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Should We All Be Moral Saints?
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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

I aim to describe and compare the concepts of moral sainthood endorsed by Raimond Gaita and Susan Wolf. I want to decide whether the category of moral sainthood is necessary, or if it's just a reflection of an outdated Christian concept. If the model is worthwhile, should we all aspire to become moral saints?

While for Christianity sainthood means being exceptionally close to God, analytic philosophy has coined the phrase 'moral saint' with various meanings. It is an appealing phrase for moral theories because it describes a thoroughly moral person, possibly an ideal to strive for.

For Susan Wolf, a moral saint is a person committed to improving others' lives, either because it makes her happy or because she sacrifices happiness in order to promote the wellbeing of others. Neither of the models seem good for Wolf, as the saint doesn't pay attention to develop any self-regarding interests.

On the other hand, Raimond Gaita bases his model of the moral saint on an example of a nun he encountered when he worked in a psychiatric ward. The defining characteristic of her sainthood was unconditional love. This love manifested in the way she treated patients who were beyond recovery, revealing their full humanity to the onlookers. The saintliness of the Nun is manifested episodically, and there is no mention of whether she has a personal life and whether it would be hypocritical for her to have one.

Gaita sees the Nun as a source of love aimed even at those whom we ourselves do not love. This love makes it intelligible to us that we have moral obligations to these people. Wolf is more concerned with the personality of the saint. She believes the saint lacks "nonmoral virtues", which are qualities we admire because they help us achieve personal excellence. Wolf prefers persons striving for "individual perfection" instead of "perfect morality". But how does that criticism relate to Gaita's conception of the saint, according to which the saint reveals the value of people who would otherwise be "morally invisible" to us?

The evaluation of the concept of the moral saint has to be performed on several levels. To decide whether the concept is good is not enough: if it is good, is it simply beneficial for us to have moral saints in our society, or should it be everyone's goal to become one?

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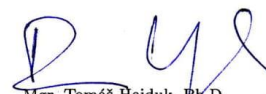
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In Pardubice on 29 March 2019

Anna Skácelová

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ANNOTATION

This thesis is concerned with the term “moral saint”. Three interpretations of the term are discussed – one definition is from Raimond Gaita and two are from Susan Wolf. Gaita’s moral saint reveals the value of those who have their humanity obscured through loving treatment. Wolf’s moral saints are people who try to behave as morally well as possible, either because the happiness of others makes them happy or because they disregard their own happiness completely. These three concepts are elaborated and critiqued in order to answer the question whether we should try to be like them.

KEYWORDS

Philosophy, analytic philosophy, ethics, Raimond Gaita, Susan Wolf, moral saint

NÁZEV

Měli bychom být morálními světci?

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá pojmem „morálního světce“, popř. „morálního svatého“. Soustředěná je na tři výklady tohoto termínu, z čehož jeden je od Raimonda Gaity a dva od Susan Wolf. Gaitův morální svatý ukazuje svým láskyplným jednáním hodnotu těch, u nichž nám není zřejmá. Wolf chápe morální svaté jako osoby, které se snaží chovat tak morálně, jak jen mohou a to buď proto, že je štěstí druhých činí šťastnými nebo proto, že vlastní štěstí ignorují. Tyto tři koncepty svatých jsou vysvětleny a posouzeny, aby byla zodpovězena otázka, zda bychom se jimi měli stát.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Filosofie, analytická filosofie, etika, Raimond Gaita, Susan Wolf, morální světec, morální svatý

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	9
1 Gaita's Revelatory Saint	12
1.1 Revelatory Love.....	12
1.2 The Revelatory Saint Herself.....	13
1.3 Purity and Repulsion.....	15
1.4 Just Treatment.....	18
2 Should We All Be Revelatory Saints?	20
2.1 Can We Become Revelatory Saints?	20
3 Justification of the Concept of the Revelatory Saint	22
3.1 Symbol of Humanity.....	22
3.2 From Love to Awareness	23
4 Wolf's Moral Saints	25
4.1 Peak of Morality	25
4.2 The Loving Saint: A Being Like No Other.....	25
4.3 The Rational Saint: A Martyr	26
4.4 The Saint's Barren Character.....	26
4.5 Moral Obsession and Non-Moral Excellence	27
5 Should We All Be Loving Saints?.....	30
5.1 Can We Become Loving Saints?	30
6 Justification of the Concept of the Loving saint.....	31
6.1 Moral Actions and Moral Manner	31
6.2 The Immorality in Impartiality	31
7 Should We All Be Rational Saints?	34
7.1 Can We Become Rational Saints?	34
8 The Justification of the Concept of the Rational Saint.....	35
8.1 A Well-Oiled Moral Machine.....	35

8.2	The Case Against Morality	35
8.3	In the World of Rational Saints	36
	Conclusion	38
	Bibliography	39

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with three definitions of the term *moral saint*. The first definition is taken from the work of Raimond Gaita, and it will be called the Revelatory Saint. Gaita himself only uses the term *moral saint*, but in this thesis, this term has multiple definitions, so the adjective “revelatory” is added for clarity. The second and third definitions are by Susan Wolf, and she has named them the Loving Saint and the Rational Saint, so these terms will be used in the thesis.

Wolf’s and Gaita’s understanding of the term differs. Wolf’s saints are characterised by the morality of their actions. She makes the distinction between the Loving Saint and the Rational Saint based on their motivations. She needs to separate these saintly characters to criticize them and further, the saints as moral ideals. The motivations of her saints, however, do not change the way they execute their actions. This action-based conception contrasts with Gaita’s. To him, sainthood is defined by the manner in which actions are executed. The emotion the saint feels and expresses through the action is crucial, because without it, the action might still be admirable to the observer, but it will not have a saintly quality.

All three concepts of moral saints will be shown, each in its own way, to be unattainable by will. However, with each of them there is a certain disparity in what that means to us. This is why the question of whether we can become such a saint is always followed by an attempt to justify the concept. In the case of the Revelatory Saint, it will be argued that the concept is still valuable as an object of admiration instead of aspiration, because admiration can bring about a change of attitude in our lives. When it comes to the Loving Saint and the Revelatory Saint, this attempt to justify the concepts, intensified by the appeal to the manner of their actions, will prove them and the action-based morality on which they are predicated to be lacking. In this way, all three conceptions of the moral saint will serve as examples in an exploration of the question of whether and how we may be able to become morally perfect or morally better individuals.

First, I will give an exposition of Gaita’s Revelatory Saint and of the principles underlying this concept. This saintly character is characterized not by her actions, but by the fact that these actions are executed with love. This love demonstrates the value of the recipient of the action to an observer. After the exposition of the concept, the question of whether we can become Revelatory Saints will be answered. The conclusion will be that we can, however, this transformation is out of our control. Though it is not attainable by will, the concept still has a certain potential in regards to the moral quality of our lives. This is why a justification of the

Revelatory Saint will be made, claiming that it is valuable as a symbol in ethics discourse and in personal life. Admiring the Revelatory Saint and feeling moved by her example can help us understand the worth of all people, thus changing our attitude towards them into the awareness which I will claim that they deserve.

Then, Wolf's notion of moral saints as people who behave as morally well as possible will be explicated and her motivation-based division of saints will be explained. The Loving Saint is a character who behaves in such extremely moral way in order to bring about the happiness of others, because this is what makes her happy. In contrast, the Rational Saint is a character who has chosen to behave as morally as possible, regardless of her emotions. She does not have a stronger natural disposition for morality than others. This exposition of saints will be followed by the criticism which Wolf gives to both of her definitions.

Consequently, the question of whether we can become Loving Saints will be answered. The conclusion will be, as with the Revelatory Saint, that we can, but never by will. An attempt to justify the Loving Saint will be made, because the concept has the capacity to show us what is wrong with understanding morality as something based on actions only. Therefore, this justification will consist in showing the Loving Saint in a negative light to expose the deficiency in the manner of her behaviour. I will compare the Loving Saint's behaviour with the Revelatory Saint's behaviour and then I will give examples of Loving Saints, showing a specific type of emotional superficiality from which they suffer. This will show them to be characters one should not admire nor aspire to become.

Next, the possibility of becoming a Rational Saint will be discussed. The answer will be that since the example of the Revelatory Saint shows that there is more to morality than doing all the actions which should be done, being absolutely moral does not end with executing all the possible moral actions. Therefore, the concept of the Rational Saint is flawed in itself and while one can act like a Rational Saint, it will not make her saintly. I will, once again, attempt to justify the concept in order to further express the shortcomings of an action-based understanding of morality. I will show that there are cases when we are glad that we or someone else has chosen to do the less moral thing to do. Furthermore, if things are done for the sake of morality, our relation to them changes. My argument will be concluded by showing how the Rational Saint would be unable to comprehend that moral behaviour should also contain the awareness for which I argued when discussing the Revelatory Saint.

When answering the question of whether we can become Revelatory Saints or Loving Saints, the answer will be that we cannot will to be, but that this change of character can happen to us. This formulation will be understood as that we cannot become such moral saints.

The same will-based understanding of “can” will be used when exploring the question of whether we can become more moral individuals.

A crucial premise for the thesis is the principle of “ought implies can”. All of the conclusions in this thesis will be made with the presumption that having the ability to do something is a necessary precondition for being required to do it. This is an understanding generally adopted by common sense morality. It can be supported with the example of a person observing a pickpocket in action and not doing anything. When looking back, the witness realizes that she were capable of intervening in the situation. She comes to regret her inactivity because she becomes aware of the fact that she could have intervened, and because she considers pickpocketing morally wrong, that she also should have intervened. Were she unable to intervene in the situation, for example if she witnessed the pickpocketing on the street while looking out of a moving bus, the requirement that she ought to intervene would not hold.

However important for this thesis, I should note that my justification of the principle of “ought implies can” is not universal. Bernard Williams gives an example of a driver who hits a child with his lorry. Although it was not his fault, he will feel guilty and he will be linked to the situation in a different way than all the other spectators, except for those who think that they had the power to prevent the accident.¹ This proves that the principle is not a universal tool for when we are making judgements about responsibility, blame or guilt. However, it is helpful in the majority of ordinary cases, so it will be relied upon throughout this thesis.

¹ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. Moral Luck. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*. 1976, vol. 50, s. 115-151. ISSN 03097013. s. 124-125

1 GAITA'S REVELATORY SAINT

1.1 Revelatory Love

Gaita bases his concept of the moral saint on the notion that love can reveal to us the value of another human being. All human beings, even if their lives lack what we consider meaning, are our irreplaceable, worthy equals.² We try to capture this notion of value whenever we speak of unconditional respect, inalienable rights or dignity of all people – the language of religion calls this the *sacred*.³ The Christian explanation of why we are all sacred – because we are the children of God and therefore loved by him⁴ – is what Gaita uses to illustrate the secular belief in the infinite value of people. In this sense, not only Godly love – but for example, also parental love can have this revelatory quality. When children see their siblings “*in the light of their parents’ love*,”⁵ they learn to love them too.⁶ Parental love can, however, demonstrate more than to a child that her brothers and sisters are lovable. The love of parents can also remind us that a person – their child – who has become evil is “*fully our fellow human being*”.⁷

Still, it is not only parents whose love can demonstrate the value of another person. It could be a lover, a sibling or a friend, as long as they love the recipient and therefore see her worth and they engage in a relationship with her in which they express this love in their behaviour. Or it can be a person who is not in a relationship with the recipient, but she loves and values her and her behaviour towards her expresses it.

A condition for a successful revelation is that the witness of this love does not fully realize the humanity of the recipient at first, and this love discloses to her a new understanding of the recipient’s value.⁸ This value can be hidden by affliction, proximity, environment or by our own prejudices concerning the recipient. Affliction as a factor obscuring human value will be discussed in the example of the Nun. Proximity hides the value in the case of a child not seeing the value of her sibling until she sees her through her parents’ eyes. Environment, such as

² GAITA, Raimond A. *A common humanity: thinking about love and truth and justice*. First edition. London – New York: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0415241146. s. 3

³ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 23

⁴ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 24

⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 24

⁶ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 24

⁷ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 24

⁸ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 18

prison, can have a dire dehumanizing effect. When describing how prisoners would seem to their guards were the prisoners not visited by people who love them, Gaita goes as far as to use the term “*morally invisible*”.⁹ Moreover, in this case it can be the guards’ prejudices obscuring the prisoner’s value. They are imprisoned for a crime, so the guards may understand them as bad people.

When it comes to showing others as our fellow human beings, the love of Revelatory Saints is special, because it can disclose this fact in dire cases. This ability stems from the qualities this love has. Saints love impartially and unconditionally, so their objective love encompasses even those whose value we otherwise would not see. They do not cultivate relationships with all whom they love, but it is as if they did. In order for the saint’s love to be revelatory, however, it must not be sentimental. Pathos would dim her understanding of the recipients. Gaita uses Iris Murdoch’s notion that love, justice and pity are ways of understanding someone else’s reality.¹⁰ If one is capable of this quality of love, of this way of understanding the reality of those whose humanity is obscured and of conveying this in her treatment towards them, she is what Gaita considers a moral saint.

1.2 The Revelatory Saint Herself

The example of a moral saint Gaita gives is drawn from his own experience – it is a nun who came to the psychiatric ward at which he worked as a teenager.¹¹ The patients in the ward were severely afflicted and therefore their humanity could not be seen. Being incurably mentally ill, there was nothing giving their life meaning, and they had no chance of ever recovering such a thing.¹² Their respect for them could not be based on self-esteem or on anything admirable about them. Their friends and family had long since abandoned them. Gaita writes that there was not any basis for anyone to believe that patients so afflicted were “*fully our fellow human beings*”.¹³ Some of the doctors and nurses treated them brutally and there was only a small group of psychiatrists who wanted to make their conditions better, because they believed in the patients’ inalienable dignity. Although Gaita admired this group of doctors back then, he comes to criticize their use of the term inalienable dignity, because he finds it

⁹ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 26

¹⁰ MURDOCH, Iris J., cit. podle GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. xxxvii

¹¹ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 17-18

¹² GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 17

¹³ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 2

inadequate in comparison with the Nun's treatment.¹⁴ While Gaita does not condemn the efforts of the psychiatrists, he explains that dignity depends on how the person behaves, and so it is alienable.¹⁵ Not only that this meant that the patients' dignity did not have a strong basis, Gaita was soon to be shown that he did not himself believe in it.¹⁶

The arrival of the Nun proved to Gaita that there was more to the patients' humanity than could be captured in an intellectual belief: "... *everything in her demeanour towards them – the way she spoke to them, her facial expressions, the inflexions of her body – contrasted with and showed up the behaviour of those noble psychiatrists. She showed that they were, despite their best efforts, condescending, as I too had been. She thereby revealed that even such patients were, as the psychiatrists and I had sincerely and generously professed, the equals of those who wanted to help them; but she also revealed that in our hearts we did not believe this.*"¹⁷

While the Nun showed the humanity of the patients to Gaita, the metaphysical beliefs she might have had about them were not proven by her behaviour.¹⁸ If she had such beliefs, they only made her see this reality, but that does not mean that they would be factual. To Gaita, no possible beliefs the Nun could have expressed would have been able to justify the humanity of the patients, it could only be done by the love that he witnessed.¹⁹ So there would be no urge to adopt any beliefs about the patients, because the revelation runs deeper than accepting proposed information. Moreover, having certain, or any beliefs is not a condition for sainthood. The Revelatory Saint expresses her understanding through love, but were she to speak about her understanding, she might make declarations with which those who were revealed the recipient's value through her love would disagree. The power and truth of her understanding is not proven by any propositions, but by the fact that love was the form and expression of this understanding.

The Nun's love, with the value of the patients, manifested episodically, when she was in contact with them. However, the saint's love itself is not an episodic quality. To truly embody it in such astonishing revelatory way, it cannot be a momentary affection. It seems to permeate the Nun's very being, affecting the manner of all that she does. This is because her under-

¹⁴ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 18

¹⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 18

¹⁶ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 19

¹⁷ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 18-19

¹⁸ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 21

¹⁹ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 20

standing of the patient's value was intrinsic, no matter whether it was also made explicit by some beliefs. It stemmed from bridging her grasp of herself with her grasp of the patients. She joined perhaps the deepest, most intimate part of her identity as a human – her love – with the way she saw them. Her love then, as a respectful, non-sentimental appreciation of their value, a “*form of understanding*”²⁰, radiated from her in her treatment towards the patients.

1.3 Purity and Repulsion

Gaita's writing offers more examples of loving agents revealing someone's humanity. The first example is of another moral saint. When writing about goodness in *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*, Gaita wonders at Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who behaved compassionately and without condescension to even the most severely afflicted.²¹ Her example clearly shows the unachievable qualities of saintly love, because Gaita shows this love to be pure, perfect and tied to her humility.²² The humility must have been a result of the saintly immanency of her understanding. Her realization of the value of the afflicted was strong enough to inspire love and awe within her. Her love, however, had to be humble, because a boasting love would reveal more about her notion of herself than of the patients, and her notion of the patients would be warped by it. In Gaita's sense, such pure love is not an achievable goal or a limit to our love.²³ It is unimaginable to ever feel this way if we have not, and any attempt to behave this way without the underlying love and conjoined humility would come across as dishonest, never revelatory. Instead, saintly love has an “*absolute value*”.²⁴

Gaita uses the adjective “*appalling*”²⁵ when describing the affliction of some of those whom Mother Teresa treated. This stresses that while some feel repulsion towards a certain extremity of affliction, this repulsion, if even felt, does not negatively affect the behaviour of the saint. This can be seen in another example of a Revelatory Saint, which comes from the preface of *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*. Gaita takes this example from Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man*, where Levi writes about Lakmaker, his fellow prisoner in Auschwitz. It was a winter night, only weeks before liberation and the concentration camp was already de-

²⁰ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 249

²¹ GAITA, Raimond A. *Good and evil: an absolute conception*. Second edition. London - New York: Routledge, 2004. ISBN 0-203-48912-8. s. 202

²² GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 202

²³ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 204

²⁴ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 204

²⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 202

serted by the SS. Only the ill prisoners were not taken away, being left to die,²⁶ but they were hearing the Russian army getting closer. Lakmaker was Dutch, which none of the other prisoners understood and he spoke no other language. He was only seventeen years old and he had scarlet fever, typhus, a cardiac illness and bedsores.²⁷ One night, he got sick, likely from eating too much cabbage and turnip soup. He tried to run to the latrine, but he was so weak that he fell and did not make it in time. He ended up lying on the floor in his own infectious filth, in which his bed was covered as well. He was crying and groaning.²⁸ The prisoners did not have any extra blankets or mattresses, and barely any water, but they could not leave him in such a state. Another prisoner, a French teacher²⁹ named Charles did not say a word, but he got up and dressed. He cut the dirty parts out of Lakmaker's straw mattress and blankets. Then he "*lifted Lakmaker from the ground with the tenderness of a mother*",³⁰ cleaned him with straw from the mattress and put him back to his bed. He scraped the floor with a piece of metal plate and put disinfectant on himself and on everything else involved.³¹

To show the marvellous goodness of Charles's behaviour, Gaita contrasts it with the other extreme, a racist SS officer taking care of him.³² The material outcome would have been the same, but he would not act with the revealing tenderness Charles did. This tenderness was the response to "*what it meant for a human being to have fallen into that condition*"³³, but it should not be confused with empathy – Gaita argues that Lakmaker could have been numb and too degraded to realize his worth as a human being, so it was not his feelings to which Charles reacted in such a way.³⁴ Charles showed motherly tenderness. He had no basis on which to love Lakmaker the same way his mother possibly did – yet, he expressed the same purity of love as she could.³⁵ Michael Campbell writes that without the example of Charles, we would not realize such behaviour was even possible, that someone could act this way in this situation.³⁶ The fact that Charles was capable of feeling such perfect, practically

²⁶ LEVI, Primo. *If this is a man*. First edition. New York: The Orion Press, 1959. [ISBN: 0349100136.] s. 185

²⁷ LEVI, Primo. ref. 26, s. 198

²⁸ LEVI, Primo. ref. 26, s. 198

²⁹ LEVI, Primo. ref. 26, s. 180

³⁰ LEVI, Primo. ref. 26, s. 199

³¹ LEVI, Primo. ref. 26, s. 199

³² GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. xvii - xviii

³³ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. xix

³⁴ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. xix

³⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 123

³⁶ CAMPBELL, Michael W. Absolute goodness: in defence of the useless and immoral. *Journal of Value Inquiry*. 2015, vol. 49, no. 1-2, s. 95-112. ISSN 0022-5363. s. 109

unachievable love for an unfamiliar, dying, infectious and severely afflicted individual shows that his love must have permeated into his understanding of human worth –and preciousness – as a whole. Such understanding is wondrous, so Charles must be a moral saint.

The last example of revelatory love is from Gaita's childhood, and it is not one of a moral saint. It is needed for the contrast with the behaviour of saints, and as an exposition of how even casualness can have a revelatory quality in the treatment of people differing from us. Gaita mentions his father, Romulus Gaita, separately from the Nun, Mother Teresa or Charles – in his biography, *Romulus, My Father*. He describes how his father and his friend Pantelimon Hora treated Vacek Vilkovikas, a harmless insane man who would talk to animals and sometimes cook in his own urine.³⁷ Gaita's father and Hora were not condescending towards him – they let him visit, they spent their free time with him and listened to him. Gaita was a young boy at that time and affected by his father's and Hora's behaviour, he also did not consider him odd. When reflecting on this in *A Common Humanity*, he writes that despite Vilkovikas's strangeness he understood him as “*living yet another form of human life*”.³⁸

The treatment of the adults taught the boy how to understand the reality of the insane man. There is nothing in the biography implying that Hora or Gaita's father acted out of sympathy. Instead, their behaviour towards Vilkovikas shows friendship. Although the natural reaction to those who cook in their own urine would be repulsion, they must not have felt it, because otherwise they would not be capable of friendship as casual as described in the book. Even though they were not moral saints, the casualness of their behaviour had a revelatory quality for Gaita. It came so natural that he does not express wonder when reflecting on it. He must have viewed it as normal to spend time with the strange man, because his father and Hora taught him by example. But when comparing Vilkovikas with the afflicted patients from the psychiatric ward, he writes that it was clear that unlike the patients, Vilkovikas was living a kind of life.³⁹ He adopted the attitude to Vilkovikas without second thought, but he was astonished by what the Nun's love revealed. While the treatment towards Vilkovikas made him understand the lives of those who were living differently, the Nun showed him that even what did not at first seem to be a life could have ultimate value.⁴⁰

³⁷ GAITA, Raimond A. *Romulus, my father*. Reprint edition. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2008. ISBN 1921351926. s. 65-66

³⁸ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 2

³⁹ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 3

⁴⁰ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 3

1.4 Just Treatment

Simone Weil writes that “*the supernatural virtue of justice consists in behaving exactly as though there were equality when one is the stronger in an unequal relationship. Exactly in every respect, including the slightest details of accent and attitude, for a detail may be enough to place the weaker party in the condition of matter which on this occasion naturally belongs to him, just as the slightest shock causes water which has remained liquid below freezing point to solidify.*”⁴¹ Even though we may interpret the Revelatory Saint’s behaviour as compassionate, she would only see it as just. No pretence of equality is possible if the agent does not truly believe in the worth of the recipient of the action, and none is needed if she does. As Weil’s quote describes, every detail of behaviour will then express this knowledge. Compassion, as interpreted by Martha Nussbaum, affects only our behaviour towards those whom we see as human, whose inner experience we can imagine.⁴² If we do not realize the possibility of an inner experience, as can be the case with the afflicted, compassion has no grounds. Compassionate treatment of the afflicted without realizing their worth is an insincere construct, because it cannot be just, nor can it capture that the afflicted are worthy of just treatment.

What is a just treatment of the afflicted may not be clear – since their value is hidden, so are the moral requirements which we have to them. The Revelatory Saint treats the afflicted justly, motivated by her love for them. Love is an emotional acknowledgment of value – what we focus our love on are objects of value, so through love, we understand them as valuable. To Gaita, a typical part of love is the demonstration of “*respect for the independent reality of the beloved*”.⁴³ Seeing this reality also means seeing the beloved as someone who can be wronged.⁴⁴ If we love this person and therefore understand her as precious, we do not want her to be wronged, thus love gives us a moral requirement. However, we do not tend to love the afflicted in a way which would make us realize our moral requirements to them. In fact, some may argue that the treatment of a person whose inner reality does not seem like ours – a person whose intellectual disability is so profound that she shows no signs of rationally coping with the world, for example – does not matter, since it will not affect her inner reality, she will not feel demeaned.

⁴¹ WEIL, Simone, cit. podle GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. xviii

⁴² NUSSBAUM, Martha. *Upheavals of thought: the intelligence of emotions*. First edition. [New York]: Cambridge University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-521-46202-9. s. 409

⁴³ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 26

⁴⁴ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 26

The just treatment of the afflicted has the potential to show us exactly why they deserve it. The Revelatory Saint's behaviour shows that the afflicted person's reality is respectable and worthy. Even if this person does not seem like one of us, the saint's love shows her as our equal. If we are willing to understand the afflicted as such, we ought to recognize that they deserve to be treated as such, that we have these moral requirements to them. Even though Ladmaker could have been numb enough that Charles's tender care would not differ from a harsh treatment to him, he still would have been wronged by such treatment. The afflicted, no matter how different or lacking their inner reality might be from ours, can be wronged, because they have absolute value. The pure love of saints can express them as such, as valuable and vulnerable, as ones the treatment of whom must be carefully considered, since the moral requirements do not intuitively stem from our own love.

Gaita also believes that it would not be comprehensible to us that we have these obligations to those we do not love unless we saw them receiving someone else's love.⁴⁵ Moreover, realizing these obligations is different than our understanding of those whom we love. With our beloved, our treatment is naturally respectful and careful, because we do not want to wrong her. We do not think about the manner of our behaviour, for example, about the way in which to look at her. But our feelings are not enough to orientate us in our behaviour towards all people. If we are to take care of an afflicted person, whom we do not love and who may cause repulsion, our instincts fail us. Behaving according to them, we may be disgusted, dismissive, disturbed – although it is absolutely clear that such behaviour would hurt those whom we love. This is why a figure like the Revelatory Saint helps us realize what kind of treatment the afflicted deserve.

⁴⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 26

2 SHOULD WE ALL BE REVELATORY SAINTS?

2.1 Can We Become Revelatory Saints?

Even if we emotionally respond to the examples of saints and we consider Gaita's realization true, we are unable to purposely become saints because sainthood is based on something which cannot be attained. Its constitutive element is pure love, an emotion. Martha Nussbaum describes the complex features of emotions: "...*their urgency and heat; their tendency to take over the personality and to move it to action with overwhelming force; their connection with important attachments, in terms of which a person defines her life; the person's sense of passivity before them; their apparently adversarial relation to "rationality" in the sense of cool calculation or cost-benefit analysis; their close connections with one another, as hope alternates uneasily with fear, as a single event transforms hope into grief, as grief, looking about for a cause, expresses itself as anger, as all of these can be the vehicles of an underlying love.*"⁴⁶

In this regard, emotions are phenomena extraverterted to our will – forceful, heated, making us feel passive and unable to control them.⁴⁷ This means that they cannot be willed, feigned or imposed. Emotions are affected by the beliefs we have about objects,⁴⁸ but even if we change our beliefs, we may still experience the emotion.⁴⁹ Therefore, even if we understand Lakmaker as our fellow human being, we may still feel repulsion toward him as an individual lying in his own infectious filth. Moreover, false beliefs may be resisting attempts to change sometimes.⁵⁰ Since emotions and beliefs are to some extent capricious, one cannot become a Revelatory Saint based on a rational decision, or, in fact, on any decision.

Nussbaum believes that compassion, as an emotion which can make one treat an afflicted other "*justly and humanely*"⁵¹, can be cultivated by education aimed at the imagination of others' inner experience.⁵² However, the quality as she describes it is felt for those whom we see as similar to us,⁵³ who have been struck by disaster, but who have humanity and human

⁴⁶ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 22

⁴⁷ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 22

⁴⁸ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 28

⁴⁹ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 35

⁵⁰ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 36

⁵¹ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 305

⁵² NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 427

⁵³ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 316

agency: “*if we saw the hero just as a worm or an ant, a pathetic low creature grovelling in the mud, we would not have the intense concern we do*“.⁵⁴ While this proves that Gaita’s notion of love and compassion for the extremely afflicted is extraordinary and not accounted for, it also shows that Nussbaum’s conception of compassion is, although attainable, limited. In order to become Revelatory Saints, we would have to cultivate love, which might be possible, just like Nussbaum’s understanding of compassion – but never guaranteed. However, the cultivation of it into a saintly dimension is a process completely extraverted to our will.

When discussing the example of Mother Teresa, Gaita himself writes that such perfection, such purity is not a goal to which it would be possible to aspire.⁵⁵ The Saint’s love must be pure, otherwise her behaviour would be condescending or pretentious. As was shown, emotions are not fully under our control, but this purity is the quality of the emotion itself, and it transcends us. This means that one may, for example, aspire to treat the afflicted in a kind or caring manner. But unless she feels pure love towards them, if she tries to treat them ‘lovingly’, it is tinged with condescension.

The Revelatory Saint is not something we could aspire to become, but this does not mean that this transformation cannot happen *to* us. There might have been a time when the Nun were not a saint, either. But there are no actions to take, no beliefs to assert which could change our feelings – and the manner of our behaviour – this profoundly. The Revelatory Saint can, however, surely become something at which we may wonder.

⁵⁴ NUSSBAUM, Martha. ref. 42, s. 409

⁵⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 21, s. 204

3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE REVELATORY SAINT

3.1 Symbol of Humanity

Although we cannot become Revelatory Saints by will, I believe that the concept is still worthwhile for us as a symbol. Admiring it and reflecting on it can help us change our understanding of other people. In this section, I will comment on Gaita's example of a woman ('M') whose prejudices made her dismiss the inner reality of the Vietnamese. This will show that it is not only the afflicted whom we can treat unjustly. I will also present the positive effect that the reflection on the example of a Revelatory Saint could have on M. Such example can work as a symbol which can improve the moral quality of her life.

Simone Weil believes that "*we have the same carnal natures as animals. If a hen is hurt the others rush up to peck it. Our senses attach to affliction all the contempt, all the revulsion, all the hatred which our reason attaches to crime. Except for those whose soul is inhabited by Christ, everybody despises the afflicted to some extent, although practically no-one is conscious of it.*"⁵⁶ Although the afflicted serve as an important example, it is not only them who are despised in this way. If we cannot realize someone's independent reality, we do not respect them and treat them justly. Gaita writes about a woman whom he calls M, who had lost a child recently. When seeing the grief of Vietnamese women who had lost their children when the country was bombed during the Vietnam War on television, she first seemed to empathize with them, but then she separated her experience from theirs, because they were able, according to her, to have more.⁵⁷ Gaita explains that with this claim, M expressed that she did not believe that their suffering would be as deep as hers.⁵⁸ While M would probably consider it heinous if somebody denied her the depth of her experience, she did so with the Vietnamese mothers, turning away from their suffering. She did not find her response despicable or hateful because she denied the Vietnamese the depth in which her words would be able to hurt them. When humans do not see the inner experience of others as such, they come to unintentionally harm them, because they do not realize that to harm them is even a possibility.

⁵⁶ WEIL, Simone. cit. podle HAUERWAS, Stanley. God and goodness: a theological exploration. *In search of goodness*. Edited by Ruth W. Grant. [Chicago]: The University of Chicago Press, 2011, s. 90-106. ISBN: 0-226-30683-6. s. 95

⁵⁷ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 57

⁵⁸ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 58

The Revelatory Saint would ideally become a *guarantee* for our understanding of the value and rights of all. Gaita believes that if one asserts the infinite preciousness of all human beings, she will understand compassion and cruelty differently.⁵⁹ In this sense, M can read about the example of the Nun and wonder at her treatment in face of the extreme affliction of the patients. The Nun's behaviour then can become a symbol for the value of *all* people for M, a symbol which she can apply to the Vietnamese and learn that they have deep inner worlds. Such understanding would then prevent her from an indirect verbal attack as brutal as the one of which she was once capable.

3.2 From Love to Awareness

M might acquire a different understanding of other people if she reflects on the example of the Nun. I will use Christopher Hamilton's critique of Gaita's conception of sainthood as a foil against which to show the quality of the possible understanding of the inner reality of other people. This quality is the awareness which we can and should have of other people.

Christopher Hamilton offers a sceptical reading of Gaita's account of sainthood. He thinks that there is no point in having Revelatory Saints, because the people Gaita would describe as saintly may only behave this way occasionally,⁶⁰ and they could even be causing or ignoring suffering at other times.⁶¹ Even though Gaita does not claim that this love would be something to aspire to, Hamilton thinks that he forces the belief that we only see the value of our fellow human beings if we view them – and love them – like the Nun did.⁶² In another place, Hamilton claims that it would be a guilty⁶³ and pained yearning to aspire to love of this purity.⁶⁴ Bringing these two points together, one may suffer if trying to see the value of other persons the way saints do, feeling guilty from the inability to force the emotion.

What the description of the Nun's impact shows is the fact that Gaita had had an implicit understanding of human value which has been made explicit. He had supported the efforts of the psychiatrists who believed in the inalienable dignity of the patients, and the patients, even if treated brutally, were taken care of in the ward. There was an implicit understanding that

⁵⁹ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. xix

⁶⁰ HAMILTON, Christopher. Raimond Gaita on saints, love and human preciousness. *Ethical theory and moral practice*. 2008, vol. 11, no. 2, s. 181-195. ISSN 1386-2820. s. 184

⁶¹ HAMILTON, Christopher. ref. 60, s. 188

⁶² HAMILTON, Christopher. ref. 60, s. 190

⁶³ HAMILTON, Christopher. ref. 60, s. 189

⁶⁴ HAMILTON, Christopher. ref. 60, s. 186

there was a point in keeping them alive and taking care of them. But if this behaviour was understood as moral, it was a mere conduct of moral actions. Hamilton also tries to reduce sainthood to moral actions when he blames the saints for not behaving in a saintly manner constantly. But doing all the right things for the afflicted was not enough in the psychiatric ward. Gaita was yet to see the afflicted as his equals, as people whose lives were just as meaningful as his.

The Nun's love has revealed this to him, and the realization taught him something about all people. If even the extremely afflicted can be treated with an immense, marvellous goodness, if even they can be brought into our understanding as precious and worthy, then it is not a difficult task to assert all people as this worthy, as was proposed with M. The Nun could be a symbol of value which would lead to expressing common humanity in action, such as M expressing genuine compassion for the Vietnamese mothers, understanding that their inner realities have been just as hurt as hers. Her manner of behaviour to them would change, too. She would understand that they are her equals, and as such, they deserve acknowledgement and respect of their inner reality of the same kind as her acknowledgment of her own inner reality.

Even though Hamilton is right and we would feel frustrated and guilty if we tried to force ourselves to love the same way the Nun did, it is not necessary. The acknowledgment, the awareness we can gain from reflecting on her example is, just like love, beyond an intellectual notion, but it is attainable. Awareness is, just like love, a form of understanding other people's inner reality. Gaita writes that we must be completely aware of a person to understand her pain.⁶⁵ He quotes Wittgenstein's remark that when comforting a person in pain, we do not look at where the pain is, but into her face,⁶⁶ that we cannot separate our sympathy from our understanding of the person for whom we feel it.⁶⁷ Indeed, sympathy applies to something, it cannot be felt without an object. Vice versa, the object must be able to evoke sympathy in us, which means that it is an object *worthy* of sympathy, which has its own reality, whose pain has as full of a meaning as ours, and we understand it as such. If one comprehends the Nun as a symbol of value and reflects on the example, her awareness of other people will change to the better. To be fully aware of persons is an attainable requirement, and one which will improve the moral dimension of our lives.

⁶⁵ GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 276

⁶⁶ WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. cit. podle GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 263

⁶⁷ WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. cit. podle GAITA, Raimond A. ref. 2, s. 267

4 WOLF'S MORAL SAINTS

4.1 Peak of Morality

In her article *Moral Saints*, Susan Wolf introduces a different conception of moral saints than Gaita's. She uses the concept of a saint to argue against moral theories which preach a strong commitment to morality, so she comes to criticize the saint later. In her understanding, a moral saint would be a person whose actions would be as moral as they could be. The life of such a saint would revolve around making the conditions of individuals and society better.⁶⁸ There are various just as morally worthy projects, so there can be saints of various characters to pursue them.⁶⁹ However, all the saints would share certain character traits – those which make them as kind and just to other people as possible. The saint must have and improve these qualities.⁷⁰ She is supposed to have an extraordinary level of all the ordinary moral virtues. Wolf writes that she should be, among other traits, extraordinarily patient, considerate, even-tempered and reluctant to make negative judgements about someone. Moreover, she should not only avoid discrimination – she should be attentive to not even have any preferences for people.⁷¹ The desire for morality would be a desire supreme to all others, so it becomes not only the ultimate devotion of the saint's life, but also her duty.⁷²

4.2 The Loving Saint: A Being Like No Other

Wolf distinguishes between two types of saints – the first one is a saint out of love, also called the Loving Saint. The Loving Saint's happiness relies on the happiness of others. Wolf describes that her care for them has the same value which we see in things that make us happy, albeit these are usually less moral. Her devotion to morality would then be glad⁷³ and incidental, because she would gravitate towards it whenever pursuing her happiness. While she would behave as morally well as possible, she would not be acting morally for the sake of

⁶⁸ WOLF, Susan. *Moral Saints*. *The Journal of Philosophy*. 1982, vol. 79, no. 8, s. 419-439. ISSN 0022-362X. s. 420

⁶⁹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁷⁰ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁷¹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁷² WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁷³ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 420

morality, because she would be following her positive emotions instead. Her actions would not be considered morally worthy in either virtue ethics or Kantian ethics.

Wolf argues that since the Loving Saint would love the happiness of others and pursue it through morality as much as to sacrifice anything for its sake, her love for everything else must be diminished. Wolf believes that the Loving Saint is missing out on the kind of joy we experience from non-moral pursuits, that she is “*blind to some of what the world has to offer*”.⁷⁴

4.3 The Rational Saint: A Martyr

The second type of Wolf’s moral saint is a saint out of duty, also called the Rational Saint. This saint dismisses her personal happiness because she considers morality to be more important. She sacrifices all her personal interests to the service for others, and she can feel the pain of this sacrifice.⁷⁵ Unlike the Loving Saint, the Rational Saint could have very strong non-moral desires, but she does not allow herself to pursue them. In this sense, the Rational Saint could be pathologically scared of damnation, or hate herself so much that she denies herself everything she finds enjoyable.⁷⁶ The Rational Saint’s most extreme version would be a person whose personal interests are completely opposed to the moral acts she carries out. This person’s beneficence from duty, executed despite opposed inclinations would be considered an act of true moral worth in Kantian ethics.⁷⁷

4.4 The Saint’s Barren Character

The saint’s extreme moral motivations would affect her character, because she must be as kind and just to others as possible.⁷⁸ Wolf believes the saintly character to be lacking. She argues that having all the moral virtues pushed to extremity would mean that these virtues would occupy the place for non-moral virtues, interests and traits which we believe a well-developed character should have.⁷⁹ While none of the hobbies and preferences are needed for

⁷⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁷⁵ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 420

⁷⁶ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁷⁷ KANT, Immanuel. *Grounding for the metaphysics of morals: with on a supposed right to lie because of philanthropic concerns*. Third edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993. ISBN 0-87220-167-8. s. 11

⁷⁸ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁷⁹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

a good life, a life in which there are none is, to Wolf, “*strangely barren*”.⁸⁰ An individual character consists of distinct projects and traits, not only of those affirmed by the pursuit of morality as a supreme value. The saint’s life and character would seem empty and indistinct, which is a reason to not want to be a moral saint.

Moreover, in this sense there are even certain traits, compatible with what we consider a good – or even admirable – character, which require a non-moral outlook.⁸¹ These would not be attainable for the saint. Wolf uses sarcastic sense of humour as an example, because it requires feeling resigned and pessimistic about the problems in the world.⁸² The moral saint should, on the other hand, always pay attention to people’s best qualities and try to improve any bad situation, retaining her positive attitude.⁸³ The saint also would not be able to have interests which can be justified only if they are not judged against more moral possibilities.⁸⁴ She would not be able to enjoy haute cuisine, because there would not be any justification for the invested time and energy which could be used for more worthy pursuits. Wolf is worried that the group of unjustifiable interests could encompass even the finer arts.⁸⁵ In the attempt to be very nice and to not offend anybody, the moral saint would also be humourless.⁸⁶ The saint would not only lack a personal, distinct character, but some of the moral limits on her traits or interests contradict the notion of what we admire in people.

4.5 Moral Obsession and Non-Moral Excellence

Wolf believes we look up to those who are not just morally good.⁸⁷ Since there are also non-moral characteristics we find admirable, our ideal may differ from the moral saint. An admirable person’s character is well-rounded and we can find it attractive if her moral devotion goes in hand with non-moral personal projects and character traits.⁸⁸ Wolf writes that we choose our ideals to be those who are well-achieved in their personal projects, and there is a moral tone to their lives. Or, if our ideals are truly dedicated to morality, we want them to

⁸⁰ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁸¹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

⁸² WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸³ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸⁵ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸⁶ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸⁷ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

⁸⁸ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 423

have some characteristics or interests which are less moral.⁸⁹ In this spirit, we prefer if those who pursue morality are, for example, tactless, blunt, opinionated, mischievous and ironic to those who are innocent, kind and loving without any discrimination.⁹⁰ Wolf concludes that we can only tolerate a certain amount of morality.

The limit for morality must be different than our limit for other values, because the dedication to morality as a value is different to other dedications. While a person devoted to one personal project will simply not have a well-rounded character, the life of a person dedicated to morality will be dominated by it in a fanatic way.⁹¹ All personal interests or non-moral character traits would be deleted or suppressed in the saint, so to Wolf, there is a “*lack or denial of the existence of an identifiable, personal self*”.⁹² The saint would not have a distinct identity, instead, she would be a “*moral fanatic*”.⁹³

This is because if one is devoted to a personal project, her devotion makes her sacrifice the opportunity to entertain some other possible projects.⁹⁴ However, the desire to be as moral as possible would not just be a stronger value among others. Morality would have a higher value, showing all the non-moral pursuits as less worthy precisely because they do not contribute to morality in the same way that the direct pursuit of it does. It would, in this way, degrade all the other values. This desire would then not be an option among others, but it would become a must.⁹⁵ The general desire for morality without any specific pursuit is odd if it is meant to be a goal in the same manner any concrete, personal or even moral goal is. To just be as moral as possible, without a specific goal, is an unfitting desire, one about which we cannot imagine someone being passionate.⁹⁶

Even though Wolf shows the ideal of the moral saint as unattractive, she admits that there could be a backstory to any non-moral characteristic or interests in the saint’s character. However, all of these traits would then be “*happy accidents*”⁹⁷ in the saint’s life and there would not be an option to support them as something which we consider good or admirable. The fact that it would not be possible to embrace these qualities is by itself a discouragement from

⁸⁹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 423

⁹⁰ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 423

⁹¹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 423

⁹² WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁹³ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 425

⁹⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁹⁵ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁹⁶ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

⁹⁷ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 425

sainthood.⁹⁸ This does not only stem from the fact that we do not want to criticize ourselves and give up the personal projects to which we are attached. As has been described above, some of the qualities the saint lacks are qualities which we consider good and which we should like. We encourage developing what Wolf calls “*any of a great variety of forms of personal excellence*”,⁹⁹ because we believe it is good for people to strive for them – at least as much, if not more, than striving for moral excellence. These impressive non-moral virtues¹⁰⁰ make a compelling case for being pursued, and the ideal they imply is healthier and more attractive than the moral saint.

Although Wolf praises non-moral excellence, she does not think that there should be a limit to how moral can we be, because it would mean dismissing the fact that it is good to be more beneficent to others than is required. Wolf believes that if a moral theory lacks an ideal of a supremely moral figure, it limits our options to do moral good and earn moral appraisal.¹⁰¹ Although she argues that they are not a good ideal to aspire to, she admits that moral saints would be admirable people.¹⁰² Wolf wants to redefine this moral ideal. Instead of the moral saint as she described her, she wants to point the ideal toward an unspecified moral personality, which realizes some form of human good with her pursuits. Since there are many ways of realizing human good, there would be many character traits such personality could have.¹⁰³ These traits should be embraced because they are good and they lead to personal excellence. They should not be considered moral, because they are not to be pursued for their goodness.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 426

⁹⁹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 426

¹⁰⁰ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 426

¹⁰¹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 433

¹⁰² WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 432

¹⁰³ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 434

¹⁰⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 434

5 SHOULD WE ALL BE LOVING SAINTS?

5.1 Can We Become Loving Saints?

All of the comments about the unattainability of Revelatory Sainthood apply to the Loving Saint as well. The Loving Saint feels happy when pursuing the happiness of others – but we cannot force ourselves to feel cause-specific happiness, just as we cannot force ourselves to love. Moreover, Bernard Williams, who challenges the supreme status of morality which can be imposed on our lives, claims that morality is not a natural disposition of every rational being.¹⁰⁵ Although a world in which everyone would be inclined to morality seems attractive because of its fairness,¹⁰⁶ this is not the world in which we live. The Loving Saint has a natural disposition which cannot be replicated, because it consists of not only feeling happy when others do – many people can feel that way – but also not taking pleasure in things which are done simply for one’s own sake, which can occur if one bakes a good cake or goes to see an enjoyable theatre play.

However, just as with the Revelatory Saint, this type of sainthood is something which can happen *to* us. We may be born with the inability to feel happiness from our own pursuits, only relying on the happiness of others – our goal would then be to maximize it. Possibly, this inability to feel happiness from our own pursuits could also be a result of some very traumatic event.

Wolf believes that moral saints as she defined them would still be admirable people.¹⁰⁷ In order to prove that this understanding of morality and of whom we should admire is wrong, I will attempt a justification of the concept.

¹⁰⁵ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 116

¹⁰⁶ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 116

¹⁰⁷ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 432

6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE LOVING SAINT

6.1 Moral Actions and Moral Manner

When judging the Loving Saint, I will appeal to the manner of her actions. Wolf herself has not gone this far, only commenting on how the results of her actions may make her feel happy, but never on what emotional tone and manner the action itself may carry. This appeal will serve to bridge the gap between Wolf and Gaita as much as possible to enable a comparison which would show whether the Loving Saint truly is a moral character.

I will show that the moral actions which the Loving Saint executes are not enough, because the manner in which she executes them is not true to the actions. They could have immense value when done for the right reasons and values. Instead, the Loving Saint does good with only a superficial understanding of what she is doing, and her emotions do not befit her actions. In this way, her – albeit moral – actions do not have enough value to be admirable. Unlike the Revelatory Saint, the example of the Loving Saint would not improve the moral quality of our lives in any way.

6.2 The Immorality in Impartiality

Elizabeth Drummond-Young claims that the power of the Revelatory Saint is in the fact that her love is not truly impartial, but that she treats the afflicted with partial love, as if she had a relationship with each of them.¹⁰⁸ This individual attention makes her behaviour impressive. The Loving Saint, however, is incapable of partial love. Wolf writes that she would be very careful to not discriminate against anyone,¹⁰⁹ and it is the happiness of people what makes her happy, not the happiness of a particular person. So people's happiness is her goal, but she will not feel happier or more fulfilled when bringing about the happiness of someone specific. For this reason we can say that the Loving Saint cannot love people, only happiness itself.

The essence of partial love is that we care for certain people in ways in which we do not care for others. The Revelatory Saint manages to care in this way for all people. In contrast,

¹⁰⁸ DRUMMOND YOUNG, Elizabeth. Defending Gaita's example of saintly behaviour. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. 2012, vol. 15, no. 2, s. 191-202. ISSN 1386-2820. s. 199

¹⁰⁹ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 421

the Loving Saint cannot live up to this, because she cannot care in a loving way for anyone. Since she is happy when she accomplishes the happiness of any random person, she does not know the happiness which one feels when she makes her beloved happy. The Loving Saint is missing out on the depths of emotion which we can feel for people, and this makes loving care impossible for her.

She cannot act in anyone's interest, only hers. The Loving Saint is only capable of caring for someone and acting for her if it makes her happy. She would have to calculate whether her actions would bring more happiness or less when asked for some uncomfortable favours we ask of real friends – such as to take our ill pet for a lethal injection. Such requirement is asked out of genuine trust and friendship, out of the belief that the friend has our best interest in mind and is willing to cause us necessary pain if we cannot bring ourselves to do it. The Loving Saint would not be able to capture the value and weight of such favour, and instead, she would wonder whether it would maximize the “friend's” joy.

In the sense of Michael Stocker, if one wants to reach personal pleasure by caring for someone or by attempting to make her happy, she does not act for her.¹¹⁰ So even if the Loving Saint spends her whole life taking care of orphaned children, her pursuit is strangely hedonistic, since her behaviour lacks the essence of loving care for the children's sake. Although her behaviour might reach admirable ends separate from the emotional impact, the only part which she will find fulfilling is the happiness it has caused her. She lacks the emotional attachments to people which would actually enlarge the moral merit of her behaviour. For Stocker, a morality like this, one which does not “*value the beloved*”¹¹¹ is flawed.

Stocker gives a striking example of an agent who is motivated by morality, but because of it, his action actually loses moral value: “*..suppose you are in a hospital, recovering from a long illness. You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine fellow and a real friend – taking so much time to cheer you up, traveling all the way across town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be best. You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not essentially because of you that he*

¹¹⁰ STOCKER, Michael. The schizophrenia of modern ethical theories. *Journal of Philosophy*. 1976, vol. 73, no. 14, s. 453-466. ISSN 0022-362X. s. 456

¹¹¹ STOCKER, Michael. ref. 110, s. 459

*came to see you, not because you are friends, but because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows of no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up. Surely there is something lacking here – and lacking in moral merit or value.”*¹¹²

In a fashion similar to this example, the Loving Saint would come to the hospital to cheer up the patient simply because making the patient happy would make her happy. In fact, she could visit all the patients in the ward that day, but without implying a stronger meaning than happiness-seeking to any of her visits. If people are no more than tools for gaining happiness to the Loving Saint, there is nothing to admire about her.

Similarly, Philippa Foot claims that a wise man not only knows how to take good care of his children, but he also wants to do it.¹¹³ What I believe she means is that the father wants to take good care of them because he loves them, and therefore has their interest in mind. Love is what gives the moral wisdom to his behaviour, and it is something the Loving Saint would never comprehend. The lack of such a deep part of what makes our lives worth living means that the Loving Saint cannot be an admirable person.

¹¹² STOCKER, Michael. ref. 110, s. 462

¹¹³ FOOT, Philippa. *Virtues and vices and other essays in moral philosophy*. [Second edition.] New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-19-925285-8. s. 6

7 SHOULD WE ALL BE RATIONAL SAINTS?

7.1 Can We Become Rational Saints?

The cost of trying to behave as morally well as possible would be high. The amount of sacrificed happiness which would otherwise come from the pursuit of personal projects depends on the relation between these personal projects and morality. If one is a doctor whose biggest personal interest is medicine, she can easily pursue morality as a supreme value within that interest with lesser sacrifice than a person whose major interest in life is swimming. Although Wolf admits that any non-moral interest could function, with a proper backstory, as a part of the moral pursuit of the Rational Saint, the development of this interest would be merely a “*happy accident*”.¹¹⁴ This changes the relation of the agent and the interest, since swimming would not be done solely because one finds fulfilment in it, but because of its potential moral merit. Similarly, unless the doctor loves medicine only because she gets to help people, even her relation to her moral interest changes when she decides to become a saint.

However, there is a bigger concern with becoming a Rational Saint than the cost, and that is that even if we sacrifice all of our personal happiness in the pursuit of morality, we will not be saintly. One can imagine the psychiatrists from the Nun’s example doing everything they could for the afflicted. This would still not be enough, because one moral requirement would still be missing – the manner of behaviour to the afflicted which they deserved. A morality based on actions cannot have a saint, because since the manner of treatment is missing in this morality, the saintly figure would be missing it, too. In this sense, Wolf’s understanding of morality is impoverished. We can try to rationally behave as morally well as possible, but it will not make us Rational Saints – a character like this would never truly be saintly.

¹¹⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 425

8 THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE RATIONAL SAINT

8.1 A Well-Oiled Moral Machine

If the Rational Saint were an example for us, it would show a person who does all the moral actions. She would have an impressive record of moral accomplishments behind her, and she would spend all of her time accomplishing more. This example would resemble a robot more than a human – but in the strictly action-based understanding of morality, she would be superior to all of us.

In this justification of her as an example, I will show why this example would not be beneficial to us, and why this understanding of morality is not beneficial to us, either. Some of the points about the manner of actions which were already brought up in the justification of the Loving Saint will be applied as well.

8.2 The Case Against Morality

The Rational Saint might hate herself or be scared of damnation,¹¹⁵ but Bernard Williams offers one more motivation there might be for pursuing morality – the belief that it can render us immune to luck and to regrets stemming from bad decisions. If there were another version of the Rational Saint, one whose life would revolve around this belief and around the fear of bad choices, we should not aspire to be her, because Williams proves that this belief is false. We can regret things for which we are not rationally responsible, such as hitting a child who has jumped in front of our vehicle.¹¹⁶ Moreover, even non-moral behaviour can have good consequences and we might not regret it. Williams makes a compelling case by using a French painter, Gauguin, who he has fictionalized as once having to decide whether to support his family or leave them to pursue his talent, and deciding to leave them.¹¹⁷ Williams claims that Gauguin's artistic success would give us a reason to be glad that he did not respect morality, and that it is not universally respected.¹¹⁸ Great artwork, among many other contributions to which we attribute value can come out of non-moral decisions, and while this does

¹¹⁵ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 424

¹¹⁶ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 124-125

¹¹⁷ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 117-118

¹¹⁸ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 118

not necessarily mean that we should aspire to be like the people who do not respect morality in their decisions, we can certainly admire them and their contributions.

However, if Gauguin perceived his moral dilemma as such, there would be no moral justification for his actions in advance.¹¹⁹ Moreover, even the justification after Gauguin's success – the good coming from it – cannot impress those who have suffered because of his decision. Williams admits that there is a *moral cost* to a decision like Gauguin's, and the wronged party can decide herself how much she will agree with the justifying outlook.¹²⁰ But even if someone was wronged, Williams claims that the good of Gauguin's success is a reason for the spectator to be glad that he chose the non-moral thing to do.¹²¹

Applied to the Rational Saint, this would mean that if the saint pursues morality to avoid decisions she might regret, she might not execute a personal project she would have been glad to have accomplished, even if it would have come with a cost. Such a project could have even been considered generally good or admirable, like Gauguin's. If we took the Rational Saint as an example and tried to live like her, it would result in regrets of not realizing our passions, of not living fully. In Williams's sense, our projects can be a driving force, a reason for living our lives.¹²² He believes that there would be no place for our personal lives if all of our reasoning was moral. Limiting morality means affirming a place for our personal projects.¹²³

8.3 In the World of Rational Saints

In a world occupied by Rational Saints, the non-moral things we generally consider good, as Wolf understands for example a sense of humour or the finer arts¹²⁴ would cease to exist. Moreover, even if the finer arts were deemed morally good and their pursuit supported, the difference in our relation to them – that they are to be pursued because they are morally good, not for their own sake – would make them lose the meaning which they have in our lives.

The final argument against the Rational Saint as a moral example is that the world of Rational Saints would be a world of disconnected people. As was shown earlier, they would not discriminate against anyone, making friendships and love impossible, so they would be lack-

¹¹⁹ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 119

¹²⁰ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. *Moral luck: philosophical papers 1973–1980*. [First edition.] [Cambridge]: Cambridge University Press, 1981. [ISBN 0521243726]. s. 37

¹²¹ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. a Thomas NAGEL. ref. 1, s. 133

¹²² WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. ref. 120, s. 14-15

¹²³ WILLIAMS, Bernard A. O. ref. 120, s. 38

¹²⁴ WOLF, Susan. ref. 68, s. 422

ing all of the moral value which they may have. Just as with the Loving Saint, if it were the Rational Saint visiting someone in the hospital, as Stocker's example suggests, the visited person would not be her friend, and she would not be visited out of friendship. Furthermore, there would be no place for the Revelatory Saint and her revelation in such a world. The Rational Saints would behave as respectfully as the moral duty would order them, but they would not see the recipients of their behaviour beyond the duty. The value of the impartially partial love of the Revelatory Saint, of what Drummond Young brilliantly explained as behaving and seeing herself as though she were in a special relationship with the afflicted,¹²⁵ would not be seen in a world where special relationships do not exist, so their special value cannot be comprehended. The same would be true for the previously criticized Loving Saints, but it has a striking consequence for the Rational Saints. The corresponding understanding of why we even have moral obligations towards people would be missing, which means that all of the Rational Saints' moral duties would not even have a rational basis.

¹²⁵ DRUMMOND YOUNG, Elizabeth. ref. 108, s. 199

CONCLUSION

Three notions of a moral saint were exposed in this thesis, one by Raimond Gaita and two by Susan Wolf. The Revelatory Saint and the Loving Saint were shown as concepts unattainable by will, because the emotions and quality of emotions on which these definitions rely cannot be forced. The Rational Saint was shown as a concept faulty in itself because her action-based morality would not lead to something perceivable as sainthood.

A similar argument was carefully unfolded in the justification of the Loving Saint when she was shown as an unsuitable and not admirable moral example. The Rational Saint was proven to be unfitting in her justification, too. The Revelatory Saint was, however, justified as a good example, because the reflection on it can improve the moral quality of our lives.

The conception of morality as the execution of moral actions was proven to be weak. The example of the Revelatory Saint has shown exactly what consequences a moral manner of behaviour can have, and how a conception of morality concerned with manner shows the value of the recipients of moral actions, and therefore explains why moral actions toward them are even obligatory or commendable.

Overall, the thesis answered not only the question whether we should become moral saints, but whether there is something to take from their examples – and how the examples themselves show that the “morality” of the moral saints might not be always commendable or admirable.

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