failure to treat oneself or others as ends and not merely as means.

1.3.3. Freedom and Creativity

The freedom and creativity principle is based on a reasonable belief that one cannot flourish, if one's life plan is not authentically one's own. Without authenticity, basic goods cannot fully play their role as the fundamental ingredients of flourishing. This principle indicates that people should be free in creatively planning their own life in line with their talents, commitments, and other conditions, without any kinds of coercion or unhealthy imitation of others. Here, freedom is made possible by at least two factors: (*1*) the incommensurability and the equality of goods, which implies that since there are no basic goods that are in themselves weightier than or should be prioritized over other goods, people have significant room to flexibly organize their goods and plan their lives accordingly; (*2*) the differences in talents, interests, vocational goals, etc. Since it doesn't make sense to say that certain talents or vocational goals must be developed by all or are more valuable than the others, people are free to organize basic goods in line with their respective conditions (talents, interests, vocational goals, commitments, etc).

Freedom doesn't entail but is a necessary condition for creativity. Creativity is significant, since a reasonable plan for a flourishing life should reflect in one degree or another one's excellence in agency. That is, a necessary condition for reasonable life planning is the presence or the development of excellence in agency, which "has primarily to do with choosing and acting well" (Murphy 2001, p. 114). Excellence in agency involves not just practical reasonableness and integrity of judgment and action, but also the creative performance of them (especially practical reasonableness), since reasonable planning must not just take limiting conditions of life seriously, but also think about some ways to participate in most or all of the basic goods in those conditions. In other words, although the frequently uncontrollable or unpredictable vicissitudes of life constrain one's opportunities, they at the same time stimulate one's creativity in designing the blueprint of one's eudaimonia. What is more, one's creativity presupposes one's excellent responsiveness to and progress in excellence in agency, which reflects

also that life planning is not a static or once in a lifetime matter, but must undergo development that goes along the improvement of one's capacities for flourishing (i.e., participation in the basic goods).

It is important to note here that one's freedom doesn't include the freedom to get rid of basic goods, although one can somehow do so by making non-basic goods the target of one's final pursuits. Even though the planning of life is up to one's decisions, the materials that constitute it (basic goods) are universally rooted in human nature and are not up to one's preferences (see Murphy 2001, p. 134). Besides, the flexibility of life planning still depends on some other conditions (talents, social circumstances, vocational goal, etc.), some or many of which are beyond one's control.

1.3.4. The Indispensability of the Coordinating Goods

To plan one's life, one must choose a basic good to be the good that coordinates the other goods, or the coordinating good. This implies that a life plan can only be in the form of a hierarchical configuration of basic goods, in which the promotion of some basic goods becomes the final goal that regulates the promotion of other goods. The regulated goods now become the secondary goals that facilitate the attainment of the regulating goods. From this viewpoint, basic goods can be understood as "possible parts of the kind of *structure* of goods that we recognize as a good human life" (Chappell 1998, p. 157).

To plan one's life is to make a hierarchical configuration of basic goods, because planning here is the imposition of certain forms or ways of interaction to basic goods, and forms or ways of interaction between goods cannot make sense without the presence of some final goal. Since basic goods in the plan are the basic units of life (that is, in the planning, life is not composed by events but by basic goals or goods), it is indispensable that some goods become the final goal that coordinates the interactions of all other goods. More relevantly, to plan one's life is to make a hierarchy of goods, *because* effective life planning needs commitment to definite and not all-inclusive goals (cf. Gómez-Lobo 2002, p. 42). Now, given that basic goods are interconnected in their functions (more of this

below), effective planning requires one to subject some goods or goals to the coordination of the goods or goals that one has committed oneself to.

Hierarchical arrangement of goods inevitably makes some goods the means of some other goods, which can only result in the inequality of the promotion of basic goods. However, this doesn't necessarily contradict the aforesaid equality principle. Why? As philosophers argue, intrinsically valuable goods can also be instrumentally valuable without canceling out their intrinsic values, and goods that function as means can be valued independently in the absence of goods that function as their ends (cf. Murphy 2001, p. 194). One's enjoying or promoting goods that function as means in one's hierarchy is no less valuable than one's enjoying or promoting goods that function as ends in one's hierarchy. Thus, as Chappell (1998) says, goods "do have values aside from the structure of the life in which they occur. But their values aside from that structure aren't the same as their values within that structure" (p. 164).[58]

To be precise, the intrinsic values of basic goods are unlike but is compatible with the instrumental values that are assigned to them, so that it's not the case that the regulating goods are more valuable than the regulated ones, for the regulative relationship between goods isn't built in the goods themselves, but more about the way one structures his basic goods. This seems to imply that there can't be a standard or hierarchy of basic goods that exists apart from people's own devising of their hierarchies. I'll argue later against this seemingly right implication.

1.3.5. The Indispensability of the Structural Goods

Not only does the pursuit of eudaimonia requires one or some basic goods to become the coordinating goods, but also, it is written into the nature of basic goods, as it were, that the participation in each basic good requires the participation in other goods. Participating in the good of knowledge, for instance, involves the participation in the

[58] Similarly, Murphy (2001) contends that "while eudaimonia structures the goods, the reason-giving character of those goods does not derive wholly from their place in eudaimonia" (p. 135).

good of life, or in some contexts, the goods of excellence in agency and friendship. To tweak Wittgenstein's famous sentence in his *Tractatus*, "In a reasonably planned life, nothing is accidental: If a basic good *can* occur in it, the possibility of its being combined with other basic goods, as well as its becoming the coordinating good, must be written into the basic good itself."

It is also important to note that the successful promotion of every basic good, as well as the successful implementation of all sorts of hierarchies of basic goods, should always involve the participation in some goods that one can call the structural goods. Some basic goods, most notably the goods of life and excellence in agency, function as the structural goods that determine the success of every kind of life plan or every pursuit of each basic good. It is hard to see how people can achieve success in their life plans without having excellent participation in such goods. The indispensability of the structural goods implies that although it is a part of making a reasonable life plan that the pursuit of some goods should not interfere with or impede one's pursuit of the coordinating good, it is not the case with the structural goods. For instance, assuming that moral saints make the good of friendship their coordinating good, moral saints' making the participation in the good of friendship primary is intertwined or overlaps with their excellent participation in the goods of excellence in agency and life. Hence, every successful participation in each basic good or every successful execution of a life plan implies already the excellent participation in the structural goods.

If this is the case, the structural goods are the most basic, not in the sense of being more valuable than all the other goods, but in the sense that the participation in those goods is the operational condition of the participation in the others. In pursuing the basic good of religion, for instance, one might be able to relatively ignore or fail to promote more fully the good of artistic enjoyment, but one cannot ignore or fail to promote the good of life and excellence in agency. A person who excels in the basic good of religion but intentionally ignores or damages his life cannot be said to be successful in his pursuit

of the good of religion. Also, it might be the case that different hierarchies of basic goods have slightly different sets of the structural goods.

1.3.6. The Impartiality and the Common Good Principle

According to this last principle, in planning one's life, one must *both* impartially refrain from impeding or attacking and actively help other people's participation in their basic goods. Unlike the preceding principles, this principle is clearly other-regarding. Yet, it is puzzling that other regarding principles like this must be considered in one's personal configuration of basic goods, which seems to be essentially self-regarding. It would be more understandable if what this other-regarding principle asks is only to abstain from attacking others' promotion of basic goods, for harming others would surely disrupt the implementation of one's life plan. But how can it be the case that the reasonableness of planning one's life depends on one's actively promoting the well-being of others?

Grisez argues that the participation in basic goods, as well as its goal in human fulfillment, are not individualistic but a communal affair: it always needs or involves others' participation in the same activities. Hence, individualistic self-fulfillment is absurd, for the most flourishing individual is one who considers his or her fulfillment to be inextricably related with the fulfillment of all others. Hence, planning and implementing one's hierarchy of basic goods naturally implies concerns for the promotion of others' basic goods or welfare. Similarly, Chappell argues that most basic goods are non-privative, that is, it doesn't make sense to say that those goods or the benefits that one enjoys from participating in them are personally indexed benefits (cf. Chappell 1998). While some other goods might be privative, Chappell thinks that participating in them would rule out egoism, as it can only be excellently done in a common enterprise. Unlike all of them, Murphy argues that participation in basic goods is based on agent-relative reasons, and it's not unreasonable to make a more or less self-centered life plan (Murphy 2001). However, besides agent-relative reasons, there exist also equally fundamental agent-neutral reasons that direct one to help others.

In any case, it seems that all friends of AE would accept that it is just inconsistent to say that one must be mainly concerned with one's full participation in one's basic goods, and care about others' well-being only insofar as it is related to one's attempt to live flourishingly. To do so reveals that the instances of basic goods in one's life are more valuable or worth pursuing than those in the life of others. This, of course, is the violation of the incommensurability principle. Also, I tend to think that completely ruling out agent-neutral reasons and being totally self-centered is ignoring or damaging the basic goods of excellence in agency (Murphy) or self-integration or integrity (Grisez, Gómez-Lobo), since refusing to be actively engaged in the promotion of others' well-being is denying or disregarding the fact that one is only a member of human family, which is united or marked by a common desire for well-being (cf. Schockenhoff 2002). To suppress one's solidarity with other human beings is to belie one's lack of integrity, as one closes the eyes to the fact that in one's pursuit of flourishing, one takes others' willingness to help to or care for one for granted.

2. Moral Sainthood and the Coordinating Good of Friendship

2.1. Moral Saints and the Participation in the Good of Friendship

Let us now see whether it is possible for NNL, with its principles of reasonable life planning, to make a more charitable interpretation of—or even justify—moral sainthood. To do this, let us apply the previous section's principles to moral sainthood, starting from the principle that regulates the indispensability of the coordinating goods. The principle is a natural starting point, because it helps us find the coordinating good of moral sainthood (to examine a way of life within the framework of NNL is to treat it as a life plan or a hierarchy of basic goods, which is coordinated by a particular good). One's choice of the coordinating good decidedly shapes one's way of life, although due to the generality of basic goods, we cannot directly infer one's particular way of life just from

its coordinating good. Thus, each basic good, especially when it becomes the coordinating good, can accommodate a variety of ways of life or vocations.

Within the framework of NNL, being a moral saint is enacting a life plan, in which the saints' final goal organizes the hierarchy of basic goods that constitutes moral sainthood. To be precise, the final goal in moral sainthood coordinates the saints' participation in their basic goods *through* a particular basic good that justifies the saints' pursuit of their final goal. So moral saints' altruistic goals themselves aren't necessarily the instances of basic goods, and to be intelligible, viz., to be explained as a means or an expression of moral saints' eudaimonia, those goals must be 'translated into' the corresponding basic goods, as it were. Within the framework of NNL, the reasonableness or the intelligibility of a way of life is based on that way of life's being an eudaimonic life plan, so it won't do to say that since sacrifices or hardships that mark moral saints are morally praiseworthy and yet non-eudaimonic, NNL must just accept the fact that the well-being issue is irrelevant to the intelligibility of moral sainthood. To examine moral sainthood in NNL is to hypothesize that moral saints' radical selflessness contributes to the saints' flourishing or is based on basic goods and it is in light of this hypothesis that moral saints' sufferings must be explained. But if the examination shows that moral saints live in a non-eudaimonic way, then, *either* moral sainthood is indeed an unreasonable, unintelligible way of life or NNL is just problematic, as it cannot accommodate the most excellent embodiments of moral goodness on earth.

At this point, we need to find the basic good that can best justify moral saints' radically altruistic way of life. One promising candidate is the basic good of friendship or community. How can the good of friendship, however, make sense of moral saints' radical altruism? Moral saints' altruistic devotion, which is essentially about their uniting themselves with the objects of their benevolence, resembles closely the form of friendship, which is also based on the union of concerns between different people (cf. Helm 2010). In attaining their altruistic goal, moral saints' sense of gratification

resembles the satisfaction of doing something significant for one's friends or family members, which in some sense are one's other selves. Aquinas thinks that it is possible to have a friendship with humanity in general, which is shown through one's making others' well-being one's own concern. Yet it is not necessary for moral saints to have such a generic attitude, as they usually direct their dedication to specific groups of people (e.g., the underpaid workers, victims of natural disasters, their oppressed compatriots, etc.).

If this is the case, radical altruism that defines moral sainthood is immediately intelligible as being based on moral saints' participation in their own flourishing through the good of friendship. On this account, moral saints' life plan is a hierarchy of basic goods in which the good of friendship is placed at the top of the hierarchy. Thus, other basic goods like knowledge, excellence in work and play, etc., are regulated by or promoted for the sake of friendship as their coordinating good. Moral saints' making friendship the coordinating basic good is justified by the fact that due to the vicissitudes of life and other natural limits, to reasonably plan one's life and to effectively implement it, one needs to be committed to one or some definite goods and not to all basic goods. If being committed to the good of friendship implies a more demanding degree of altruism, then moral saints' radical altruism is at least *prima facie* justified, since it is just a natural consequence of *both* making friendship one's coordinating good and the necessity to be committed to a particular basic good. For this reason, structurally speaking, there is no essential difference between a good scientist, who has to sacrifice her fuller participation in some basic goods for the sake of knowledge, which is her coordinating good, and a moral saint. A life that is focused on the participation in the good of knowledge like that of a scientist is no less radical than moral sainthood, although it is radical in a different domain. Hence, Adams' proposal might not be so farfetched when he suggests that besides moral saints, there should be scientific saints, artistic saints, etc.

2.2. Examining Moral Sainthood by the Configuring Principles

In explaining the principle that regulates for the need to have the coordinating good, I said that the subordination of some basic goods to other basic goods in the means-ends relationship is compatible with the equality principle. So, in treating the good of knowledge as a means to further their altruistic endeavors, moral saints are not necessarily regarding knowledge as being inferior to friendship, nor are they necessarily treating knowledge as being commensurable with friendship. To serve the Congolese, Schweitzer had to study medicine, so he treated the good of knowledge as a means for participating in the good that justifies moral sainthood. This is all right, unless Schweitzer violated the equality principle by thinking that the good of knowledge could only function as a means to promote the good of friendship or the other goods. In view of this, moral saints must at least respect or appreciate those basic goods that, due to their way of life, they fail to promote more fully or can merely treat as means for their altruistic goals. Indeed, moral saints' self-sacrifices can only be clearly seen in their taking seriously the real loss that they should bear for the sake of their life goal, which can be shown through their regret or their effort to compensate for their loss to a certain extent. For instance, to dedicate his life to the Congolese in Lambarene, Schweitzer had to forfeit the opportunity to be a great classical organist. Since he was unable to play organ in that remote tropical area, Schweitzer decided to practice by using small blocks of wood, and hoped that by doing so he could maintain his fingers' nimbleness (he wrote a famous treatise on the best finger techniques for playing Bach). Schweitzer's attitude reflects his great appreciation of the good of aesthetic enjoyment, which he had participated in to an exceptional degree and yet, due to his radical altruism, couldn't further promote.

Before discussing the other principles, I want to note that in examining the actual ways of life like moral sainthood, it is important to pay attention to the balanced uses of the descriptive and the normative considerations. The principles for configuring basic goods, like the one that requires the presence of the coordinating good, sometimes need

to explain moral sainthood on the basis of the empirical or descriptive features of moral saints. The use of the configuring principles, however, at other times needs to explain moral sainthood in a more normative fashion, so that it is not necessary to provide meticulous factual or scientific data that show that a large percentage of moral saints truly live in line with the principles, although it is possible to give such information. This is because, a philosophical project like this is more interested not in the defense of the actual moral saints, but of the saints' way of life as it is normatively and conceptually considered. It is then often enough to say that moral sainthood is conceptually speaking compatible with the enactment of the configuring principles, and consequently, the actual moral saints or those who want to develop more virtuously must keep to the principles in planning or living out their life.

Now how about the freedom and creativity principle, the implementation of which involves one's creativity to participate in most or all basic goods, although one cannot possibly participate in them equally fully in one's lifetime? Again, this is not a question that demands a factually precise or scientific answer. It is enough to say that it is possible for moral saints to follow this principle in their demandingly altruistic lifestyle. For example, Paul Farmer, in the midst of his overwhelming schedule, was still concerned for his physique and did push ups (Kidder 2003: 191). Some moral saints, most notably Francis of Assisi, participate in the good of aesthetic enjoyment to a level that clearly exceeds the degrees of some people's interests or participation in that good. It may be the case that, consistent with Adams' theory (1999), as deeply integrated persons, moral saints' sensitivity to moral goodness is inseparable from or rooted in their sensitivity to all types of excellences or goodness. Besides, in pursuing their altruistic goals, moral saints do not necessarily forsake their talents, vocational goals, interests, and other kinds of commitments, because, factually or conceptually speaking, they still have freedom to pursue those personal capacities either alongside or in full union with their altruistic endeavors. The participation in some basic goods can be fully and independently enjoyed,

even when they are used for the sake of the participation in other basic goods. Let us take as an example Dorothy Day, who used her managerial and writing skills, which are grounded in the goods of excellence in agency or work and knowledge, on behalf of the poor whom she served. Day could of course fully enjoy those goods and be invigorated by her participation in them, even when they were used for the sake of the other goods. It is by no means inconceivable to say that she could enjoy the exercises of her writing or managerial skill apart from her realization that those skills were used for the sake of other goods. Hence, at least from the normative point of view, talents, interests, vocations, and other sorts of personal capacities are not just retained, but can still be freely, independently, and creatively used by people like moral saints, whose main life aspiration doesn't seem to reflect the promotion of those personal factors.

Next, about the structural goods, the principle states that one must not and cannot disregard those goods that are indispensable for the successful, excellent participation in all basic goods, regardless of one's choice of the coordinating goods. To follow this principle, the participation in the good of friendship in moral sainthood should overlap with and advance the participation in the structural goods like excellence in agency and life. It is through this that one can judge whether a moral saint leads an integrated human life. Accordingly, moral saints who intentionally neglect their basic sustenance, health, social skills and the participation in other structural goods not only live non-flourishingly, but also undermine their own life calling. It is the nature of the structural goods that the success or failure of the participation in them decides the overall success or failure of one's life, regardless of the basic good that one places on the top of one's hierarchy of goods. Again, it is by no means inconceivable that in participating in their coordinating basic good, moral saints perfect their capacities to enjoy and more fully participate in their structural goods. Many moral saints, for instance, have above average excellence in agency or work, which is shown in the following abilities:

a. Leadership and managerial skills (decision making, tactic planning, creativity, administrative skills, etc.) That may be the reason why many saints or heroes could lead their people effectively in their moral struggles. What is more, moral saints are visionary, but they are very rarely devoted to abstract moral ideas or concepts, but more often to vivid visions that are friendlier to human flourishing. The powerful concreteness of their visions may well be one of the main reasons for their charismatic ability to inspire others.

b. Emotional intelligence. Many moral saints are humble and therefore willing and able to "take direction and support from the followers they inspire" (Colby & Damon 1992: 293), and typically reveal "unremitting faith in positivity in the face of the most dismal circumstances" (Colby & Damon 1992: 293), which results in healthy 'aggressiveness' that refuses to let injustice prevail. Chavez, for instance, believed that the exploited workers' goals for better pay and working condition are achievable only through insistent efforts and commitment (his motto is "*Si, se puede*"—"Yes, it's possible"). Hopeful and active saints cannot be easily intimidated, that's why aggressively corrupt forces can often be counterbalanced or defeated by them.

It is no wonder that Peter Drucker, the father of the modern management, thinks that religious workers, some of whom were saints[59], often display outstanding skills or philosophy (healthy detachment, devotion, etc.) that are very relevant to the success of contemporary managers (cf. Drucker 2001). Finally, it is precisely one of the most excellent characteristics of moral saints, as well as the sign of their flourishing that many exceptional capacities and talents can be harmoniously combined with strong dedication to the well-being of others. This intuition, which affirms the flourishing nature of moral saints' way of life, is shown in Carbonell's comment on Paul Farmer,

[59] In writing his book, Drucker might not be aware of this fact, although he could easily infer it from the historical data that he used.

> "Farmer's life is *not barren*. On the contrary, he *flourishes*. What could be more interesting, more fulfilling, more deeply satisfying than a life devoted to using one's talent and intellect to improve the lives of thousands of people, indeed to prevent people from *dying*, and to do so in places where no one else is prepared to help them but you?" (2009a, pp. 377-378; the italics are original).

Lastly, it is likely that there is no particular problem in explaining how moral saints fulfill the impartiality or the common good principle, as the critics might well think that the problem is that the saints follow this principle only too well! It is very obvious for moral saints that their well-being is inextricably linked with the others' well-being, since, more than other people, moral saints' self-love is tightly knitted with their love for others. This has been implied in chapter 2: one's self-love, which is quite identical to one's desire for self-actualization, is expressed in one's first-level and second-level goals, which function to define one's self-identity. More than others, moral saints' first-level and second-level goals are other-regarding, so that's why their self-love and their love for others are integrated into one. A life that pursues this kind of final goal is exceptionally gratifying and flourishing, because, as some philosophers have pointed out, being a person presupposes the need and capacity for identifying one's self *through uniting it with other sources of value* (cf. Helm 2010). In that respect, one's personhood is defined and enhanced by loving others, and it is not a coincidence that moral saints can attain it more excellently than others.

2.3. Some Provisional Conclusions:

It is quite clear from my arguments and explanations above that, contrary to Wolf's charge, moral saints do not need to dismiss or damage the basic goods that they could not pursue, and that in pursuing their altruistic goal, moral saints can participate in many if not most of basic goods. Besides, the loss of basic goods in moral sainthood is caused more by the fact that in any life plans or hierarchies of basic goods, one's pursuit of the coordinating good can make one's pursuits of other basic goods selective. That is,

one can prioritize the pursuits of those goods through which one can better realize one's coordinating good (cf. Murphy 2001, p. 196), and moderate or discontinue the pursuits of those goods that do not contribute to one's final good. It seems to me that as long as this *normative* dimension of moral sainthood is consistent with both the concept of moral sainthood and NNL, Wolf's complaints, which are mainly *descriptive*, can't undermine moral sainthood as a reasonable life choice that can or should also bring flourishing.

Furthermore, moral saints' lack or loss of goods may not significantly affect their overall flourishing and eudaimonia, for their achieving their final good or some other basic goods can compensate for the lack or the loss. In fact, their being persistent in the midst of deprivations is a sign that had they given up their life calling, they would be less happy and less flourishing. This is analogous to friends or a spouse who persevere in their relationship, although difficult circumstances greatly challenge their commitments. It can be said here that although the situation is less than ideal, the fulfillment of their final or basic goods give them more happiness and even flourishing. What is more, resilience and integrity, lest one forget, are chief indicators of flourishing; a study reports that "positive human functioning is perhaps most remarkable when evident in contexts of significant life change and adversity. It is…when individuals are being tested, that much becomes known about human strengths…" (Ryff & Singer 2002: 15). But how about those external dangers that moral saints must constantly face?

Although it is no secret that persecutions, harassments, not to mention death and social ostracism often befall moral saints, it should be noted that a considerable amount of dangers or risks here are manmade (i.e. mainly caused by hostile societal values, repressive systems, ignorance, etc.). Thus it is a grave mistake to say that a lifestyle that dares to face these risks is directly and mainly responsible for the dangers that it often has to endure. It is also obvious that sufferings that moral saints must endure are caused by the passivity of the majority, who think that being heroic or saintly is either non-advisable or non-binding. This attitude has contributed to the success of the repressive power

structures and although it's not the only cause of moral saints' hardships, its absence will alleviate much suffering. In a certain sense then, the ambivalence is viciously circular, for it creates the very condition that motivated it in the first place. This not only shows that the dangers that appear to be moral saints' constant lot are actually preventable, but it also implies that a very effective way to make moral sainthood a more flourishing way of life is by defending and justifying moral sainthood.

Lastly, considering that full eudaimonia is not achievable in this world, it is better to read eudaimonia as a vague excellence concept (eudaimonia$_V$). As I said earlier, excellence concepts start from a high level of goodness. Thus, eudaimonia$_V$ starts from a high level of good life. In this case, the actualization of one's nature is identical to eudaimonia$_V$, if one's actualizing level is already high or one is not merely psychically flourishing, but considerably flourishing in the objective sense of the term. I think it is safe to say that the arguments above show that at least, normatively speaking, moral sainthood can or should reasonably attain a degree in eudaimonia$_V$. To argue that moral sainthood can attain eudaimonia$_{NV}$ is of course unreasonably ambitious.

3. Problems and Prospect

3.1. The Problems

Therefore, it seems that moral sainthood is an intelligible way of life that effectively promotes eudaimonia. I wish things could be that easy. The above portrayal is actually problematic, since the basic good of friendship is conceptually inadequate to account for moral sainthood. Let us take a look at the problem more closely:

Genuine friendship, which, in many NNL theorists' view, encompasses the goods of marriage and family, presupposes a quite robust degree of mutual affection. However, many if not most moral saints serve people whom they don't personally know. So is it possible to establish genuine, i.e., eudaimonic, friendship with people whom one isn't acquainted with? Here are some possible answers: following Aquinas (see MacDonald

1990), one can say that one can love or unite oneself with unknown people, for here, one projects one's self-concerns to others and becomes motivated to love them as they love themselves. [60] So, as Aquinas believes, even humanity or human kind can be the object of one's love, especially when one realizes the unifying qualities of all humans, e.g., all are called to and aim at the highest fulfillment of their nature (cf. Stump 2010, Schockenhoff 2002). Another similar reply is that what moral saints show is a Kantian love, which is based on the dignity or ultimate value of others as human beings. Consider, for example, Mother Teresa, who, in Gaita's (2004) description, showed to those who experience horrifying affliction a compassion that was

> "without a trace of condescension…Her compassion expressed the denial that affliction could…make a person's life worthless…[Her] love revealed…what it is to be a human being...The wonder which is in response to her is not a wonder at her, but a wonder *that human life could be as her love revealed it to be*" (pp. 202; 205; emphasis is original).

Even though the Thomist or the Kantian love above is a form of love or involves a certain degree of love, it is merely necessary but obviously insufficient for friendship. To qualify as a basic good that contributes to flourishing, friendship requires a significant degree of intimacy and mutual affection. Although this does not imply that friends must physically live together, the mutual knowledge of each other's concerns, interests, and life goals should signify genuinely eudaimonic friendship. For this reason, it is in marriage, family, and to certain extent religious community that we can find the best exemplifications of genuine friendship. But if genuine and eudaimonic friendship is limited in this way, then *either* moral saints do not participate excellently in the good of friendship or the so-called saints should be those who are radically devoted to their

[60] "Love of concupiscence and love of friendship…proceed from an apprehension of the unity of the thing loved with the lover...[when someone] loves someone with a love of friendship, he wills the good for him in the same way that he wills the good for himself; hence, he apprehends him as another self insofar as he wills the good for him in the same way that he wills the good for himself." (*ST* I-2. 28. 1).

spouses, family members, or coreligionists only. In contrast to genuine friendship, moral saints' self-identification with the needy or the suffering ones doesn't require or assume intimate relationship of both parties. If moral sainthood is truly based on the basic good of friendship, then it is not vigorous and deep enough to contribute to the fulfillment of human nature. As a result, moral sainthood might not be a very flourishing way of life.

Not only is the case that moral saints' affections for the people whom they help are not always reciprocated, they are often misunderstood. Hence, it is certainly not the case that they often have a supportive and intimate circle of friends or community. Due to the subversive nature of their beliefs and actions, many moral saints live as socially ostracized figures or lonely fighters who do not live up to the standard of social happiness and flourishing of their societies and ages. Besides, even if moral saints live as popularly admired heroes, it is not often the case that the supporting people would eventually become their comrades or close friends. Anyway, many moral saints are 'alienated' from their societies or even close communities, and in such a condition, they are marked more by their resilience in the midst of isolation, rather than by their ability to win close friends. It is precisely their uniqueness or alienation that many times manifests their revolutionary system of values and explains their popularity (although being popular or even being popularly loved doesn't always translate into having close friends).

3.2. The Need for Another Coordinating Good

To conclude, it seems quite problematic to say that moral sainthood can be considered as a pursuit of the basic good of friendship or community. Although some similarities might be telling, the differences are more significant. However, if moral sainthood doesn't constitute the pursuit of the basic good of friendship, then it seems that it is not grounded in the aspects of moral saints' well-being, since other basic goods do not seem to be able to become its coordinating good. But one must be wary of giving up too soon here, because given the fact that most moral saints are deeply religious and

religious life and teaching are closely linked to radical altruism, it may be the case that moral sainthood is a form of participation in the basic good of religion. If that is true, then that might well account for the following facts:

a. Many if not most moral saints are very pious or religious, and many, if not most, of the openly secular or atheist moral saints are highly inspired by religious ideas or religious moral exemplars. In one of the most influential reports on moral exemplars or saints, the researchers conclude:

> "A true integration of reflection and action rests on a unifying belief that must be represented in all the cognitive and behavior systems that direct a person's life choices…many of our exemplars drew upon religious faith for such a unifying belief. In fact…this was the case for a far larger proportion of our exemplars that we originally expected…even those who had no formal religion often looked to a transcendent ideal of a personal sort: a faith in the forces of good, a sustaining hope in a power greater than oneself, a larger meaning for one's life than personal achievement" (Colby & Damon 1992, pp. 310-11).

b. The awe-inspiring and self-transcending moral power of moral saints, which can also be found in profoundly spiritual people (cf. James 1902, Haidt 2003, 2006).
c. The outstanding quality and levels of happiness in moral saints, seeing that religious people are on average happier than the non-religious (Myers 2000, Haidt 2007).

I want to inquire in the next chapter of whether this is just a coincidence that shows that until recently, as Parfit says, ethics in most societies hasn't been emancipated from religions (Parfit 1984), or more intriguingly, high levels of virtuousness or moral sainthood is or at least resembles religious experience.

CHAPTER VI:
"ARE MORAL SAINTS RELIGIOUS?"
AN INQUIRY OF MORAL SAINTS' EUDAIMONIA (PART II)

"It comes to this…What interests me is in learning how to become a saint."
"But you don't believe in God?"
"Exactly! Can one be a saint without God?—that's the problem, in fact, the only problem I'm up against today"…
(Albert Camus, *The Plague*, p. 273).

1. Moral Sainthood and Religious Experience (I): Empirical Data

I want to present some empirical data that show that moral sainthood resembles or may be identical to a religious phenomenon. The data are about a group of intriguing psychological phenomena that Virginia psychologist Jonathan Haidt calls elevation.

Elevation is something that concerns moral saints' awe-inspiring moral qualities that border on sacredness, which are most of the time, but not necessarily, anchored in their religiosity. This 'otherworldly' quality is about moral saint's ability to be 'elevated' and 'elevate' others. Moral saints reveal that being moral isn't just about being dutiful, but above all about *transcending* one's self-interest *through being absorbed* in one's commitment to fundamental values or ideals that are *higher* than oneself. Intriguingly, as psychologists have shown, (*1*) the display of this quality tends to produce similar affects in others; (*2*) the saints' and others people's experiences of this moral elevation closely resemble religious experiences (i.e. they are "crypto-religious", Haidt 2006). How should we interpret this phenomenon?

1.1. Taking Clues from Disgust

Social scientists argue that the aforesaid characteristic and its cognates, although in the neighborhood of religious sensibility, can be naturalistically explained. In his groundbreaking study on disgust, Haidt (2003) found that disgust has a religious function to protect the soul from degradation (p. 281). In many religions that adopt purity codes, disgust is a warning sign that keeps 'the low' or 'the impure' from contaminating 'the high' or 'the pure'. Some religions regulate one's physical interactions with corpses, semen, blood, certain animals or other impure things that defile oneself. Further, physical impurity is closely linked with moral impurity, so that those who commit moral wrongs also defile themselves, and might have to be excommunicated, being placed 'outside the realm of purity'. Haidt's discovery confirms many religious studies scholars' view (e.g., Otto 1958, Proksch 1964) that the concept of holiness in the Bible and other religious documents cannot be limited to the notion of moral blamelessness only, for it is mainly about the believers' purity that is based on their living in or belonging to the inner sanctum of a transcendental being. Being unholy or impure is being outside this inner sanctum, while holiness is being inside it. In religions that adopt a purity code, moral perfection is identical to being co-located with the divine.

Following the trend of the recently burgeoning positive psychology movement, Haidt then investigated the positive counterpart of disgust, which he later called *elevation*. If disgust tends to degrade or pollute, elevation makes people go upward psychically and become 'positively contaminated', i.e., purified. Haidt (2006) thinks that elevation is interrelated with the feelings of awe, reverence, and admiration (pp. 200-206), which are usually activated in religious and aesthetic experiences. Although Haidt doesn't believe that these emotions need the postulation of God's existence, he thinks that they are the integral parts of human psychological makeup, without which life would be greatly impoverished. In moral contexts, elevation is an emotion "triggered by people behaving in a virtuous, pure, and superhuman way" (Haidt 2003, p. 281). Haidt quotes a Hindu

spiritual leader's saying to convey the moral significance of this degradation-elevation bipolarity: "Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil and is not our duty" (Swami Vivekananda, Haidt 2003, p. 279).

After conducting a series of cross-cultural studies, Haidt found that the bipolarity is quite universal and not exclusively confined to religious communities. In non-religious settings, the disgust-elevation antithesis is always found in special moral experiences, during which people witness either very wicked or highly virtuous persons. Witnessing the deeds of a very evil person, people are prevented from degrading themselves to his level by feelings of disgust and sad anger. But in observing the virtuous actions of a moral saint, people are pulled to attach themselves to her by feelings of elevation or amazement. The former feeling demonizes or bestializes the wicked, while the later divinizes or humanizes the saint and her observers. Haidt (2003) summarizes his finding on this in the following table (p. 285):

Component	**Elevation**	**Social disgust**
Elicitor	People moving up, blurring human-god divide	People moving down, blurring human-animal divide
Motivation tendency	Merge, open up, help others	Separate, close off
Affective phenomenology	Feel lifted up, optimistic about humanity	Feel dragged down, pessimistic about humanity
Physical changes	Chest (warm glow)	Gut (nausea)
Contamination	Positive	Negative

Given that emotions have cognitive or epistemic functions, Haidt's study shows that morality cannot be reduced to a set of rules that coordinate societal relationships, but signifies something more. Intriguingly, the above sort of moral feelings, which turn on the encounters with the embodiments of evil and goodness, are also the very emotions that Haidt thinks define religious sensibility. Now, to make sense of this and its relationship with moral sainthood, I will unpack elevation in the following subsections.

1.2. 'Elevating'

By 'elevating', I refer to the ability of moral saints to instill elevation in those who witness their extraordinary moral character and behaviors. Haidt (2003) says, "saints are found in so many cultures because elevation is found in so many cultures. People whose actions cause widespread elevation are likely to be canonized"; moral saints then, are one of the very sources of "powerful moments of elevation…[that] sometimes seem to push a mental 'reset button,' wiping out feelings of cynicism and replacing them with feelings of hope, love, and optimism and a sense of moral inspiration" (pp. 285, 286). William James (1902) might have it when he said that to read the accounts of saints is "to feel encouraged and uplifted and washed in better moral air" (p. 259). However, I find it rather curious that Haidt doesn't consider the negative aspects of elevation, for in witnessing saintly actions, people can also feel guilty or alienated (i.e. 'go-away-from-me-for-I'm-a-sinner' sort of experience).[61] These negative feelings are often accompanied by compunction or an awareness of one's 'polluted' nature, which moves one away from the sources of elevation. Perhaps, whereas disgust moves one from polluted beings, elevation can prevent one from polluting pure beings.

At first, Haidt thought that (quite sensibly, I think) elevation is a highly contagious inspiration that can move people to act virtuously. Later, he found that among people who experienced elevation, although some might be initially willing to emulate moral saints' behaviors, most turn out not to do it (Haidt 2006, p. 196). The reason is, as Haidt and his student later discovered, moments of elevation trigger the release of oxytocin, a hormone that causes feelings of love, intimacy, and trust, which make people "more receptive to new relationships", but given the passive nature of these feelings, they

[61] Haidt told me that he did find that people occasionally check off shame or other negative feelings when they watch elevating videos, for the reasons that I said, but compared to the positive affects, they are negligible. But if it's empirically and conceptually viable that elevation can coexist with negative feelings that I mentioned, then it challenges Haidt's claim that elevation *is* the *positive* counterpart of disgust.

are insufficient to move people to action (Haidt 2006, p. 198). I think this doesn't imply that elevation is irrelevant to (or not an effective medium of) moral education, provided that other more cognitive, practical, and rigorous means of moral cultivation are available and consistently implemented.

1.3. 'Elevated'

'Being elevated' here only refers to moral saints' elevations: Gandhi was inspired by Christ, Martin Luther King Jr. by Gandhi, and Paul Farmer by the dedicated "Church ladies" or nuns on his campus. Yet, in contrast with the elevation of the observers mentioned in the previous paragraph, moral saints' elevations are life-transforming and lasting. But why is elevation more efficacious in those who are already or are becoming moral saints? Some think that moral saints must have lifelong continuation of elevation (Sorokin 1954). Others think that there must be some crucial traits that supplement elevation and make it a more stable influence (Colby & Damon 1992). I'm unsure about this, but it might be that moral saints' elevation is efficacious, because they have *more robust* receptivity that *constantly* weaken their egocentricity and thereby make their ego more open to moral influences.

James (1902) notes that the saints' uplifted psyche is characterized by "moral enthusiasm…cosmic emotion…in which the sand and grit of the selfhood incline to disappear, and tenderness to rule" (279). Some crucial moments in moral saints' lives, like the inspiration that starts their embracing moral sainthood, are marked by a paradoxical state of self-diminution and enlargement. Phenomenologically, this psychological state, while can be gratifying, is distinct from egocentricity. In the former, one's attention field is enlarged to include others, and one isn't too concerned about one's welfare, success, etc. Haidt (2006, p. 203) also notices that awe, which is a species of elevation, tends to weaken the self, for awe happens, only when something vast is perceived, the vastness can't be contained by the person's mental structures, and the

person doesn't resist his self's becoming small. The self's being shrunk here is more about the suspension of the person's self-centered awareness or concern, and in that way she can be more absorbed in her experience.

But what is the difference between aesthetic awe, which is short-lived and non-transformative, and life-transforming moral awe or elevation? It should be noted first that there are structural similarities between them: both involve profound receptivity that holds off self-centeredness. Yet this receptivity, which might be experienced by the non-committal observers in Haidt's experiments, is not quite robust and so it is just necessary but insufficient for having efficacious elevation. Robust receptivity, on the other hand, is not just about holding off egocentricity, but also the change of one's basic identity. That is, the self is not just a passive spectator, for it doesn't resist when the elevating exemplar overpowers the pull of its old identity (e.g. as a person who's ambitiously concerned about her career) and it willingly embraces the exemplar as its new ideal.

More precisely now, what makes moral saints' receptiveness robust? James (1902) suggests that elevation itself is part of the answer. James' understanding of elevation involves "a shifting of the emotional center towards loving and harmonious affections, towards 'yes, yes,' and away from 'no'" (273). Paradoxically then, while robust receptiveness is the key to make elevation efficacious, moments of elevation themselves make the robustness possible. The paradox, however, disappears with this qualification: to be efficaciously elevated *at the start*, one's receptivity must be somewhat robust, which might have been nurtured by religious belief or moral education. Now, the robustness of moral saints' receptivity may or may not entail its permanence. In any case, the permanence of elevation, which is crucial for the consistency of moral sainthood as a way of life, also depends on or can be secured by the mutual reinforcement between receptivity and elevation. In this mutual reinforcement, moral saints are in fact becoming *actively passive* (see Colby & Damon 1992, p. 13). In other words, although their main

role is receiving moral inspirations from their moral experiences, religion, or other moral saints, nevertheless this receptivity is active; that is, they are committed to make their moral sensitivity or receptivity the avenue for their identity change (for 'beginner' moral saints) or heartfelt absorption in their moral experiences (for moral saints in general). This active passivity is one of moral saints' distinguishing marks that invites "us to conceptualize our lives in terms other than mastery…[and] provide a vision of life that stresses receptivity and interaction" (Coleman 1987, p. 209).

Yet, we have to pay attention to some caveats here: (*1*) the aforesaid mutual reinforcement process is just an ideal picture, but due to human weaknesses and other debilitating factors, the reality is not that smooth; (*2*) although many saints show seemingly constant flows of moral enthusiasm (cf. Hawley 1987a, Kidder 2003), lasting elevation shouldn't be understood as ongoing emotional excitement. Elevation can be modestly understood as morally-oriented inspiration, the maintenance of which depends on moral education, religious beliefs and practices, and suffering. Here, efficacious moral elevation may be more like the reinforcement of passion than the excitement of feeling (I understand passion as a deep-seated but non rigid psychic orientation that can be strengthened or cultivated and weakened, but passion, as "the basis for a wide repertoire of emotions" [Roberts 2007, p. 15], can surface as emotions).

Lastly, I want to note that many moral heroes and saints were also inspired by rather different, suffering-based elevations, that occurred when they witnessed intensely moving scenes of suffering. This is like Oskar Schindler's life-transforming experience in 1943, when he heartrendingly saw the appalling murders of the Jews during the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. Although I'm unsure whether calling this experience elevation is right, it surely elevates the witnessing persons above their egocentricity and enables them to identify themselves more fully with the sufferers. That's why, contrary to more fleeting feelings of compassion or sympathy, this kind of elevation is life changing. But some saints who are primarily moved by suffering might have a more melancholic

(but not depressive) view of life, and their strength is more energized by moral anger or sadness. Yet as some accounts have shown, it seems that both kinds of elevation can co-exist in many moral saints' lives.

2. Moral Sainthood and Religious Experience (II): An Interpretation

2.1. Interpreting Moral Sainthood as a Religious Phenomenon

2.1.1. Moral Saints and Religious Experience (I): Introduction

Before applying the above empirical data to my argument, I want to justify first the claim that those data really support the hypothesis that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon, despite the fact that some moral saints aren't religious and they or others can read the data non-religiously (e.g., naturalistically). On my view, moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon, only if its defining experience, consisting of the moments that determine or greatly influence one to be a moral saint or to persist in moral sainthood, is religious. Based on this delineation, when I talk about the religious experience of moral saints below, what I refer to are the moments in moral saints' lives that are both defining and religious. Thus, to justify the claim that the data support the hypothesis that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon is to justify viewing the data as evidence *for* the religiousness of moral saints' defining experience, although some of moral saints aren't religious and they or others can interpret the data differently.

I'll explain the meaning or the scope of the religiousness of moral saints' experience in the next subsection, but it's enough to say here that according to the empirical data above, moral saints' religious experiences are the same as their religious *elevations*.[62] But it seems that religious experience isn't limited to religious elevation, although it seems that religious elevation, particularly when it is linked with moral sainthood, is the most obvious and transformative kind of religious experience. But it is

[62] Haidt (2006) finds that religious elevation is more pervasive and salutary than people thought (p. 204).

also possible that religious elevation is the heightened kind or the culmination of ordinary religious experience. The first possibility treats religious elevation as only one kind of religious experience, while the second treats all kinds of religious experience as elevations, which differ in their degrees or intensity. At any rate, due to the limits of the empirical data here, I focus my inquiry in this chapter only on religious elevation, and so use the phrases 'religious experience' and 'religious elevation' interchangeably.

Haidt (2006) thinks that "anything that shrinks the self creates an opportunity for spiritual experience" (pp. 200-201), and for that reason, aesthetic, moral, and other types of elevation are actually "crypto-religious". This implies that due to their function to weaken one's egocentrism, although elevation is not necessarily a religious experience, it shares the same psychological continuum with religious experience. A more precise way to put this might be: all types of elevation are continuous with religious elevation, which means: (*1*) religious elevation can take place within aesthetic, moral, and other types of elevation; (*2*) the preliminary levels of all types of elevation are merely crypto-religious, and they attain their religious character only after activating people's religious sensibility, which enables them to recognize the religious import of their elevation. So not all elevation is religious.[63]

According to the criteria above, an experience *E* of moral saints is a religious experience, only if experiencing *E* activates moral saints' religious sensibility and makes them aware of the religious nature of *E*. Thus, the data can support the hypothesis that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon, only if they are about experiences that activate moral saints' religious sensibility and make them aware of the religious nature of those experiences. But this begs the question. Defining religious experience on the basis of people's awareness of the religious nature of their experience can't accommodate the

[63] As psychologists like Abraham Maslow and Haidt believe, it is natural for the non-religious to have elevation experiences (Maslow calls them 'peak experiences').

possibility that non-religious saints, due to their background beliefs, might well deny or still be unaware of the religiousness of their elevation.

Can we then broaden the scope of religious elevation or experience, so that those who are not aware of or don't believe in God can still have it? From a theistic point of view, i.e., assuming that God exists and people have the inherent capacity to be directly aware of God, regardless of whether they can draw the right conclusion about God or not, it seems plausible that all kinds and degrees of elevation are religious. If God exists and people have a *sensus divinitatis*, then even a modicum of moral sentiment or sense of awe can be the activation of people's capacity to sense the divine presence, seeing that, as theists commonly believe, moral, aesthetic, and all kinds of goodness come from and witness to God. However, here the risk is broadening the scope of religious experience too widely,[64] and yet, the present aim is to seek the defining characteristics of the religious experience *of moral saints*, not those of religious experience in general.

A safer way, I think, is to define and *prima facie* justify the religious experience of moral saints mainly in accord with the testimony of religious moral saints themselves. So an experience *E* is a religious one, only if religious believers who experience *E* generally think that *E* is a religious experience, regardless of whether non-believers who experience *E* think that *E* is a religious experience. To be precise, the experience *E* of non-religious moral saints may well be the typical religious experience of moral saints, regardless of whether non-religious saints regard *E* to be so, insofar as: (*1*) *E* is an experience that defines moral sainthood; (*2*) in experiencing *E*, most religious moral saints would say that *E* is a *religious* experience. Thus, one can affirm that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon with *prima facie* justification, only if it is based on

[64] From a naturalistic viewpoint, it may be natural to say that all kinds and degrees of elevation are the activation of people's religious sense. If this is so, then some necessary conditions for religious experience pretty much overlap with Haidt's necessary conditions for the feeling of awe above (see 1.3). One can then say that moral saints' religious experience can be recognized or defined according to the naturalistic criteria. Yet a disadvantage of the naturalistic interpretation is: it can too easily convert religious experience into a species of psychological experience and it is thus not in line with the aim of this chapter.

the testimony of religious moral saints or the studies that reflect their testimony. This approach, I believe, provides *prima facie* justification for the claim that the empirical data support the hypothesis that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon, although they can be read differently by non-religious moral saints or others.

More precisely, the approach above justifies the claim on the basis of:

First, the relevance of the subject matter. Since this is about *religious* experience, then, even if religious beliefs aren't likely true, it's to be expected that in neutrally investigating religious experience, scientists or scholars will seriously take into account the ways religious believers interpret their own religious experiences. If the purpose is to defend the validity of religious experience, then, as long as the testimony of most believers points to the same direction, then accepting at testimony is *prima facie* justified. In this context, it is also methodologically justified to use the testimony from non-believers that corroborates or completes the believers' testimony (although using critical testimony to examine the available evidence is also important).

Second, a reasonable epistemological position that assumes that unless there is contrary evidence or a defeater, people's epistemic capacities or dispositions, including those that pertain to religious experience, are reliable.[65]

2.1.2. Moral Saints and Religious Experience (II): The Testimony

Now, let's find the main content of moral saints' religious experience, i.e., what moral saints mean or refer to when they say that they have religious experience or elevation? Based on the testimony of moral saints and the relevant studies, we can conclude that moral saints experience the moments that define and guide their way of life as their experiencing *of* God himself, and not just a common religious emotion.[66] Moreover, moral saints' religious experience can be roughly categorized under two main

[65] For an excellent defense of the reliability of religious perception, see Alston 1991.

[66] Saints "must live with a joy of life that would not make any sense… if God did not exist" (Coleman 1987, p. 223). Sorokin (1954) thinks that lifelong elevation boggles the mind. He says, "the secret of an undiminishing love intensity…seems to lie in this inflow of love from outside the loving individual that replenishes his great expenditures of love energy" (p. 25).

types of experience: (*1*) the experience of divine empowerment, and (*2*) friendship or partnership with the divine. Let us now briefly discuss them one by one.

Religious moral saints believe that through the moments that define and guide their life, God motivates and empowers them, even works in them. Gandhi says, "Without an unreserved surrender to [God's] grace, complete mastery over thought (and all fears) is impossible" (quoted in Sorokin 1954, p. 27). In the midst of hardship in Congo, Schweitzer experienced moral awe or elevation, during which, as he reported,

> "My life is completely and unmistakably determined by the mysterious experience of God revealing Himself within me as ethical Will and desiring to take hold of my life" (quoted in Sorokin, p. 27).

Echoing a similar experience, China's contemporary moral hero, Gao Zhisheng, wrote in his smuggled letter (he has been repeatedly kidnapped, jailed, and brutally tortured), "A heart that is filled with God has no room to entertain pain and suffering.[67]" Psychologists Colby and Damon report that many moral exemplars whom they interviewed

> "found in their faiths a seemingly boundless capacity for forgiveness and charity—a capacity that lay at the heart of their moral activities. In fact, it is hard to imagine how the exemplars could have overcome the dispiriting frustrations of their work…without such capacity" (Colby & Damon 1992, p. 296-97).

As history has shown, religious passions enable one to transcend her natural limitations. "Religious belief can summon up the psychic equivalents of nuclear weapons" (quoted by Ralph Wedgwood in Wedgwood 2007, p. 278).

Next, many religious moral saints like Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa found that the love that they have for those to whom they dedicated their life originated in the divine love itself. In moments of elevation, moral saints like Francis of Assisi believe that what they concretely feel from the first-person viewpoint is a kind of blend between their

[67] See Gao's letter in http://www.chinaaid.org/2011/01/speaking-from-my-heart-by-gao-zhisheng.html

feeling and the divine affection, which they also perceive as the divine calling for partnership. It is as if their hearts are broken with things that broke the heart of God.[68] As William Alston aptly puts it, it is as if that "there is a literal merging or mutual interpenetration of the life of the individual and the divine life, a breaking down of the barriers that normally separate one life from another…" (Alston 1988: 141-42). In these cases, God's communicating his love to moral saints shows that the saints' happiness and well-being mainly consist of their friendship with God, who unites His concerns with theirs and vice versa. It is not a coincidence that in some cultures or religions, being a moral saint is synonymous with being a friend of God. However, this type of religious experience is more evident and motivating, if moral saints are believers in a personal God. Pantheistic religions may also bring psychological benefits for their saints, as their elevation can be regarded as a participation in the providential order of the universe, but it seems that theistic religions are practically more advantageous, since having a personal supreme being as one's partner and protector is more concrete, intimate, and thus uplifting a picture.

As I said earlier, relying on the testimony of religious moral saints doesn't preclude the possibility that non-religious moral saints aren't aware of the religiousness of their experience. So it's possible that non-religious saints would interpret their experience non-religiously or naturalistically. Yet the undeniably strong religious qualities of the defining experience of moral saints often make the religious interpretation of it unavoidable. For that reason, not only are most secular saints influenced by religious believers or ideas, they also devote themselves to their cause with religious fervor, and almost inescapably use quasi-religious language in depicting their moral experience. As researchers report, moral exemplars "who had no formal religion often looked to a transcendent ideal of a personal sort: a faith in the forces of good, a sustaining hope in a

[68] The words of Bob Pierce, the founder of the Word Vision, a Christian non-profit organization that helps the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed.

power greater than oneself" (Colby & Damon 1992, p. 311). It's likely then that the defining moments in moral saints' lives, although they can be experienced by the non-religious, they can only be more coherently interpreted as religious experience.

2.2. Moral Saints, the Basic Good of Religion, and NNL

I believe that the empirical data quite convincingly show that moral sainthood is a religious phenomenon (cf. Adams 1987, p. 168). If this is so, then it's not baseless to say that moral sainthood is a way of life that makes the basic good of religion its coordinating good. I won't explain again whether moral sainthood is in accord with the principles for reasonable life planning, as one can show its being so without changing much of the details of the similar argument for the good of friendship in chapter 5. This is since the good of religion, as I explain below, is quite similar to the good of friendship.[69]

NNL theorists define the participation in the basic good of religion as the harmony of two wills: the divine and the human wills (Finnis 1980, Murphy 2001). On this account, the good of religion is essentially similar to the good of friendship, as the flourishing that is brought by religion lies in love between persons. Friendship love, according to the Thomist and NNL traditions, is one of the highest and the most genuine kinds of love, without which, life surely cannot flourish. It is hard or perhaps unnecessary to argue for this (i.e., why friendship love is eudaimonic), for love, as Irving Singer explains, not only contributes to meaning of life, but might also "underlie all other forms of meaning…love is the principal means by which creatures like us seek affective relations to persons, things, or ideals that have value and importance for us" (Singer, quoted in Badhwar 2003: 42). In a similar vein, Thomists believe that love is basic, not merely in the sense that its goodness or eudaimonic character is not derivable from more fundamental reasons or goods, but also, it becomes the basis or starting point of the

[69] Here I just focus on one of the most essential features of the participation in the good of religion, which is the close fellowship between God and human being. To avoid longer arguments, I don't discuss other features that are important for many moral saints, such as: religious rituals, religious community, etc.

actualization of all aspects of flourishing, which directs it to its final goal, viz., one's eudaimonia through union with others. Aquinas, along with most religious believers, also believes that since God is the most perfect being, union or friendship with God must be much more eudaimonic than friendship with other humans.

In addition, the good of religion can only be eudaimonic, if God really exists and one who participates in the good of religion knows that God exists. Without these conditions, one merely indulges oneself in self-deception or overestimates one's psychological power, which disqualifies one from living an authentic and eudaimonic life. Now, in light of (*1*) the understanding of the participation in the good of religion above, and (*2*) the fact that religious experience in moral sainthood is transformative and constantly takes place, it is likely that the first facet of moral saints' religious experience that I mention in 2.1.2., viz., the divine empowerment, is essentially subsumable under the second one, viz., partnership or friendship with God. Therefore, moral saints' religious experience might well be the highest kind of religious experience at least in this life, for it reveals to them not only God's existence, but also God's ongoing friendship with them.

But there is one objection here, which is similar to the argument against the robustness of the good of friendship in moral sainthood: seeing that (*1*) human's fellowship with God cannot be as clear and close as human friendship, and (*2*) some moral saints aren't believers, then it seems that by mainly participating in the basic good of religion, moral saints' friendship with God is neither robust nor eudaimonic.

However, although friendship with God is less intimate and somewhat less complete than human friendship, if it is veridical, it is more eudaimonic than human friendship in at least these respects:

a. Friendship with God, who is an omnipresent spirit, is a spiritual union with God, through which, as Alston points out, believers can directly (from the first-person

viewpoint) access the divine mind (Alston 1988). This is impossible in human friendship, as humans only communicate via bodily languages;

b. God's communicable perfections (loving-kindness, mercy, etc.) are more lasting and excellent than human qualities, and so more enjoyable;

c. As some religions like Christianity believe, friendship with God is necessary for all eudaimonic, gratifying, or meaningful relationships. That is why, as many religious believers think, in being closely acquainted with a person whom God empowers to be more loving to others, one can feel also God's loving presence.

Further, most believers think that the imperfect eudaimonia that religious experience slightly discloses in this life can be significantly and fully realizable only in the afterlife. So it is natural to say that in this world, friendship with God cannot be fully eudaimonic, since now "we only see in a mirror." But how about non-believing moral saints? Admittedly, due to the absence of faith, non-believing moral saints' enjoyment of the good of religion can't be as robust or concrete as their believing counterparts, and yet, provided that their religious experience is the experience *of* God, they can still enjoy a considerable amount of flourishing, at least more than people who do not have similar experience. This might be due to the nature of God's perfections, which are highly eudaimonic, even when they are experienced without faith. Yet, although it seems to me that one can enjoy God's presence without having faith in God, seeing that one must have high degrees of spiritual and moral sensibility to make one's religious experience transformative and eudaimonic, it seems that non-believing moral saints' absence of faith in God must be substituted, as it were, by a different kind of faith (e.g., faith in the force of goodness, i.e., God's presence in religious experience is perceived as the presence of an impersonal force of goodness).[70] So it might be the case that although moral saints are not necessarily religious, they are always non-naturalistic.

[70] Thus it is possible that although a moral saint can be an atheist (in the sense of disbelieving the existence of a personal God), she cannot be a naturalist, at least not coherently.

2.3. The Superordinacy of Religion

2.3.1. Some Problems

I've argued that moral sainthood can be understood as a reasonable life plan that aims at eudaimonia. Hence, contrary to the views of the critics like Wolf, moral sainthood is grounded in moral saints' responsiveness to their welfare. I also argue that it is the basic good of religion that becomes the coordinating good in the hierarchy of goods that define moral sainthood. Justifying moral sainthood this way is in accord with the principles for reasonable life planning, which assert that due to the vicissitudes of life and differences in talents or other factors, eudaimonia can only be realized by making some goods means to participate in the goods that fit with one's talents, interests, etc. This assumes that being a moral saint is as reasonable and potentially eudaimonic as being a scientist, an artist, etc., each of which has its own hierarchy of goods. It is clear here that to justify moral sainthood is to treat it as one vocation among many others.

Be that as it may, the strategy that has been implemented so far is problematic, for it fails to consider that since moral sainthood is compatible with vocational pluralism, it cannot be understood as a vocation. Because attaining moral sainthood doesn't necessitate moral saints to abandon their vocations,[71] moral sainthood is a cross-situational way of life. Way of life is distinct from vocation, as vocation is clearly more exclusive and perhaps less permanent than way of life, although both of them are very personal, i.e., they define or are based on one's self-identity. It is likely that, following our discussion in chapter 2, vocation corresponds to the first-level goal, whereas way of life reflects one's second-level goal. As argued in chapter 2, not only should that first-level goal or vocation be in harmony with the second-level goal or way of life, the former should also become means to accomplish the latter. Otherwise one can't enjoy integrity and inner peace, which are indispensable for eudaimonia.

[71] For instance, Schweitzer and Farmer (both are physicians), Gandhi (a politician and religious leader), Mother Theresa (a nun, social worker), Gao (a lawyer), Martin Luther King Jr. (a clergyman), etc.

But there is one more failure that is more fundamental than the first: in saying that being a moral saint is potentially eudaimonic or structurally similar to being a scientist or an artist, one implies that attaining moral sainthood is optional or relative to one's personal conditions. Yet this is not in line with CT and SAE. Thus, what must be shown within the framework of NNL is that moral sainthood is a cross-vocational or inclusive goal that isn't just compatible with vocational pluralism, but must also be reached by virtuous persons, irrespective of their life plans or vocations. Briefly, what I need to argue for is the compatibility between NNL and CT.

However, making NNL compatible with CT would generate a host of problems. *First*, to regard moral sainthood as the cross-vocational terminus that binds the virtuous is to treat moral sainthood as an objective hierarchy of goods, the existence of which is independent from people's choices or plans and is not relative to talents, interests, and other personal factors. For this reason, making the attainment of moral sainthood the binding goal is affirming the bindingness of adopting an agent-independent hierarchy of goods (that defines moral sainthood). However, treating moral sainthood as such a hierarchy, as well as making the adoption of it binding, seem to violate the principles for reasonable life planning, since it elevates one basic good over all the other basic goods, and thus violates the incommensurability principle. This is unacceptable in NNL, as it makes the good of religion the overriding good and thereby devaluates the other basic goods. Besides, it neglects the fact that people are different in their talents, interests, etc., and thereby undermines people's freedom and creativity to design their own life plans. Making a hierarchy of goods agent-independent would arbitrarily alienate many life plans that don't share it and this demonstrates the non-reasonableness of such a hierarchy. What is more, due to the lack of freedom and creativity, the structural basic goods, like excellence in agency, cannot be properly promoted.

Second, treating moral saints' hierarchy of goods as the binding goal is to invite a swarm of conceptual problems. All hierarchies have their own coordinating goods, but

to regard all of them as means to attain the hierarchy that defines moral sainthood is to make the good of religion the super-coordinating good. But how can one regulate the relationship between one's coordinating good, which corresponds to one's distinctive conditions, and the super-coordinating good that doesn't always correspond to one's conditions? Is there any inadequacy in the coordinating goods, as well as in their agent-dependent hierarchies of goods, that allegedly justifies the need for the super-coordinating good? How about those people whose coordinating good is the good of religion but are not moral saints (this is surely possible!), can we say that although they aren't always very virtuous, they are in some respects better than others in virtue of their pursuit of the basic good of religion?

Last, to conceptualize the eudaimonia of moral sainthood in NNL is to understand moral sainthood in terms of a life plan, but if moral sainthood is also the final goal of all life plans, then isn't it easier to just plan to be a moral saint from the start? Yet this is ruled out by the principles for configuring goods. As a result, one can only treat moral sainthood as *either* a super hierarchy of goods or a non-hierarchical goal. If the first disjunct is chosen, then moral sainthood as a super hierarchy must supplant all kinds of life plans. If the second disjunct is chosen, then one treats moral sainthood as a kind of state of affairs that must be aimed by all kinds of life plans. If this is so, then moral sainthood is identical to *either* eudaimonia or an intermediate stage between a completion of a particular life plan and eudaimonia. In any case, both disjuncts seem unfeasible.

2.3.2. Solutions (I): Religion as The Super-coordinating Good

I want to argue in this subsection for the solution of the problems in the previous paragraphs, which depends on a coherent portrayal of religion as the cross-hierarchical super-coordinating or superordinate[72] good. In this portrayal, there are two kinds of the coordinating good: the first kind is the coordinating good that one chooses in accordance

[72] Borrowing David Oderberg's term, see Oderberg 2004. As it will be evident below, the meaning of the term in my use is unlike Oderberg's. Also, I will use the terms 'super-coordinating' and 'superordinate' interchangeably. I use the former whenever I want to contrast its function with the coordinating good.

with one's personal conditions (talent, vocational goal, etc.) when one plans one's life, whereas the second kind is the good that [super-]coordinates the way the first coordinating good helps one achieve one's life plan. Here, flourishing is achieved when the attainment of the coordinating good secures the attainment of the super-coordinating good. In chapter 2, I define final goal as the combination of first-level and second-level goals. One can say accordingly that the actualization of the hierarchy of basic goods that promotes the coordinating good makes up a person's first-level goal, while one's [super-]promotion of the super-coordinating good of religion through one's promotion of the coordinating good constitutes her second-level goal. The final goal is then the attainment of eudaimonia, which depends on the attainment of second-level goal *through* the achievement of first-level goal.

More precisely, while the coordinating good is a fundamental aspect of flourishing that functions as the goal of one's personally designed hierarchy of goods or life plan, the super-coordinating good functions as the goal of the achievement of the coordinating good. That is why making religion the coordinating good, which is relative to one's personal conditions, is different from recognizing the superordinacy of the good of religion, which is not relative to one's personal conditions. Here, whereas the basic good of religion is *a* fundamental aspect of human flourishing that is about the development of human's religious sensibility via a distinctively religious set of practices and beliefs, the superordinate good of religion denotes the overall attainment of human flourishing as being defined in terms of friendship with God. Both the basic good and the superordinate good of religion are called *good*, for they are perfective of human nature. But while the *basic goodness* of religion concerns the perfecting of human nature via one of its aspects, the *superordinate goodness* of religion concerns the perfecting of all aspects of human nature via their expressing a human's friendship with God.

On this account, there are two kinds of hierarchy as well: the first kind is the subjective or personally designed hierarchy of goods, while the second kind is the

hierarchical coordination of the first kind of hierarchy by the super-coordinating good. What the second kind of hierarchy basically shows is the superordinacy of the good of religion, which is objective or exists independently from the personally constructed hierarchies of goods. Hence, the participation in the super-coordinating good supervenes on the participation in the coordinating goods, which means that the realization of the objective or higher hierarchy is supervenient upon the achievement of the personal hierarchy. In view of this, moral saints are those whose achievement of their personal hierarchies successfully achieve for them the objective hierarchy. More specifically, one becomes a moral saint, if the execution of one's life plan, no matter what it is, makes one participate also in friendship with God. In short, moral saints are those who use their life plans or vocations, diverse as they are, for the sake of their relationship with God.

So this doesn't mean that after successfully completing a life plan, one needs to adopt a life plan that mainly promotes the good of religion. If this is the case, then everyone must have at least two stages of life, the second or the highest of which is religious life. Nor does it mean that in personally devising a life plan that mainly promotes a certain basic good[73], one must always subject that basic good to a specific instance of the good of religion (e.g., in being a scientist, one must use the good of knowledge for the benefits of an organized religion). In that case, everyone must become a religious worker or missionary. For this reason, there are two ways to participate in the basic good of religion too: the first way is to make the good of religion the coordinating good, while the second way is to make the good of religion the super-coordinating good. The first way is related to one's exclusively religious vocational goals (being a priest, nun, pastor, monk, etc.), while the second way supervenes upon the successful achievement of all vocational goals, not limited to the religious ones. Although the success of the second way doesn't depend on the first way (i.e., it doesn't depend on whether one's vocational goal is explicitly religious), it may well necessarily depend on some degree of

[73] Making that basic good that life plan's coordinating good.

participation in the basic good of religion in one's personal hierarchy of goods, irrespective of their coordinating goods. That is, it may well be the case that, due to the nature of the super-coordinating good, every successful life plan must take seriously the participation in the basic good of religion, although it is not the coordinating good in one's plan. Hence, the good of religion might well be a structural good too.

To recap, one's life plan is eudaimonic, only if it expresses or is lived out for the sake of one's relationship with a perfect being. This means that in carrying out their life plans, people align their vocation, interests, and participation in goods to the divine will, which results in their becoming the embodiment of divine goodness. This is similar with the egalitarian doctrine of sanctification in some religions, which demands religious believers, in spite of occupations, to attain the highest stage of spirituality or sainthood.

2.3.3. Solutions (II): Religion as the Holistic Evaluative Property

But the main problem is: how can one justify within NNL the postulation of the super-coordinating or superordinate good, along with the super hierarchy of goods, which are independent from personal choices and conditions? To answer it, I'll discuss in a more precise manner the function or meaning of the superordinacy of religion in two steps: (*1*) I explain first the meaning of the *superordinacy* of good, and then, (*2*) I will argue why religion or friendship with God is eligible to be the superordinate good.

What is the meaning of a good's being the superordinate good? Actually, some basic goods are more or less 'superordinate', viz., one's participation in them determines the quality of one's life plan, regardless of one's choice of the coordinating good in that plan. I think that the superordinacy of religion is more 'superordinate' than those kinds of goods. Let us see how this is so. Suppose that *r* is a superordinate good, only if *r* is a structural good, i.e., the excellence in *r* is required to excellently participate in every basic good (e.g., the excellence in the good of excellence in agency is required to participate excellently in each basic good). But identifying the superordinate good with the structural good is incorrect, for structural goods only concern the operational

condition of the participation in each good, not the fulfillment of all aspects of flourishing. Besides, this reading implies that all structural goods can be superordinate goods, which is not in accord with the intuition that if God exists and friendship with God is the most meaningful and eudaimonic activity, then it is only religion that qualifies to be *the* superordinate good.

The next possibility is: *r* is a superordinate good, only if the excellent participation in every basic good is completed by *r*. For instance, one's participation in aesthetic experience becomes more excellent or eudaimonic, if it is completed or supported by the good of knowledge. So although enjoying Degas' paintings qualifies to be an instance of the participation in the good of aesthetic experience, enjoying them with a great deal of knowledge of French Impressionism is much more eudaimonic. Likewise, if God exists, then although enjoying the goodness of philosophical knowledge without believing in God qualifies to be an instance of the participation in knowledge, enjoying philosophical knowledge with faith in God is more eudaimonic. Oderberg (2004) might suggest something similar when he contends that the superordinacy of religion implies that "*within each basic good* there are kinds of pursuit that have a religious content making them more important than other kinds of pursuit within the same good" (p. 150). However, the problem is the same with the previous one: every basic good can play such a role, for instance, participating in the good of knowledge is more eudaimonic, if it is enhanced or perfected with the appreciation of the beauty of truth in general, and so on.

I think that it's closer to the truth to say that *r* is the superordinate good, only if *r* is a structural property of a flourishing life. What does it mean? I get the terms 'structural property' from Daniel Oderberg's paper (2004). It is called 'structural', for it refers to a quality or attribute of the structure of one's life as a whole. As a structural property, being eudaimonic obtains when a life displays a reasonable structuring of basic goods that actualizes human nature. There are other structural properties that refer to the qualities of a flourishing life, such as: being reasonable, self-actualizing, perfective, etc. Briefly,

structural properties in this context belong to a set of success or eudaimonic properties[74] that can explain each other, although they are not interchangeable. Since structural properties signify a comprehensive evaluation of one's whole life or life plan, I think it's better to turn the phrase 'structural property' into 'holistic evaluative property'.[75] Another reason to prefer the new term is: eudaimonia is more about the successful accomplishment of one's life plan than just about displaying a correct structure of basic goods in one's life. So to say that religion is the superordinate good is to say that a life is eudaimonic, if it has the evaluative property of being harmonious with the divine will or expressing friendship with the divine being, which is perfective of human nature too.

On this account, being harmonious with the divine will becomes an evaluative property that supervenes on all life plans, which follow the reasonable principles for configuring basic goods. I want to add here that, *pace* Oderberg (2004), although an evaluative property is a of success property, it's not something that one can have only if one has fully reached eudaimonia. Since full eudaimonia in this world is impossible to achieve, characterizing the property that way is unrealistically ambitious. I think that this overarching quality can be exemplified in a calibrated way, given that, as I said in chapter 5, eudaimonia can also be considered as a vaguely calibrated concept. If this is the case, then it's not true that making religion the superordinate good or evaluative property would make religion or friendship with God an intermediate stage between a completion of a particular life plan and eudaimonia. Therefore, evaluative properties like 'being reasonable', 'being self-perfective', 'being ultimately good', 'being eudaimonic', and 'being harmonious with the divine will' have different senses but the same referent. They are not interchangeable, and yet all of them explain the attainment of human flourishing, albeit from a variety of viewpoints.

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[74] Naturally, being non-eudaimonic or being unreasonable is also a structural property. But I want to focus my arguments here on positive structural properties.

[75] Unless required by contexts, I'll omit the word 'holistic' in my use of the term.

However, it doesn't sound accurate to say that the good of religion, viz., being harmonious with the divine will, is just one among a set of evaluative properties. Although one can say that being harmonious with the divine will or being God's friend is reasonable, eudaimonic, or self-perfective, it doesn't seem right to say that they are all on equal footing. If God exists and friendship or union with God constitutes eudaimonia, then friendship with God or the good of religion is the ultimate basis of the attribution of the other evaluative properties. That is to say, if God exists and friendship with God decides the flourishing of human beings, then a life plan or a way of life that doesn't take God into account cannot be a reasonable, self-perfective, or eudaimonic one. Furthermore, friendship with God is more than just an evaluative property. It seems to be an aspect of human flourishing, provided that God exists and human beings have the inherent need of and capacity to know God. This need and capacity can be fulfilled through the participation in the *basic good* of religion. But as the *superordinate good*, religion is more than just an aspect of human flourishing, since the fullness of being human is attained through friendship with God.

But how can we reconcile this apparent conundrum: on the one hand, religion is one among several aspects of flourishing; on the other, religion is a sort of the overarching aspect of human flourishing? To answer the question, it is crucial to clarify first the role of the good of religion as the overarching aspect of human flourishing. In line with the Christian and some other religions' teachings, human is a relational being, both horizontally and vertically. That is, just as humans cannot be complete without some degree of relationship with others, they cannot be complete, even more fundamentally, without some degree of relationship with God. This is because, without being inspired or equipped with love from God, humans cannot even have meaningful relationships with others. In short, just as one's being a person is defined through one's capacity to have interpersonal relationships, one's being a human is defined through one's capacity to have relationship with God. For this reason, participation in every basic good is incomplete

without both being based on and being expressed in the context of one's relationship with God. This means that to participate in basic goods is to participate in the goodness and the perfection of God himself.

On the basis of the previous paragraph's account, it seems that we can understand the good of religion anew, in line with either one of these alternatives: (*1*) religion is a basic good, but a unique one, for one's participation in it must lead to one's developing friendship with God in the participation of every other basic good; (*2*) religion is strictly speaking not a basic good, but a kind of super-basic good that becomes the foundation and the goal of the participation in all basic goods. Here, participation in religion resembles the function of the gift of charity in Aquinas' thought. Charity motivates and directs one's participation in all goods to its final end, which is friendship with God.

Lastly, I just want to explain the reason why making religion or friendship with God the superordinate good doesn't violate the incommensurability principle. It seems that in making religion the superordinate good, one cannot help but making the basic good of religion the most valuable good that must be always prioritized over all the other goods. But this implication is unnecessary.[76] What the basic good of religion provides is admittedly very crucial for eudaimonia, but the participation in it can be seen as a development in one's religious capacity that enables one to manifest one's friendship with God in the participation in every other basic good. In view of this, it is still compatible with the incommensurability principle to say that religion is not just a basic good, but also a structural good that is more fundamental than the other structural goods. This doesn't imply that the good of religion can trump the other basic goods, since the fundamentality of religion is only instrumental (i.e., it helps one to be a more consistent friend of God in the participation in all basic goods). Moreover, since, as a holistic evaluative property, being in friendship with God must suffuse the participation in every

[76] Take reasonableness, which is also an evaluative property, as an example. Even if reasonableness is a basic good, as some think, it doesn't make sense to say that in making being reasonable an evaluative property, one makes reasonableness the overriding good.

basic good, it is reasonable to say that friendship with God that's exemplified in the participation in knowledge is distinctive and thus incommensurable with the exemplification of it in the participation in community. Hence, making religion the superordinate good implies that all instances of participation in basic goods are equally valuable. Thus, in accepting the role of the super-coordinating good of religion, one is not guilty of making religion the overriding good.

Next, what is the basis for claiming that friendship with God is the superordinate good that should be exemplified by all reasonable life plans? The existence of God. Why? The answer will reflect a Thomist idea, which states that "anything that contributes to the objective good for a person also brings her closer to God. The beloved's closeness to God and her flourishing as the best person she can be will, therefore, be co-variant…" (Stump 2010, p. 93). Why is it the case that the more one's nature is fulfilled, the closer one is to God? In Aquinas and his friends' view, since God is the most perfect being, according to whose image human beings were created, union with God constitutes the beatitude and flourishing of human beings. Union with God is eudaimonic, not only because God is in some sense the model of human perfection, but more importantly, being united with God is a dynamic state of affairs that empowers one to flourish, as God is a friend who makes the fulfillment of one's needs his own concern and so actively helps one to achieve one's life plan and eudaimonia. A more adequate explanation will be given in the last section.

I want to consider now some possible queries of the arguments above.

A. Where is the place of virtues and virtuousness in this portrayal?

First, it is important to note that: (*1*) the superordinate good or evaluative property that must characterize eudaimonia is having a friendship or loving relationship with God, and (*2*) virtuousness or virtue is the capacity to participate in basic good and attain flourishing (Chappell 1996), as well as the expression of eudaimonia itself. As a result, virtuousness is actually a loving disposition toward God or goodness in general (if one doesn't believe in a personal God), so that individual virtues are a mode of loving

response toward God or all kinds of goodness in various circumstances. Hence, love becomes the overarching factor that unifies virtues and, through practical wisdom, regulates their performances across divergent situations.[77]

This also explains why, I think, an ambitious virtuous living just for the sake of being virtuous might be unlivable. A demanding virtuous living can make sense if it is understood in the context of one's devotion to God in all domains of living. That might well be the reason why, as I believe, it is mainly in the context of religion that one can strive to be as virtuous as possible. That is why it is rare to see people who just want to be as virtuous as possible without being motivated or supported to do so by religious beliefs. Aiming at being maximally virtuous without religious belief or other concrete causes might be a *de dicto* morality that cannot be effectively motivating or even realistic, as Carbonell argued (2009a).

B. Is it possible to participate in the super-coordinating good of religion, although one doesn't believe in God or one isn't aware of the fact that eudaimonia consists in friendship with God?

I believe that it is possible. To explain it, I borrow a conceptual resource from a monistic reading of Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia in *Nicomachean Ethics* (cf. Lear 2000). According to this reading, contrary to the view that Aristotle offers two contradicting conceptions of eudaimonia in his *Ethics*, the genuine highest good is just one, which is the contemplation of theoretical truths. However, moral life, which is best expressed in politics, is also a form of eudaimonia, albeit a 'middle-level' one, for moral life and theoretical contemplation not only commonly share, but also prioritize and rely on the excellence of reasoning. As a result, moral life participates in and approximates the highest good. Similarly, as Aquinas and his friends contend, in promoting moral goodness and living flourishingly in love, the virtuous are actually sharing God's will and

[77] As Adams (2006) says, virtuousness is basically "an excellence of the will" (p. 17) or an enduring manner of being for the good, which in itself is intrinsically good. A less ambiguous term (than will or being for the good) that may well reflect more accurately Adams' definition of virtue, I think, is love.

embodying God's own goodness, although they are not necessarily aware of it.[78] Thus, non-religious but virtuous people or moral saints participate in and approximate religious moral saints' loving friendship with God, although they are not necessarily aware of it.

C. Why is it the case that the participation in the super-coordinating good of religion must be mainly expressed as altruistic concern or love?

I believe that to answer this question more satisfactorily, the concept of moral goodness must also be understood more platonically, in the sense that the goodness of human flourishing must ultimately based on the transcendent standard of goodness in God (Adams 1999).[79] Since God is the morally perfect being who cannot fail to love others, then, if the fulfillment of human nature is modeled on God's excellence, the most flourishing and therefore virtuous human being must be the most loving one. As Aquinas says, "it is more godlike to be a source of good activity for oneself *and others* than for oneself alone" (Aquinas, III *Sent*. d 35, q. 1 a. 3, quoted in Finnis 1998, p. 120n85).

From a more human-centered viewpoint, love is indispensable for eudaimonia, as it is directly related to the nature and the need of being a person. Love is a personal, robust responsiveness to terminal values that can only be discovered in persons or person-based activities. It is also due to this reason that, unlike other ways of life, moral sainthood defines the self more directly and profoundly. Now, if it is the case that the most flourishing life plan overlaps with or even requires altruistic love, then the NNL's picture of the flourishing virtuous persons and *moral sainthood* coincide: *there is no*

[78] "The *end* of the love of persons—that is, the ultimate thing toward which love is directed—is union with God shared in the union with other human beings." (Stump 2010, p. 91).

[79] As Adams (2006) writes, "value…is not to be defined by the demands of the merely biological (as if they really were demands in any normative sense), but by approximation to an objective ideal or transcendent standard" (p. 52). Chappell (2004) thinks that a Platonic conception of the good can be understood as the ideal standard that applies "in the different normative dimensions…each good stands as an ideal limit, a 'horizon of perfection', for the development of the kind of improvement that it governs" (p. 108). As Chappell (2004) points out, "if the goods were all defined as aspects of human flourishing, that would simply raise the question why human flourishing was such a good thing" (p. 107). Finnis also seems to have the same kind of reasoning in his 1980: chap. XIII.

essential difference between moral saints and the virtuous persons who want to live to the fullest for others' and their own perfection.

3. Epilogue: Moral Sainthood and Theistic Moral Argument

I believe that the above conception of eudaimonia fulfills the criterion for a solution that I mention in chapter 4. According to the criterion, the workable conception of eudaimonia needs to (*1*) provide some reasons that can justify or complete the lack of the other goods or aspects of human flourishing, which is caused by moral saints' radical altruism; (*3*) look for some eudaimonic reasons that can somewhat lessen and compensate for the risks or dangers that constantly threaten or even damage moral saints' well-being.

The NNL-based account of the eudaimonia of moral saints (as the configuration of basic goods that aim at realizing the superordinate good of religion), I hope, has basically fulfilled the aforesaid criterion. What I want to emphasize right now is that the suffering of moral saints constitutes a problem of evil, and the conception of eudaimonia as friendship with God has some conceptual resources to deal with it. Here is my brief explanation. If a loving God exists, then, not only would humans' intimate relationship with him securely *guarantee* their promoting all of their basic goods, but also that friendship with God is the *perfect way* to participate in each basic good. This is the instrumental side or effect of friendship with God. The goodness of befriending God doesn't mainly consist in solving the problem of evil, although redeeming human sufferings is a natural outcome of it. This is also important for showing the ultimate intelligibility or reasonableness of moral sainthood or virtuous life in general. Why?

The practical reasoning that people use to devise their life plans is teleological in its nature, for it always tries to make sense of their plans and actions in increasingly larger dimensions. Thus, a particular action can be understood within the context of a certain project, the purpose of which can be found in a larger life plan that incorporates that project. This kind of subsumptive structure of practical reasoning reasonably leads to

the evaluation of one's life *sub specie aeternitatis*. In this largest possible dimension, the virtuous or moral saints start to ponder the ultimate values of their lives, regardless of the degrees of their flourishing. Here they can find that even if their whole life is reasonably structured and flourishing, the prevalence of suffering and inevitability of death will question its ultimate goodness (cf. Finnis 1980: chap. XIII; 1983: chap. VI). Since some forms of suffering are asymmetrical with happiness and death is detrimental to the virtuous persons' well-being[80], then, without the possibility to transcend the temporal limit of one's life, not only would the value of one's life be greatly relativized or defeated, the objectivity of goodness would also be doubted or even rejected.[81] Adams' account on this is worth quoting in full:

> "For many people the quest for an integrated and virtuous outlook and system of concerns will have a religious form. Indeed it is hard to escape religious forms in this matter if we understand religiousness broadly enough…ethics…must ask quite comprehensively how it is both possible and good to be for the good. Then ethical reflection can hardly be isolated from Kant's religious question, 'What may I hope?'" (Adams 2006, p. 210).

It is this need for a "conservation of meaning" and values (see Pargament 1997) *sub specie aeternitatis* that explain why the superordinacy of religion makes moral life an intelligible and reasonable life. Thus, since this religious concern is a direct consequence of the teleological nature of practical reasoning, the superordinacy of religion in NNL may well be a reasonable principle that one must seriously consider or adopt in planning one's life.

Here, moral saints' friendship with God, as well as its ensuing happiness, is inseparable from faith and hope or the positive outlook of both the success of their moral

[80] See the relevant arguments in Feldman 1992, Meyerfield 1999, Bradley 2009.

[81] In view of this, although a quotation from Cicero below might sound extravagant to modern ears, it is actually very reasonable: "He who is to live in accordance with nature must reason on the basis of the whole world and its government. Nor can anyone judge truly of good and evil, save by knowledge of the whole plan of nature as well as of the life of the gods, and of whether the nature of man is or is not in harmony with universal nature" (Cicero, *De Finibus* III, 73, quoted in Finnis 1980, pp. 374-375).

endeavor and the supremacy and triumph of moral goodness in the world. I understand faith and hope here broadly as a life-changing conviction in the moral image of the world (cf. Henrich 1994), i.e., an image that is constituted by moral realism, dignity of persons, the triumph of goodness, etc. This kind of faith is shared by many, including atheists, although I think that (*1*) it has strong religious imports, and (*2*) it is more consistent if it presupposes the existence of a personal God. I believe that one cannot detach the ethical interpretation or justification of moral sainthood from this faith[82], that is, all issues that pertain to the former (eudaimonia, virtues, etc.) can only make fuller sense and reasonable if they are based on or firmly placed in the framework of the latter.

[82] Instead of being a *deus ex machina* that one furtively smuggles in to explain the sufferings away, faith for moral saints is an organizing principle of basic goods that shapes, brings forth, and sustains their life.

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VITA

VITA

Leonard Sidharta
Purdue University
Department of Philosophy
100 N. University St.
West Lafayette, IN 47907

EDUCATION
Ph.D., Purdue University, Philosophy – Expected August 2012
Dissertation: "Moral Saints and Eudaimonia: A Philosophical Justification of Moral Sainthood"
Committee: Patrick Kain (director), Jeffrey Brower, Mark Murphy (Georgetown University), Michael Bergmann
Examination Test Area: History of Philosophy (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)
B.A. (Hons.), Calvin College, Philosophy – 2002

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION
• Philosophy of Religion, Ethics

AREAS OF COMPETENCE
• Early Modern Philosophy, Kant, Analytical Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS
• Selected translations and exegeses of the Shang Dynasty's Oracle Bones and the Zhou Dynasty Bronze Inscriptions, in Kelly Clark & Justin Winslett, (2011), "The Evolutionary Psychology of Chinese Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* (79: 4), 928-960.
• Selected translations and exegeses of the Zhou Dynasty's Book of Documents, Book of Odes, and Confucius' Analects, in Kelly J. Clark, "Tradition and Transcendence in Masters Kong and Rorty," *Rorty, Pragmatism, and Confucianism*, Yong Huang, ed. State University of New York Press, 2009.

AWARDS AND HONORS
• Graduate School Summer Research Grant (2012)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Instructor (full responsibility for course; Purdue University)
• Spring 2012 – Ethics
• Summer 2011 – Religions of the East
Teaching Assistant (Purdue University)
• Fall 2011 – Philosophy of Law
• Spring 2011 – Ethics
• Fall 2010 – Animal Ethics
• Spring 2010 – Philosophy of Religion
• Fall 2009 – Religions of the West
• Spring 2009 – Environmental Ethics
• Fall 2008 – Religions of the East
• Spring 2008 – Introduction to Philosophy
• Fall 2007 – Ethics

LANGUAGE
• Chinese
Classical Chinese (reading), English, Indonesian, Koine Greek (reading).

REFERENCES
• Dr. Patrick Kain, Purdue University
• Dr. Jeffrey Brower, Purdue University
• Dr. Michael Bergmann, Purdue University

LIST OF GRADUATE COURSES
History of Philosophy:
• Continental Rationalism (Leibniz's Metaphysics), Jan Cover
• 21st Century Analytical Philosophy, Christopher Pincock
• Studies in Medieval Christian Philosophy, Jeffrey Brower
Metaphysics and Epistemology:
• Metaphysics (Studies in Free Will and Modality), Michael Bergmann
• Studies in the Theory of Knowledge, Michael Bergmann
• Kant (Critique of Pure Reason), Jacqueline Mariña
• Studies in Philosophy of Mind, Daniel Kelly
Value Theory:
• Seminar in Ethics (Contemporary Virtue Ethics), Mark Bernstein and Daniel Frank
• Mind and Morality, Daniel Kelly

• Contemporary Ethical Theory, Patrick Kain
• Kant's Political Philosophy, Patrick Kain

Logic
• Advanced Symbolic Logic, Dolph Ulrich