CARING FOR THEIR COMMUNITY:
STUDY OF MORAL EXEMPLARS IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

by

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Abstract

In response to the overemphasis on cognition in understanding the moral domain, this study attempted to draw attention to the contribution personality can make. To do this, people affiliated with health, social and religious organizations were contacted and asked to nominate young adults whom they considered to be moral exemplars. Forty nominated moral exemplars participated in the study, along with forty comparison individuals who were matched to the exemplar group on age, gender, years of education, and ethnicity. Each person was given a battery of questionnaires, as well as participated in a life narrative interview. It was found that, in contrast to the comparison group, moral exemplars possessed a different personality disposition with these individuals rating themselves higher on the trait dimension of Agreeableness. On development-related measures, moral exemplars were found to be more mature in their thinking as reflected in higher scores on Faith Development and Moral Reasoning. As well, moral exemplars were further along in their identity formation as revealed in lower scores on Identity Diffusion. Within the stories regarding their life’s high points, more agentic themes were found in those stories coming from moral exemplars. However, when it came to managing their everyday projects, moral exemplars were more disorganized. These diverse findings are discussed in reference to the contributions they make to the formation of a moral identity in the early adult years.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ...................................................................................................................................................... ii

List of Tables................................................................................................................................................ vii

List of Figures ................................................................................................................................................. ix

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................................... x

CHAPTER I  From World War II to the Year 2000 – A Moral Quest ......................................................... 1

1.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 1
1.2 Kohlberg's Theory ....................................................................................................................................... 5
1.3 Personality .................................................................................................................................................. 8
1.4 Moral Personality ....................................................................................................................................... 11
1.5 Moral Exemplars ....................................................................................................................................... 15
    1.5.1 Broad Goals ........................................................................................................................................ 15
    1.5.2 Past Research ..................................................................................................................................... 16
    1.5.3 Gender ................................................................................................................................................ 18
    1.5.4 Specific Purposes ............................................................................................................................... 19
1.6 Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 22

CHAPTER II  Method ......................................................................................................................................... 23

2.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 23
2.2 Search for Moral Exemplars ....................................................................................................................... 23
2.3 Participants ............................................................................................................................................... 30
2.4 Procedure .................................................................................................................................................. 34
    2.4.1 Measures Overview .......................................................................................................................... 34
2.5 Demographics ........................................................................................................................................... 38
2.6 Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 41

CHAPTER III  Personality Traits ................................................................................................................ 43

3.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 43
3.2 Altruism and Volunteerism ....................................................................................................................... 45
3.3 Moral Exemplars ....................................................................................................................................... 46
3.4 Predictions ............................................................................................................................................... 49
3.5 Method .................................................................................................................................................... 50
3.6 Results ..................................................................................................................................................... 52
    3.6.1 NEO PI-R .......................................................................................................................................... 52
    3.6.2 Nomination Forms ............................................................................................................................ 56
3.7 Discussion .............................................................................................................................................. 58
3.8 Summary ............................................................................................................................................... 61
12.3 Gender .............................................................................................................. 190
12.4 Limitations ...................................................................................................... 191
   12.4.1 Sample ..................................................................................................... 191
   12.4.2 Procedure .............................................................................................. 194
   12.4.3 Results ................................................................................................. 194
12.5 Future Directions ........................................................................................... 196
   12.5.1 Current Study ........................................................................................ 196
   12.5.2 Moral Identity ....................................................................................... 196
   12.5.3 Types of Moral Exemplars ................................................................. 197
   12.5.4 Situational Effects ............................................................................... 198
   12.5.5 Transmission of Virtues ..................................................................... 198
   12.5.6 Future Goals ......................................................................................... 199
12.6 Final Remarks ................................................................................................ 201

References ............................................................................................................. 202

Appendix A Information Letter to Agencies ......................................................... 223
Appendix B Nomination Form .............................................................................. 224
Appendix C Consent Form .................................................................................... 225
Appendix D Revised NEO Personality Inventory .............................................. 226
Appendix E Personal Project Analysis .................................................................. 233
Appendix F Objective Measure of Ego Identity .................................................. 239
Appendix G McAdams’ Life Narrative Interview Protocol ................................ 245
Appendix H Themes of Agency and Communion .............................................. 249
Appendix I Ego Processes .................................................................................... 251
Appendix J NEO PI-R Facet Scales ..................................................................... 254
List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Moral Exemplars drawn from Agencies .................................. 33
Table 2. Demographic Information .............................................................................. 40
Table 3. Mean T-scores on the Five Trait Dimensions ................................................. 54
Table 4. Mean T-scores on the Facets of Agreeableness .............................................. 55
Table 5. Most Frequent Attributes Illustrating Each of the Big-Five
Personality Factors ................................................................................................. 57
Table 6. Mean Scores for Cross-Impact Matrix, Positive Impact, and
Negative Impact ...................................................................................................... 73
Table 7. Mean Factor Scores ......................................................................................... 76
Table 8. Personal Project Content Categories (Percent Composition) ......................... 79
Table 9. Personal Project Category Frequencies ......................................................... 80
Table 10. Mean Project Meaning Scores across Content Categories ......................... 83
Table 11. Mean Structure Scores across Content Categories ....................................... 85
Table 12. Mean Positive Impact Scores across Content Categories ........................... 86
Table 13. Ego Function Scores by Gender .................................................................... 99
Table 14. Mean Identity Status Scores .......................................................................... 111
Table 15. Identity Status Category Frequencies including Low Profile Moratorium ... 115
Table 16. Identity Status Category Frequencies excluding Low Profile Moratorium ... 116
Table 17. Group Frequencies for Preconventional and Conventional
Moral Reasoning Level Categories ........................................................................... 126
Table 18. Frequencies of Agency and Communion Themes for
Peak Experiences ...................................................................................................... 150
Table 19. Frequencies of Agency and Communion Themes for Turning Point Experiences .................................................. 151

Table 20. Correlation Matrix of Variables that Produced Group Effects ...................... 160

Table 21. Group Classification based on the Discriminant Function ......................... 163
List of Figures

Figure 1. Model of Moral Identity: Influence of Personality, Social Influences, Moral Judgment and Social Attitudes, Self, and Opportunity on Moral Identity .......................................................... 14

Figure 2. Mean Number of Attributes Reflecting each of the Big-Five Personality Factors .......................................................................................................................................................... 57

Figure 3. Distribution of Participants according to Stage of Moral Reasoning .......... 126

Figure 4. Revised Model of Moral Identity: Influence of Personality, Social Influence, Moral Judgment and Faith Development, Self, Opportunity, and Personal Projects on Moral Identity ................................................. 188
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CHAPTER I. From World War II to the Year 2000 – A Moral Quest

I refuse to accept the idea that the ‘is-ness’ of our present nature makes us morally incapable of reaching up for the ‘ought-ness’ that forever confronts us.

~ Martin Luther King

1.1 Introduction

As a new millennium dawns, we awake to a world being swept away in a modern day industrial revolution. Never before has the world witnessed so many advances in so many areas, all beneficiaries of this revolution. Within the span of 50 years, computers have become one hundred million times more powerful than before, and yet can be purchased for the same unit cost (Kurzweil, 1999). And with this advance in technology have come major changes in the industrialized countries. There have been vast improvements in areas such as biomedical research, entertainment, and communications. We are quickly becoming a global village of individuals living longer than at any point in our history. In the financial districts, we can now distinguish between old economy and new economy stocks, the latter being comprised of “high tech” companies. Yet while we laud ourselves for our numerous successes over the last century, there were many events that cause us to lower our heads in abject shame (see Postman, 1999).

World War II was one of the darkest periods in our history. Never before have so many people been killed and the world so pervasively impacted. The cost of the physical destruction is estimated to have reached as high as $4 trillion dollars, with much of the damage occurring in Europe (Lyons, 1994). At least 17 million soldiers perished and
even more civilians. Yet more disturbing than the sheer numbers killed were the methods employed. The groups targeted for persecution included the Jews and Gypsies. This persecution was part of Hitler’s attempt to create a Germanic empire, which led to the emigration and then extermination of those classified as human trash in his New Order. Through death camps and special murder squads, the Nazis were able to exterminate close to six millions Jews before the close of the war. The attitude towards the Jews is exemplified in remarks made by Adolf Eichmann who oversaw the emigration and deportation of Jews. Years after the war he made these chilling comments:

I did not take on the job as a senseless exercise. It gave me uncommon joy. I found it fascinating to have to deal with these matters.... My job was to catch these enemies and transport them to their destination.... I lived in this stuff, otherwise I would have remained only an assistant, a cog, something soulless.... To be frank with you, had we killed all of them, the 10.3 million, I would be happy. (in Bauer, 1982, p. 207)

While initial rumors of the mass murder of Jews were met with skepticism during the early part of the war both inside and outside Nazi-occupied Europe, the full realization of what had taken place emerged after the war. Many were shocked and horrified that within the context of an enlightened world such heinous crimes towards humanity could occur. For some, the shock eventually gave way to a search for understanding both at a personal and a scholarly level. In the social sciences, a few researchers had the goal of understanding how this cataclysmic event could happen as an
underlying motive in their research pursuits. These included Stanley Milgram, Sam and Pearl Oliner, and Lawrence Kohlberg.

On the darker side of human nature, Milgram’s (1963) classic study on obedience was an attempt to understand how “normal” people could become active participants in creating the Holocaust. Milgram reasoned that Hitler’s inhumane policies towards the Jews could only have been implemented on such a massive scale if a large number of people were obeying orders. His interest in understanding this particular event led him to explore the phenomenon of obedience to authority, and to the startling finding that a majority of his research participants obeyed orders from an experimenter to deliver deadly, painful electric shocks to another person. Hence, Milgram’s study served to help explain how people can be led to perform actions they otherwise would not dream of doing.

On the brighter side of humanity, from within the evil of World War II were flickers of light that penetrated through the darkness. These flickers took the form of individuals risking their own lives to help hide Jews, and their stories are testimonies to the power of the human spirit to do good in the face of adversity. These so-called rescuers were the subjects of the Oliners’ (1988) study. Through in-depth interviews, the Oliners hoped to understand what led the rescuers to act directly against authority, risking the safety of their families to save the lives of strangers. Yet the Oliners’ efforts in identifying and explaining the behavior of such individuals transcend the Holocaust experience, for the Holocaust “points not only to the fragility of Jews but to the precariousness of any group that might have the misfortune of being arbitrarily persecuted” (p. xviii). Thus, for the Oliners, the ultimate goal of their research was to find
ways to cultivate moral excellence: "If we are to live in a world free from the threat of Holocaust, we will need to create it. If we can understand some of the attributes that distinguished rescuers from others perhaps we can deliberately cultivate them" (p. xviii).

Similarly, Kohlberg's (1981) work in the field of moral reasoning development was, in part, a reaction to Nazi Europe and the murder of millions of innocent Jews. He wrote: "The Holocaust is the event in human history that most bespeaks the need for moral education and for a philosophy that can guide it. My own interest in morality and moral education arose in part as a response to the Holocaust" (p. 407). Kohlberg’s academic pursuits led him to formulate a six-stage model of people’s moral reasoning development that has had a profound impact on moral psychology as well as moral education.

The works of Kohlberg, the Oliners, and Milgram were attempts to understand the horrific events of World War II, and ultimately to prevent them from happening again. Yet the research paths they have journeyed have led them to different places. This research project is more closely aligned with the Oliners’ study since its focus was on learning more about moral exemplars, people who have demonstrated extraordinary moral commitment. Specifically, its mandate was to reveal the kinds of behaviors these exemplars are known for, and the attributes that set them apart from others. Like Kohlberg and the Oliners, the ultimate goal was to identify specific variables unique to these individuals in order that they may be later cultivated in others. Thus, by doing so, it is hoped that the world could be made a better place as we embark upon a new millennium.
Before presenting the current research work, it is appropriate to step back and provide the psychological research context for this dissertation. In reality, this dissertation project was a reaction to Kohlberg’s work and those who have followed in his footsteps. Hence, it seems fitting to briefly explain Kohlberg’s psychological theory of moral reasoning development.

1.2 Kohlberg’s Theory

It was in the 1950s and ‘60s when Kohlberg’s research into moral reasoning took flight. This was during a time when behaviorism was big in its influence over psychological research and thought. In the area of moral psychology, social learning theory guided most of the research focusing on child-rearing approaches that fostered “the development of resistance to temptation, guilt, confession, reparation after deviation, and internalization of moral values” (Grusec & Lytton, 1988, pp. 333-334). Here, the primary concern for social learning theorists involved moral behavior.

Kohlberg’s work challenged the dominant view of the day by shifting the attention away from moral behavior and onto moral thought. Following the lead of Piaget (1932), whose work was just beginning to influence North American psychology at the time, Kohlberg argued that it is the individual who interprets situations, derives psychological and moral meaning from social events, and makes moral judgments. Thus, for Kohlberg, those in the field of moral psychology should be studying how people arrive at these moral judgments.

In his attempt to bring cognition to the fore, Kohlberg proposed a developmental model of moral reasoning. According to Kohlberg, people’s moral reasoning progresses through three levels, with two stages to each level. Each stage reflects a more
sophisticated form of reasoning. At the preconventional level, reasoning focuses around the self with concerns regarding physical punishment and obedience to authority (Stage 1), and on hedonistic consequences to the self (Stage 2). At the conventional level, the reasoning shifts away from a concern for self and onto concern for others within the context of interpersonal relationships (Stage 3), and in the maintenance of social order (Stage 4). Finally, at the postconventional level, the reasoning goes beyond societal order to focus on basic human rights and the social contracts that arise among individuals (Stage 5), and the upholding of universal ethical principles (Stage 6).

Stage 6 is the telos of Kohlberg’s model (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983). Here “right” is defined in accordance with abstract ethical principles of justice, reciprocity and equality of human rights, and respect for the dignity of human beings. The appeal to these universal ethical principles reflects Kohlberg’s reliance on the works of neo-Kantian philosophers such as Baier (1965) and Rawls (1971). Fundamental to these formalistic theories is their emphasis on rationality, impartiality, and objectivity when making moral judgments. At Stage 6, individuals should be able to provide universally valid forms of rational thought that will lead to consensus on any moral dilemma faced, independent of contextual conditions. This position is illustrated by Baier’s conception of the “moral point of view,” which is an abstracted position where one makes moral decisions as an impartial, objective, dispassionate, and disinterested observer. By taking such a perspective, the decisions reached are expected to be ones that everyone should abide by since it is in the interest of everyone.

With the decline of the Enlightenment enterprise, both philosophical and psychological theories originating from this tradition have come under increasing fire.
Critics in philosophy have charged Kantian theories as placing too much emphasis on impartial, rational thought at the expense of other factors. One example is the work of Williams (1981). In Kantian theories, moral actions are determined from an impartial, abstracted position where one must separate one's own biases and interests from entering into the decision-making process. For Williams (1981), however, there is no good reason why one should forego his or her personal interests and pursuits for the sake of following an objectively determined moral decision: Why should one sacrifice the things in which one is interested and invested in order to fulfill a moral prescription? In fact, to give up one's personal projects for the sake of moral duty would be unreasonable according to Williams.

Flanagan (1991) takes this argument a step further by claiming that Kantian theories not only make unrealistic demands, but they often make impossible demands. Who of us are able to be completely impartial and objectively rational at all times and in all situations when faced with moral dilemmas? Since no human being is capable of such a feat, Flanagan argues that Kantian theories are not very helpful to us because they presuppose a psychological condition no one is able to meet or sustain. Therefore, any viable moral theory needs to take into account a minimal sort of psychological realism. That is, a psychologically legitimate moral theory needs to prescribe behaviors that are in the realm of human possibility.

As in philosophy, a similar phenomenon is occurring in psychology with many psychologists being critical of Kohlberg's Kantian-based theory. While there is empirical support for Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning development (see Walker, 1988), much of the criticism relates to Kohlberg's narrow definition of the moral domain. These
individuals argue convincingly that there is more to morality than justice reasoning. For instance, Gilligan’s (1982) work on gender issues has been important in emphasizing the caring orientation to morality. In addition, Shweder’s (Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987) research highlights the importance of cultural concerns in studying issues of morality.

However, even the works of Gilligan and Shweder continue to focus on people’s reasoning capacity, which has been one of the main criticisms of Kohlberg’s model. Ironically, Kohlberg’s cognitive solution to social learning theorists’ emphasis on behavior has now become the problem with critics complaining that attention to moral behavior has been neglected. What has arisen is a chasm between moral thought and moral action both in philosophy and psychology. Walker and Hennig (1997) have dubbed this the gappiness of moral life, and explain that there is more contributing to moral action than cognition. Realizing this continual overemphasis on cognition, many researchers in the field have attempted to broaden the moral domain. Seeing the significance of emotions on morality, Hoffman (1991) has focused on the relationship between empathy and moral action as a way to close the gap. Another direction taken has been to link personality and morality (Walker & Hennig, 1997). This personality path is one this project followed. However, before pointing to where these links have been made between personality and morality, it may be prudent to provide a very broad overview of the personality domain.

1.3 Personality

The domain of personality psychology is a very broad area, and to do an adequate job in reviewing it would require volumes. However, there are a few fundamental areas
that need to be covered because of their importance to this research project. One of the major themes emerging within personality psychology relates to a structural distinction made by William James (1890). James proposed that the self could be understood in terms of the concepts “I” and “Me,” or “self-as-subject” and “self-as-object.” Here the “I” is considered the active observer, while the “Me” is defined as the object that is being observed by the “I.” Further, the “I” is considered to be more than a passive observer in that the “I” is responsible for constructing the “Me.” When the “I” is focusing attention on itself interacting in the world, it receives information. This information is collected and organized by the “I” to form different self-qualities. These qualities known about the self is what forms the “Me.”

In the personality literature, a substantial amount of the work has focused on the “self-as-object.” To help make sense of this work, McAdams (1995) proposed a three-level model of personality in which to organize the research. The levels are defined based on the influences time and context have on personality. At the most general, broad level is the research studying dispositional traits. These traits are dimensions of personality that are relatively stable over time and over a broad array of social contexts. Examples of trait researchers include Buss (1989), Costa and McCrae (1992), Digman (1990), and Goldberg (1993). The second level has been referred to as personal concerns (McAdams, 1995), or middle level units (Cantor, 1990). The primary difference between personal concerns and dispositional traits is that the former takes into account the influence time, place, and/or role can have on the person. Examples of research at this level include motives (McClelland, 1961), values (Rokeach, 1973), defense mechanisms (Cramer, 1991), coping styles (Lazarus, 1991), developmental issues and concerns (Erikson, 1963;
Havighurst, 1972), personal strivings (Emmons, 1986), personal projects (Little, 1989), current concerns (Klinger, 1977), life tasks (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987), and attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Finally, at the third level, McAdams proposes that to know someone's unique identity is to know someone's life story: "Without exploring this third level, the personologist can never understand how and to what extent the person is able to find unity, purpose, and meaning in life" (McAdams, 1995, p. 382). At this level, understanding a person requires understanding the contexts in which he or she is embedded. Examples of personologists taking a narrative approach include Barresi and Jukes (1997), Gregg (1995), and Nasby and Read (1997). Together, these three levels provide a heuristic in which to organize the personality literature.

Much of the research mentioned above focuses on the "Me" side of the self. Yet there is a substantial body of research investigating the "I" side of the self. For McAdams (1998), "I" is associated with the "Ego," and functions as a synthesizer of subjective experiences: It is what puts all the "Me" components together to form a united self. As well, the "I" is what confers purpose on the "Me" by creating an evolving life story, and integrating the different parts of the "Me" into a coherent narrative. In social psychology, the work on self-schemata (Markus & Sentis, 1992) and self-theories (Epstein, 1973) are often associated with both the "I" and "Me" since they involve processes that serve to gather and organize knowledge about the self. However, these organizational structures themselves become characteristics of the self (Blasi, 1988; McAdams, 1998). Other research programs that study the "I" include ego development (Loevinger, 1976), ego functioning (Haan, 1977), and self-understanding (Damon & Hart, 1988).
While there are many ways to categorize the research in the personality field, the I/Me division is useful in make sense of this expansive research area. Through the use of these categories, it is hoped that the research to be presented will be more easily assimilated. However, it should be made clear that this division is artificial, and only serves the purpose of helping to simplify something that is rather complex. In reality, the self is a complicated, dynamic whole structure that is constantly negotiating time and space. Furthermore, when one empirically studies the different facets of the self, inevitably one is dividing the self. And when one divides the self, some may fear that one is destroying the self. Yet to understand the whole, at times, requires understanding the parts that make up the whole. Thus, the challenge for researchers in the field of personality research is to be able to study the many parts of the self while not losing sight of the whole. This challenge applies to those in the moral field who are attempting to build bridges between personality and morality, one direction this field is actively pursuing in the post-Kohlberg era.

1.4 Moral Personality

Recently there have been two theorists who have offered conceptual models of the variables that influence moral personality, Blasi (1995) and Hart (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1999). From a more abstract, broad, theoretical perspective, Blasi conceives of moral personality development as a series of integrations. First, the development of a mature moral identity requires the integration of moral knowledge into one’s self-concept. This is demonstrated by the moral-related terms used to describe the core aspect of the self. Second, there is the integration of moral knowledge with existing motives so that in time, moral knowledge will acquire its own motivational power. Third, there is the integration
of the "agentic system" with moral knowledge and motivation. That is, it is not sufficient that one defines oneself in moral terms, but that one also is motivated to act in moral ways, and that this will-to-act is part of who one is. Blasi writes:

This system can be thought of as a complex organization of skills and attitudes, including the capacity to translate desires into intentions, to focus one's attention on the goal and away from distracting objects and ideas, to inhibit and control contrary impulses and to delay gratification, to create time-ordered plans and to persist on one's tasks.

(1995, p. 239)

There are a number of research programs that illustrate, in a limited way, an agentic system in action. Mischel's (1981) impulse control and Poulin-Dubois and Shultz's (1988) resistance to temptation are examples. However, there have been no studies that capture how an agentic system may work on a larger scale as laid out by Blasi (1995).

A second model of moral personality formation comes from Hart, Atkins, and Ford (1999) who identified predictors of moral identity (see Figure 1). The more stable sets of characteristics are personality and social influences. These variables are believed to be less affected by environmental factors. Moreover, these variables can have both a direct and indirect effect on moral identity. For instance, personality can impact moral identity directly, or can influence moral judgments, the self-concept construction, and social opportunities available, which in turn can have direct effects on moral identity. Likewise, social variables such as social class, family, and culture can influence moral
identity directly or through moral judgment and social attitudes, the self, and opportunity variables. Moreover, to substantiate their model, Hart et al. cite numerous studies illustrating the personality and social influences on moral identity. For example, Hart, Keller, Edelstein, and Hofmann (1998) reported a positive relationship between ego-resiliency and moral-judgment. As well, Hart and Fegley (1995) have shown a relationship between people’s self-conception and moral identity.

Hence, the work of Hart et al. (1999), along with Blasi (1995), has been crucial in building both a conceptual and an empirical bridge between personality and moral psychology. Yet there is still further work to be done in the field of moral psychology that research in personality can help to inform. This dissertation project studying the personality of moral exemplars was designed to add to the existing knowledge regarding the connection between personality and morality.

1 Hart et al. define personality as “traits that characterize an individual’s typical style of behaving, thinking and feeling” (p. 377).
Figure 1. Model of moral identity: Influence of personality, social influences, moral judgment and social attitudes, self, and opportunity on moral identity.

Personality
   Sympathy
   Reliability
   Generativity

Moral Judgment
   Social Attitudes

Self
   Exploration
   Moral evaluation
   Salient ideals
   Commitment to ideals

Opportunity
   Institutions
   Relationships
   Efficacy

Moral Identity

Social Influences
   Family
   Culture
   Structure

Individual
Resilience

Community
Social Capital

1.5 Moral Exemplars

1.5.1 Broad Goals

This dissertation project placed its spotlight on moral exemplars, people who have shown extraordinary moral commitment. The reasons for the interest in these particular individuals were three-fold: First, the hallmark of moral exemplars is the good works these individuals perform that have beneficial effects on society. Consider Mother Teresa who devoted her life to caring for the poor in the slums of Calcutta, or Mahatma Gandhi whose pacifist stance liberated a nation. Few would question the significant impact they had, and still have, in changing the lives of millions, and inspiring additional millions to action. Even on a local scale there are moral exemplars making a positive difference in the lives of those in their community. One goal of this study is to identify the different ways moral exemplars are contributing to the betterment of their world.

Second, if moral exemplars are contributing to society in positive ways as believed, what is it about these individuals that can potentially explain their behavior? Are there attributes that set them apart from those who are not as committed to morally exemplary actions? Answering these questions is what occupies most of the space in this dissertation. By studying the personality of moral exemplars, it was hoped that if there were differences between moral exemplars and individuals in a comparison group, these differences would emerge at day’s end.

Finally, the ultimate goal for researchers in this particular field is to cultivate moral excellence in others. By identifying potential variables that may influence moral exemplars to action, we as a collective group of researchers hope to find ways to cultivate
these kinds of attributes so that people can contribute in big or small ways towards creating a better world.

1.5.2 Past Research

The idea of studying moral exemplars is not new. There have been recent studies exploring the personality of such people. One of the best-known studies conducted was by Oliner and Oliner (1988). As mentioned previously, Oliner and Oliner compared rescuers of Jews (as identified by a group responsible for Israel’s memorial to the victims of the Holocaust) to non-rescuers during the Nazi-occupation of Europe. They interviewed close to 700 rescuers, non-rescuers and survivors whom lived through World War II. What the Oliners reported was that rescuers did not have more opportunities, knowledge, or material resources than non-rescuers, nor were rescuers more frequently asked to help. Rather what became apparent was that rescuers had a capacity for what the Oliners refer to as extensive relationships; that is, a stronger sense of attachment to others and feelings of responsibility. This capacity developed within the context of close family relationships where parents role-modeled care. Within the confines of these families, political, religious and philosophical attitudes took shape leading the rescuers to act according to what they felt was an ethical obligation to show care. So deeply were these attitudes internalized that they were compelled to action.

In contrast to the Oliners’ specific focus on rescuers, Colby and Damon’s (1992) research attended to a more heterogeneous group of people in terms of their involvement in a diversity of prosocial actions. Colby and Damon interviewed 23 adult moral exemplars from across the United States. These adults, selected by a group of “expert nominators,” came from diverse backgrounds, and had made important contributions in
the areas of civil rights and liberties, poverty, medical care and ethics, education, business ethics, philanthropy, journalism, the environment, peace, and religious freedom. Through semi-structured interviews, Colby and Damon were able to collect rich information about the lives of these extraordinary people. Like many of us, the lives of these moral exemplars were filled with challenges and risks. In the face of these adversities they had an unremitting faith, positivity, and principled certainty in their actions. They tended to disregard the risks involved to themselves and their family, and disclaimed any notion of being courageous, taking a more humble stance. As well, they often relied on the support of others in accomplishing their goals, and throughout the many trials and tribulations they had weathered, an inner harmony and unity to the self permeated their life stories.

On a less grand scale, Hart and Fegley (1995) studied the self-understanding and social judgments of local community care exemplars. These care exemplars were African- and Latin-American adolescents living in the poor, urban area of Camden, New Jersey. They were nominated based on their work in soup kitchens, community gardens, nursing homes, Special Olympics, and other community leadership roles. These care exemplars were contrasted with a comparison group of adolescents, matched on age, gender, ethnicity, and neighborhood. Of interest to Hart and Fegley was how care exemplars constructed their self-concept. Compared to the other group of adolescents, care exemplars were more likely to incorporate their past and future self, and construct theories of self that reflected the importance of their personal beliefs and philosophies. Therefore, how care exemplars construct the self was found to be different from those individuals in the comparison group.
Together these three studies have significantly contributed to the field of moral psychology in important ways. First, they clearly illustrate the kinds of exemplary moral behaviors in which individuals are involved. These individuals are making a positive difference within their community and beyond. Second, these studies have begun uncovering the unique attributes that distinguished moral exemplars from others. In particular, exemplars appear to be different from other individuals in their life experiences, formation of their attitudes, and formation of their self-concept. Thus there does appear evidence that moral exemplars are different in fundamental ways from other individuals.

1.5.3 Gender

In moral psychology, there has been a substantial amount of attention drawn to the gender debate. Following Holstein’s (1976) study reporting a gender bias in Kohlberg’s scoring rules, a flurry of research activity has swirled around the issue of gender differences in moral reasoning and moral orientation. One of the best-known researchers on the topic has been Carol Gilligan (1982). Gilligan claims that Kohlberg’s theory is associated with the moral reasoning development of the masculine ideal, which is reflected in the morality of justice. Neglected or misrepresented in Kohlberg’s theory is the feminine ideal as reflected in an ethic of care. One of the perceived implications of this neglect is that Kohlberg’s scoring system classifies women at lower moral stages of reasoning in comparison to men. While there continues to be heated discussion on this and related issues, the balance of evidence has fallen on the side of no gender differences on stage of moral reasoning (see Walker, 1984).
Given the controversies surrounding gender issues in moral psychology, gender differences were investigated in this study. Past studies on moral exemplars can provide little guidance in helping to form predictions in regards to gender differences. In these studies, the issue of gender differences was conspicuously absent in their discussions. As a result, this project provided an opportunity to explore gender differences between the two groups.

1.5.4 Specific Purposes

There are a number of limitations to these past studies. First, Oliner and Oliner’s study, while impressive in its sample size and the quantity and quality of the data obtained, nevertheless tended to be more descriptive in nature. Many of the analyses were descriptive based on measures created from extracting information from the interview protocols. Moreover, the Oliners mentioned the importance of political, religious, and family attitudes and values as being important discriminating variables. But we now live in a different time and place where the political, religious and family institutions no longer hold the same sway, and those living in industrialized nations are generally free from any threat of war. Hence, it is likely that there are different influences spurring contemporary moral exemplars to action than in the past.

As for Colby and Damon’s study, they took a case study approach using in-depth interviews. By using this methodological technique, Colby and Damon were able to explore moral commitment by understanding the person’s life and how he or she made sense of it. From the qualitatively rich amounts of information unearthed, Colby and Damon were able to sift through and extract important emergent themes. However, the
difficulty with such an approach is that these findings are not generalizable to other exemplar groups without the proper controls in place.

Finally, Hart and Fegley's study is the most methodologically sound of the bunch by including a comparison group of adolescents matched on a number of important demographic variables. However, the limitations of their study includes the fact that they had a rather small sample size of 15 for each group, and that the groups came from a depressed urban area, and consisted of two ethnic minority groups. These factors place limitations on the generalizability of their findings.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address some of the limitations mentioned above, and to expand on their findings. This was accomplished by including a larger sample (relative to Colby and Damon, and Hart and Fegley) drawn from a large, multicultural urban area. Findings obtained from these moral exemplars were contrasted to a comparison group of individuals matched on a number of demographic variables.

Second, past research has tended to focus on older adults, many in their golden years (i.e., Colby & Damon, 1992; Oliner & Oliner, 1988), or adolescents (Hart & Fegley, 1995). The target age group of interest in this study was young adults, people who have graduated high school and are in the process of entering into a larger social world. With this entry comes the challenge of making a number of life commitments in areas such as academics, career, relationships, and ideological beliefs (i.e., politics and/or religion). These kinds of commitments have been shown to be important in the formation of one's adult identity (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Waterman, 1985). Moreover, since moral commitments often influence and are influenced by other life commitments, it was
of interest to know how the moral commitments of these exemplars may shape their identity in this transition period towards adulthood.

Third, and most importantly, past research studies have either investigated one facet of personality, like self-conception in Hart and Fegley's study, or have included a number of facets of personality but failed to use many well-established, validated, reliable measures as is the case with Oliner and Oliner, and Colby and Damon. To address the former limitation, this study was designed to include a larger array of personality measures in order to capture a more full-bodied, integrated understanding of the person. In the latter case, established measures in the field of personality and developmental psychology were used in the hopes of obtaining a detailed and accurate profile of the people in this study.

Since there have been controversies surrounding gender issues in moral psychology, this project included an exploration of gender. Interestingly, there has been a strange silence on the topic in past research on moral exemplars. In contrast, in the altruism literature (Piliavin & Charng, 1990), there have been gender differences reported. However, these differences have surrounded issues related to whether one gender is more likely to help versus the other gender. For instance, women have been found to be more likely to intervene in situations where there are low levels of harm (Austin, 1977). As well, women have lower thresholds for noticing situations of harm. Yet these results are not very informative in differentiating between the genders in samples that do decide to help. Therefore, one of the purposes of this project was to begin to study gender issues as they relate to the personality of moral exemplars.
1.6 Summary

Following in the footsteps of Milgram (1963), Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Kohlberg (1981), the broader goal of this dissertation project was to understand the positive side of our humanity. The entry point from where this project embarked on this endeavour has origins in the cognitive-developmental tradition within moral psychology. Specifically, this study of the personality of moral exemplars was, in part, a reaction to the past overemphasis on cognition and under-emphasis on other facets of human functioning including personality. By focusing on the personality of moral exemplars, it was hoped that specific personality variables that contribute to both moral identity development and moral behavior would be isolated. While other studies have delved into this area, none have done so with as much empirical depth and breadth as this project. And unique to this study was the focus on the transition to adulthood period, a time associated with a search for an adult identity. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to advance the existing field by addressing the limitations of past studies to include a broad array of personality measures not previously employed, to narrow in on a time in life when people are in the process of making adult commitments, and to consider gender issues.

In the chapters to follow, the findings of this project will be unraveled. Unlike the traditional five-chapter dissertation structure, this one creates chapter divisions according to the variables studied, with each variable being housed within its own chapter. The rationale for this unorthodox approach is to concentrate on each variable. Before embarking on this empirical journey, the methodological ground rules guiding this research need to be posted. This is the purpose of the next chapter.
CHAPTER II. Method

2.1 Introduction

Having laid the theoretical foundations, attention can now turn to the logistics surrounding this project. In this chapter, explanations of the selection processes for obtaining the moral exemplars and comparison individuals are presented, as well as the rationale behind these processes. In addition, this chapter briefly details the morally exemplary activities in which the participants were engaged. As well, brief explanations of the measures included in this study are covered with more detailed descriptions to follow in subsequent chapters. Finally, this chapter closes with a demographic description of the participants, and a preview of what is in store in coming chapters.

2.2 Search for Moral Exemplars

In order to find moral exemplars, a logical procedure would be to first form some conception of what a moral exemplar is, and then generate a criteria list of qualities a person must possess. However, coming up with items to be included on that list is no small feat. There are a number of strategies one can employ to overcome this challenge. One strategy would be to consult those in philosophy whose job it is to contemplate these more heady issues. In fact, there has been a growing list of philosophers who are intellectually endowed to do just this. Their approach to ethics comes from a virtues perspective. Philosophers under this umbrella include such luminaries as Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), Lawrence Blum (1994), Martha Nussbaum (1988), and Phillipa Foot (1978), all of whom have played a critical role in bringing virtue ethics back into vogue, and for good reason. The return to virtues has been precipitated by the growing
dissatisfaction with Kantian theories. Kantian theories, some claim, have demonstrated their inadequacies by being so remote from concrete human experiences (Nussbaum, 1988), an argument similar to Flanagan's (1991). With its emphasis on objective reasoning, Kantian theories effectively cut off the individual's contextual roots, isolating him or her from either cultural (MacIntyre, 1984) and/or personal values (Williams, 1981) in which he or she is embedded. In contrast, virtue ethicists have argued for a reconsideration of the ancient Greeks' focus on virtues, or traits of character. These included the cardinal virtues of courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice, to which Aquinas later added faith, hope and charity (Pence, 1997). By focusing on virtues, Nussbaum and others believe that important facets of human life like friendship, emotions and other personal or cultural particularities can be rightfully incorporated into a legitimate ethical theory.

Numerous attempts have been made to develop a theory of ethics based on a virtues approach (see Pence, 1984). These attempts represent a broad spectrum of perspectives. There are those who study virtues by focusing on a particular virtue such as courage or love (i.e., Geach, 1977). There are others who place emphasis on the social aspect of virtues as defined by a cultural community, many of whom are labeled as cultural relativists (i.e., MacIntyre, 1984). And then there are philosophers who believe that spanning across cultures are found universal virtues (Nussbaum, 1992). The arguably unfortunate result of this diversity in approaches is a lack of consensus on what form an ethic of virtue should take. Even defining the concept of "virtues" continues to be debated with no clear, uniform understanding of what exactly is meant by this term. All
this to say is that at the end of the day we can expect no single voice coming from philosophy.

An alternate approach is to look at past psychological research to gain insight from how other researchers came about their sample. In the case of Oliner and Oliner (1988), they set up a criteria list of what they considered an altruistic act of rescue. In their list, acts of rescue had to meet four criteria: (a) involve a high risk to the actor, (b) accompanied by no external rewards, (c) voluntary, and (d) directed toward helping a Jewish person. With the help of Yad Vashem\(^2\), they were able to successfully find their sample. Unfortunately, this approach would not work well for this study since the focus was not specifically on rescuers of Jews, or any other exclusive group for that matter, as moral exemplars.

In the case of Colby and Damon (1992), they found their exemplars by first generating a criteria list of widely endorsable moral standards. To help in this process, they called in 22 expert nominators who came from diverse backgrounds in reference to their political ideology, religious beliefs, and sociocultural experiences. Moreover, Colby and Damon ensured that their experts were of the type that had the ability and experience to reflect on moral matters in a systematic way. Hence, the experts selected included

\(^2\) Yad Vashem is a memorial authority in Jerusalem established by the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Law adopted by the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) on August 19, 1953. Its purpose is to commemorate the six million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators as well as the “Righteous Among the Nations” who risked their lives to save Jews. In fulfillment of the latter purpose, a commission of eighteen members, composed of the chairman of the Yad Vashem Directory and his deputy as well as representatives of assorted other groups and public figures, was appointed to decide who should be so designated. The commission studies all requests for recognition based on evidence. Each individual member of the commission is assigned a specific case and makes an initial recommendation. The member meets with at least one of the survivors in order to get a firsthand impression of the story. In making its final decision, the commission considers all the circumstances related to the rescue story as well as the rescuer’s motivation, personal risk, and dedication. Criteria for recognition by Yad Vashem include: (a) the rescuer was motivated by humanitarian considerations alone; (b) the rescuer risked his or her life; (c) no remuneration of any kind accompanied the rescue act.
theologians, philosophers, historians, social commentators, scholars of ethics and morality. Together, these experts pared down their list to five criteria: (a) a sustained commitment to moral ideals or principles that include a generalized respect for humanity, or a sustained evidence of moral virtue; (b) a disposition to act in accord with one’s moral ideals or principles, implying also a consistency between one’s actions and intentions and between the means and ends of one’s action; (c) a willingness to risk one’s self-interest for the sake of one’s moral values; (d) a tendency to be inspiring to others and moving them to moral action; and (e) a sense of realistic humility about one’s own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one’s own ego. With this list in hand, the experts who created it were then asked to nominate people whom they considered to be moral exemplars. Hence, this approach is very similar to the philosophical approach listed above with the exception that Colby and Damon were able to achieve consensus with their group of experts. Since this is similar to the philosophical approach, it suffers from the same flaw: The challenge continues to be one of finding criteria that would satisfy other experts outside of Colby and Damon’s study. Invariably there will be another group who contend, and understandably so, that these criteria lead to a narrow conception of who a moral exemplar is. For instance, a man recently sacrificed his life to save his employee from an attack by her knife-wielding husband at a local coffee shop. Many people consider this person a hero for his courageous action. Here, the virtue of courage is being used as a criterion in which to evaluate the person’s deed. However, this deed was not an example of “sustained commitment” and therefore, he would not be classified, according to Colby and Damon’s criteria, as a moral exemplar, to the dismay of many.
In fact, if one carefully studies Colby and Damon’s list one would realize that their moral excellence approach to studying the moral domain is as limiting as Kohlberg’s justice approach, for both support, either implicitly or explicitly, the separation between self-interest and ego concerns with moral duty. This is exactly what Williams (1981) in philosophy and Walker and Hennig (1997) in psychology were arguing against! Ironically, Colby and Damon report an actual unity to the self and moral actions in their moral exemplars’ narrative accounts, not a division. This should cause one to seriously question the utility of their expert criteria list. This is not to say that the people in Colby and Damon’s study are not moral exemplars. A majority of laypeople would probably agree that they are. However, it seems there is a discrepancy between what experts consider are important qualities of a moral exemplar and those qualities actually emerging from the data.

Similarly, Hart and Fegley’s (1995) method for identifying exemplars came from two sources: Suggestions offered by church and youth group leaders from Camden who were very familiar with the city and its adolescents, and previous research on care and morality (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992; Coles, 1986; Kohlberg, 1984). Once their preliminary list was generated, it was reviewed by an advisory board comprised of youth group leaders, religious leaders, and two psychologists with expertise in Latin-American and African-American culture and deep familiarity with the city. The final criteria list included: (a) involvement in community, church, or youth group activities that benefit others; (b) unusual and admirable family responsibilities; (c) a willingness to help those in need; (d) volunteers time to help others; (e) emotional and social maturity; (f) leadership; (g) open-mindedness about others; (h) a willingness to look beyond the
difficulties of living in Camden to a better future; (i) compassion; (j) a sense of humility about his/her aid to others; and (k) commitment to friends and family. Interestingly, only those who met criteria (a), (b), or (d) were considered worthy since, by meeting these criteria, these individuals “had clearly demonstrated the altruistic caring behavior of central interest in this study” (p. 1350). In this case, Hart and Fegley’s criteria seems too liberal in their consideration of anyone who has been involved in activities where others have benefited. As a result, this list was of limited utility.

If one cannot rely on experts in the field to come up with a criteria list to classify moral exemplars as past research has done, to where does one turn? In this study, a folk psychological perspective was taken by relying on the public for their assistance. Rather than asking the experts, people outside the walls of academia were solicited for nominations of people whom they considered to be moral exemplars. Certainly not everyone in the field agrees with this approach. Colby and Damon (1992) feel that most people do not distinguish carefully between the characteristics they like and admire and those they consider essential to being a good person. People who have not had a great deal of experience doing so cannot be expected to explain clearly the assumptions underlying their moral judgments or to make careful distinctions and define their terms precisely. (p. 28)

To some extent Colby and Damon are correct in that people may be limited in their ability to explain the intricacies of what makes a good person. However, this does not mean that people do not have an informed opinion on the matter. This last point is an
important one for it reflects my interest in understanding people's conception of a moral exemplar, which may be informative to us academics. First, Walker and Pitts (1998) have argued that naturalistic conceptions of moral excellence can serve to inform philosophers in their theory-generating enterprise. By taking into account the range of human functioning, philosophers can prevent themselves from erring on the side of an overly narrow conception of morality. Second, there may be an incongruence between how laypeople and philosophers conceive of moral exemplars, which would be interesting in its own right. Here the differences may not be in the list of criteria generated, but on the particular criteria each group wish to emphasize: What may be important to philosophers may not be important to laypeople. A final benefit that comes from asking people outside academics is that they may be better in touch with reality. While moral philosophers are excellent at determining what a moral exemplar should be like, laypeople may be better at describing what moral exemplars are like. That is, laypeople may be better at providing academics with a sense of what virtues are important in the everyday here and now reflecting the cultural times.

MacIntyre (1984) claimed that moral virtues tend to develop within the context of a social system. Further, some have argued that we currently live in a "de-moralized" society (Himmelfarb, 1994). According to Himmelfarb, the moral values of Western society have changed profoundly over the past century. The virtues of the Victorian period no longer hold sway in today's postmodern world, and have been replaced by values that are vulnerable to the relativist times. By asking laypeople about their conceptions of moral excellence, it was hoped that a better sense of the current moral
values of individuals would be obtained, and how they were being played out in the lives of moral exemplars.

2.3 Participants

Having settled on a "layperson's" approach to finding moral exemplars, the research process began by contacting a diverse array of organizations including social, health, religious, human rights, and animal rights organizations drawn from the Yellow Pages. Once contacted by letter (see Appendix A), individuals working for these organizations, typically the executive director or equivalent, were asked to nominate people whom they considered to be moral exemplars by completing a nomination form (see Appendix B). A moral exemplar was defined to be a person who had shown "extraordinary moral commitment." This definition was intentionally vague in order to not bias the nominators' conception of a moral exemplar. As a result, it was hoped that the nominators would put forth people based on their own working models of a moral exemplar. In order to tap into their working models, nominators were asked to provide reasons for their selection. From this information, the layperson's perception of a moral exemplar could be studied further.

Approximately 800 organizations were contacted by fax, phone, mail, or email. The executive directors were asked to nominate people who either worked or volunteered for their organization. Since young adults were of interest, the age range was restricted to be 18 to 30 years of age. The nominators were asked to fill out a nomination form which requested the following information: name, age, gender, contact information, an explanation of why the candidate was believed to be a moral exemplar, and whether the nominator's name could be used when contacting the candidate.
Sixty-six nomination forms\(^3\) were returned of which 59 met the eligibility requirements (seven were over the age range requested). Of the 59, one person had moved out of the country and could not be contacted. Out of the 58 remaining candidates, the first 40 to be contacted and who were willing to participate were included (only two were not interested in participating).

When nominees were contacted, they were told how the experimenter got their name, and then briefly informed about the nature of the study. A majority of the individuals had received prior notice about their nomination into the study from the nominator. In addition, as an incentive to participate each individual was offered $40. The 40 individuals who participated were nominated based on their active involvement with such organizations as Big Brothers, Ronald McDonald House, Crisis Centres, Community Living groups, Youth Services agencies, Food Banks, churches and para-church organizations, etc. (see Table 1). Moreover, it was not simply the fact that these individuals volunteered or worked for these agencies. Rather, these individuals stood out from others within the organization by going above and beyond what was expected of them in their roles as volunteers or workers. In this way they were considered exemplary.

A comparison group of individuals was also included in the study. These individuals were matched to the exemplar group on four demographic variables: age, gender, level of education, and ethnicity. Since the exemplar group was found to be relatively highly educated, finding a similarly educated pool of people from which to draw proved a challenge. In the end, the comparison individuals were recruited from the

\(^3\) One reason why agencies were reluctant to participate in this study was that they did not feel comfortable with being involved with research projects on the perceived controversial topic of morality. As well, agencies felt uncomfortable with isolating one or a few persons from the rest as being exemplary.
Department of Psychology subject pool, and upper level psychology classes. This seemed to be the most practical means in which to obtain such a group of individuals.

Forty-five individuals met the age, gender, education, and ethnicity criteria. These people were contacted and briefly informed about what the study entailed, their role as a comparison group (although the experimental group was not specifically identified), the $40 honorarium, and asked whether or not they were interested in participating. Of the 45 individuals, 40 agreed to participate. Those who did not participate cited they were either not interested or too busy to be involved.
Table 1

Frequency of Moral Exemplars drawn from Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-church groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Brothers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Centres</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Living</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Bank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald McDonald House</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS Society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Procedure

Individuals participated in two sessions. In the first session, participants came to a lab room in the Department of Psychology at a large Canadian university. There they filled out a consent form (see Appendix C), provided demographic information, and completed a battery of questionnaires assessing personality traits, personal projects, and identity status. These forms and questionnaires took on average 2 hours to complete. Approximately 1 week later, they returned to the lab room for the second session where they underwent a 2-hour life narrative interview, which was audio-taped and later transcribed. Upon completion of this session, participants were debriefed, thanked for their time, and given their honorarium.

A brief description of the measures included in this study is presented below. A detailed rationale for why they were included as well as additional details about the measures, such as reliability and validity, will be presented in subsequent chapters.

2.4.1 Measures Overview

During the first session, participants completed the following battery of questionnaires:

Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) (see Appendix D). The NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is a self-report measure that assesses normal personality traits on five domains (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness). The measure contains 240 items. For each item, participants respond using a 5-point Likert-type scale indicating their agreement with each item (0 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Neutral). The time required to complete the measure is between 30 to 40 minutes.
Personal Projects Analysis (PPA) (see Appendix E). The PPA (Little, 1983) has four components, three of which were included in this study. In the first part, individuals are asked to complete the Personal Projects Elicitation List. This involves the listing of as many personal projects (i.e., looking for a job, doing laundry, meeting a friend for lunch) as one can generate, and takes approximately 10 minutes. Upon completion, individuals list these projects down on the left-hand side of the Project Rating Matrix form. Across the top of the form are dimensions upon which the projects are rated on an 11-point scale (0 to 10). Individuals are asked to rate each project on 17 dimensions (Little, 1983, 1989). This task takes 30-45 minutes to complete. Finally, the people are asked to generate a Project Cross-Impact Matrix (10-row X 10-column matrix). On both the rows and the columns ten personal projects are listed. To fill in the matrix, people go down their row of projects and ask themselves whether this project has a positive, very positive, negative, very negative, neutral, or ambivalent impact on each of the other projects (listed on the column side). This task typically takes 20 minutes to complete.

The Revised, Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2R) (see Appendix F). The EOMEIS-2R (Adams, Bennion, & Huh, 1989) is a 64-item self-administered questionnaire. For each item, people are asked to record their level of agreement using a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree to 6 = strongly disagree). The measure is designed to categorize people into one of four identity status categories (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion). The instrument is composed of two domains. The ideological identity domain includes occupational, religious, political and philosophical life-style values, goals, and standards. The
interpersonal identity domain incorporates friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreational choices. The **EOMEIS-2R** takes between 10-15 minutes to complete.

During the second session, each participant underwent an in-depth, semi-structured interview (see Appendix G). The purpose of the interview was to allow the participant to tell his or her life story. The questions that guide the life narrative interview are based on the interview protocols developed by McAdams (1993) and Fowler (1981). The interview takes approximately 2 hours. Based on the information generated from the life narrative interview, four variables were explored:

**Themes of Agency and Communion** (see Appendix H). Using McAdams (1992a) **Coding Autobiographical Episodes for Themes of Agency and Communion Manual**, one is able to detect agency and communion themes in two life narrative episodes (peak experience and a turning point) that are considered significant with respect to the subject’s sense of his or her own development as a person. Each episode is coded for the presence (1) or absence (0) of eight different themes, four under the heading of agency (Self Mastery, Status/Victory, Achievement/Responsibility, and Empowerment) and four under the heading of communion (Love/Friendship, Dialogue, Caring/Helping, and Unity/Together). For each person, his or her agency score is calculated by adding the number of agency themes found within each episode. Similarly, a participant’s communion score is calculated by adding the number of communion themes found within each episode.

**Moral Reasoning.** Within the context of the interview, participants were asked to describe a real-life moral conflict they were having or recently had, and how they resolved the conflict (see Appendix G). Using Colby, Kohlberg, Speicher, Hewer,
Candee, Gibbs, and Power’s (1987a) *Standard Issue Scoring Manual*, each participant’s real-life moral conflict was scored for moral reasoning. Moral reasoning scores are obtained by first matching moral judgments from the moral conflict text to criterion judgments in the manual. Each match produced a stage score, and these stage scores are used to generate a Weighted Average Scores (WAS) (ranging from 100-500). The WAS is calculated by multiplying the percentage usage of each moral stage by the stage number and then summing the totals to produce a numerical score for level of moral reasoning (see Colby, Kohlberg, Speicher, Hewer, Candee, Gibbs, & Power, 1987b).

**Faith Development.** Using the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (DeNicola, 1993), participants’ level of faith development was scored based on information from their life narrative interview (see Appendix G). Faith development scores are obtained by matching passages from the interview transcript to specific criteria set out in the manual. Stage scores are found for seven faith aspects (Logic, Social Perspective Taking, Moral Judgment, Social Awareness, Locus of Authority, World Coherence, and Symbolic Function) by averaging criterion scores found within each aspect. Each aspect stage score can range from 1.00 to 6.00. An overall stage score is determined by averaging across the seven faith aspects stage scores.

**Ego Functioning.** Haan’s (1977) *Ego Q-sort* method was used to assess participant’s use of specific ego processes. Upon listening to the audio-taped interview, the experimenter performed a Q-sort procedure. The Ego Q-sort is comprised of 60 descriptive items, three of which represent each of the ten coping and defending ego processes. These 20 processes can be further categorized into one of eight ego functions (see Appendix I). To calculate ego scores, the 60 items are first sorted into a fixed 9-step
quasi-normal distribution ranging from most uncharacteristic of the person (+1) through neutral (+5) to most characteristic (+9). A score for each of the 20 processes is calculated by averaging the three items representing that process. From these ego processes scores, ego function scores representing each of the eight ego functions and a single overall coping score can be generated, scores commonly reported in the literature. An ego function score is calculated by averaging across those ego processes making up that particular function. The overall coping score is determined by adding the four coping function scores and then subtracting the four defending function scores.

These concise descriptions of the measures are designed to provide a glimpse into the information that was collected from participants. More details about them and their theoretical relevance to this study are forthcoming. Before leaving this chapter, a brief introduction to the participants is conveyed below by way of demographic information.

2.5 Demographics

The total sample size for this study was 80 individuals (40 moral exemplars and 40 individuals in the comparison group). There were an equal number of males and females in each group. The average age was 25.44 years (SD = 3.72), and the average years of post-secondary education was 4.24 years (SD = 2.11). The sample was mostly composed of White individuals (83%), with a few Asians (15%) and East Indians (2%) (see Table 2).

Since the two groups of individuals were matched on age, years of education, gender and ethnicity, there should be no differences on these demographic variables. However, to ensure this was the case for the interval scale variables of age and years of education, 2 (group) X 2 (gender) ANOVAs were performed. In both cases, there were
no group effects. However, there were gender effects for the two variables (age: $F(1, 76) = 26.75, p < .001$; education: $F(1, 76) = 4.34, p = .041$). Males were older (males: $M = 27.32, SD = 2.75$; females: $M = 23.55, SD = 3.64$) and had more years of post-secondary education (males: $M = 4.73, SD = 2.25$; females: $M = 3.75, SD = 1.86$) than females. Since it was of interested in studying gender effects, to insure differences on gender could not be attributed to age and years of post-secondary education, these two variables were partialed out, where appropriate, in later analyses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>25.4 (3.8)</td>
<td>25.5 (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23.4 (3.6)</td>
<td>23.7 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.4 (2.8)</td>
<td>27.3 (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary Education (in years)</td>
<td>4.25 (2.19)</td>
<td>4.23 (2.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.80 (1.96)</td>
<td>3.70 (1.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.70 (2.36)</td>
<td>4.75 (2.20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SDs are in parentheses.*
2.6 Summary

Using a "layperson’s" approach, individuals working for a diverse array of community organizations were asked to nominate young adults who they considered to be a moral exemplar. From these nominations, 40 morally exemplary adults were recruited to participate. The exemplar group was matched to a comparison group on gender, age, years of education, and ethnicity. Each participant completed a battery of personality-related questionnaires. As well, each person underwent a life narrative interview from which four personality-related and development-related variables were extracted. The purpose of including these variables was to identify where group differences lay. These findings are presented in the following chapters, with each variable contained within its own chapter. It is hoped that this atypical dissertation structure will allow the reader to assimilate the findings more easily.

In the first empirical chapter (Chapter 3), group differences on personality traits are presented, representing the top level of McAdams' (1995) three-tiered model of personality research. This is followed by chapters covering several middle level personality variables such as Personal Projects (Chapter 4) and Ego Functioning (Chapter 5). As well, at this level, the development-related variables of Ego Identity (Chapter 6), Moral Reasoning (Chapter 7), and Faith Development (Chapter 8) are included. Finally, as McAdams argues, to know someone well is to know his or her life story. In Chapter 9, portions of the participants' autobiographical accounts are studied in order to uncover themes of agency and communion within the text.

In Chapter 10, those variables that contributed the most in distinguishing participants between the two groups are identified through discriminant analysis. This is
followed by a brief case study on one of the moral exemplars based on information
gathered from his life narrative interview (Chapter 11). Finally, Chapter 12 serves to
weave together the different themes emerging from the study, and bring the project to a
close.
3.1 Introduction

In the past, interest in personality traits within moral psychology revolved around whether or not they influence moral behavior. The early research addressing this issue concluded that traits or character variables are not good predictors of behavior (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Hartshorne, May, & Maller, 1929; Hartshorne, May, & Shuttleworth, 1930). In these studies, children underwent a number of different tests tapping a particular construct like honesty, which researchers defined as an effort to deceive another and/or to conceal one's own behavior. Given that consistency across the different tests was poor, the authors concluded that there was little evidence that general traits like honesty, as well as altruism and caring, existed. Rather, there were many situational factors that were believed to be stronger predictors.

In addition, the belief that global traits can predict behavior came under heavy attack within broader psychology in the 1960's. Mischel's (1968) monograph reported evidence showing that cross-situational consistency of behavior is often poorer than trait theorists would lead one to believe. During this era, the area of personality psychology seemed to be well on its way towards extinction (McAdams, 1998).

Recently, however, this trend has been reversed with the increasing empirical support for stability of personality traits across different contexts. In moral psychology, a re-examination of Hartshorne and May's research program suggests that there is more consistency to children's moral behavior than previously believed. Past findings could be attributed to Hartshorne and May's extreme definition of character traits (Burton, 1976).
They defined a character trait as “an inner entity operating independently of the situation in which the individual is placed” (Hartshorne & May, 1928, p. 385) giving no allowance for any situational considerations. Similarly, in personality psychology, Zuroff (1986) argued that Mischel’s (1968) definition of a trait is also too extreme in demanding that consistency in human behavior be pervasive across all situations. In reality, Zuroff remarked, no real trait theorist adopts such an extreme view. Rather, trait theorists typically argue for consistency within a range of situations.

Over the past 20 years there has been an explosion in trait research (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & John, 1992). According to these trait personologists, personality traits are enduring dimensions of individual differences in one’s tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Unlike states or moods, traits are relatively less transient and more stable over time and situation within adulthood (Costa & McCrae, 1994). As well, personality traits can be measured reliably and validly, and measurements of individual differences in traits can be successfully used to predict behavior (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McAdams, 1992b).

Moreover, these trait personologists have rallied around a five-factor model in which to organize and understand personality traits. Although using different labels, different research programs have converged to demonstrate that personality can be structured along five major factor dimensions (Conley, 1985; Costa & McCrae, 1988; Costa, McCrae, & Arenberg, 1980; Digman & Takemoto-Chock, 1981; Goldberg, 1981; John, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Peabody & Goldberg, 1989). According to McCrae and Costa (1990), the five broad factors are as follows: (a) Neuroticism (N) refers to the chronic level of emotional adjustment and instability within the individual; (b)
Extraversion (E) represents both the quantity and intensity of preferred interpersonal interaction, activity level, need for stimulation, and capacity for joy; (c) Openness to Experience (O) taps the individual's active seeking and appreciation of experiences for their own sake; (d) Agreeableness (A) reflects the kinds of interactions a person prefers along a continuum from compassion to antagonism; and (e) Conscientiousness (C) assesses the degree of organization, persistence, control, and motivation in goal-directed behavior.

In addition, the five-factor model has been employed in a number of applied contexts. For instance, the model has been used to determine the trait make-up of people suffering different psychopathologies (see Widiger & Trull, 1992). In the context of this study, the five-factor model may help to describe the "types" of people who may be predisposed to performing extraordinary moral actions. In the realm of volunteer work, there has been evidence of differences between volunteers and nonvolunteers on a number of important personality trait dimensions.

3.2 Altruism and Volunteerism

In the late 1970s and into the ‘80s, there was an increase in research exploring altruism. One of the questions posed by those working in this field was whether there is such a thing as an “altruistic personality.” One method of study to answer this question was to compare volunteer-types to nonvolunteer-types on personality dimensions. Some of the studies showed no significant differences. For example, Simmons, Klein, and Simmons (1977) found no differences between those who donated a kidney to a relative and a standardization group on any of the standard scales of the MMPI. As well, on
charitable giving, Reddy (1980) found little evidence for relationships between most personality and attitudinal measures and this particular prosocial behavior.

In contrast, there have been many other findings that have found clear differences between the two groups. In Piliavin and Charng's (1990) review article, they reported that people high in self-esteem, high in competence, high in internal locus of control, low in need for approval, and high in moral development appear to be more likely to engage in prosocial behavior (Aronoff & Wilson, 1984; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981; Rushton, 1981; Staub, 1978). Schwartz (1970) found that those individuals who had strong personal norms regarding bone marrow donation and high scores on attribution of responsibility to the self were more likely to join a marrow donor pool. Batson illustrated the importance of empathy in those who are engaged in altruistic acts (Batson & Coke, 1981; Batson, Dyck, Brandt, Batson, Powell, et al., 1988; Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983). Finally, in their review article on community mental health volunteerism, Allen and Rushton (1983) compared volunteers and nonvolunteers based on 19 studies. Their review indicated that volunteers, compared with nonvolunteers, possessed more internalized moral standards, positive attitudes toward self and others, a greater degree of self-efficacy, more emotional stability, and greater empathy. Thus, there appear to be some important personality attributes of those engaged in these types of prosocial behaviors.

3.3 Moral Exemplars

These findings within the altruism and volunteerism literature lead one to suspect that there would be differences between the moral exemplar and comparison groups. In fact, one may anticipate there being greater differences for two reasons. First, these moral
exemplars have been selected for various reasons to stand out from the rest of their peers within the same organization. Not only were many of these people dedicating their resources to worthy causes, they also were showing those in the organization that they were outstanding in some additional capacity. Second, while many of the exemplars were volunteers, approximate one-quarter of the sample worked on staff for their organization. These individuals have shown a clear commitment to morally worthy causes by devoting their careers to such endeavors. Therefore, one may anticipate more distinct differences in personality than those found in the altruism and volunteerism fields of study.

As mentioned, there has been scant research studying the personality traits of moral exemplars specifically. In Oliner and Oliner's (1988) study, they reported that rescuers were higher on empathy, social responsibility, prosocial action orientation, and internal locus of control. Further, Hart (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Hart, Yates, Fegley, & Wilson, 1995) reported that adolescent care exemplars described themselves using more references to positive, moral, caring personality traits (i.e., honest, moral, trustworthy) than did comparison adolescents. There were no differences found on general personality traits (i.e., wild) and non-moral personality traits (i.e., funny, friendly, loving, mature, shy, obnoxious). Thus, these two findings suggest that there very well could be a "moral exemplar personality."

Additional support for this conviction comes from Colby and Damon's (1992) study. They made numerous allusions to characteristics that match many of the trait descriptors listed within the Five-Factor Model. For instance, Colby and Damon wrote: "From our exemplars' accounts of their own lives, we gained a somewhat different picture: a sense of continued openness to change and growth, an openness that is not the
usual expectation in most adult lives" (p. 187). This characteristic of openness suggests that exemplars would rate high on the dimension of Openness to Experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

In addition to openness, Colby and Damon (1992) described their exemplars as having a positive attitude: “In just about all of our moral exemplars, we observed a strong, enduring, and general positivity toward their lives, toward their work, and toward other people.... Positivity also connotes hopefulness and optimism” (pp. 262-263). This sense of positivity, hopefulness, and optimism can be subsumed under the dimension of Extraversion. In fact, one of the facets of Extraversion is Positive Emotions. Costa and McCrae (1992) described Positive Emotions as the tendency to experience joy, happiness, love, and excitement. As well, people high on Positive Emotions laugh easily and often, and are cheerful and optimistic. In addition, it is plausible that positivity may negatively correlate with the dimension of Neuroticism. That is, these exemplars may score low on this dimension, which is known to include the facets of Anxiety, Anger, Hostility, and Depression (see Appendix J for facet descriptions). Hence, it is reasonable to predict that exemplars would score high on Extraversion and low on Neuroticism.

Colby and Damon (1992) have also described their exemplars as persistent, responsible, and having a “great sense of certainty” amidst risk (p. 71). These characteristics may be associated with high ratings on the dimension of Conscientiousness, particularly the two facets of Achievement Striving and Self-Discipline (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to Costa and McCrae, people scoring high on Achievement Striving have high aspiration levels and work hard to achieve their goals. They are diligent and purposeful and have a sense of direction in life. Further, Self-
Discipline refers to the ability to begin tasks and carry them through to completion despite boredom or distractions. Hence, these Conscientiousness facets seem to capture important characteristics common to Colby and Damon's exemplars.

Finally, Colby and Damon often mentioned their exemplars' sense of humility, their positivity towards and concern for other people, and self-sacrifice in helping others. All these characteristics are associated with high ratings on the dimension of Agreeableness. This dimension includes the facets of Altruism, Trust, Modesty, Tendermindedness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). On these facets moral exemplars are expected to rate themselves high. Thus, Agreeableness is believed to be an important dimension in which to distinguish moral exemplars from comparison individuals.

Furthermore, empirical support that Conscientiousness and Agreeableness factors are of particular significance to the moral domain comes from Walker (1999). In his study, he had participants provide characteristics and attributes of a highly moral person. These descriptors were then analyzed by a computer program, developed by Donahue (1993), that searched for Big-Five personality trait-type words. Walker discovered that the most frequent descriptors generated were those that reflected the factors Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, factors considered as classic dimensions of character (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & John, 1992).

3.4 Predictions

Because the trait themes emerging from Colby and Damon's interviews with exemplars seem to parallel the "Big Five" dimensions of personality, it was decided that Costa and McCrae's well-established NEO PI-R measure of personality traits would be useful to determine whether or not there are specific facets to the personality of moral
exemplars. Based on the qualitative work of Colby and Damon (1992) mentioned above, it was predicted that the exemplar group would be higher on the dimensions of Openness to Experience, Extraversion and lower on Neuroticism than the comparison group. As well, drawing on the studies of Colby and Damon (1992), Hart and Fegley (1995), Oliner and Oliner (1988), and Walker (1999), it was predicted that the exemplar group would score higher on Conscientiousness and Agreeableness than the comparison group.

3.5 Method

NEO PI-R. Participants completed the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R). The NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is a 240-item self-report (Form S) measure of normal personality traits. Participants indicate their level of agreement on each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale (0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). The measure assesses both the five domains (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) as well as the six facet scales within each domain (see Appendix J). Each facet is made up of eight items. These items are summed to produce a facet score, and the six facet scores are summed to produce the raw trait score. As is convention, the six raw trait scores are then converted to factor scores, expressed as T-scores (see Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The NEO PI-R has shown to be a reliable measure in terms of its internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Costa & McCrae, 1992). They reported the internal consistency alpha coefficients for the 48-item domain scales ranged from .86 to .95. As for test-retest reliability, Costa & McCrae cite numerous studies that have looked at test-retest reliability, all of which report good reliability for both self and peer ratings.
In addition, there have been many studies demonstrating the validity of the measure (Costa & McCrae, 1992). First, the five-factor structure has been validated through the analyses of natural language trait adjectives (Goldberg, 1981), as well as other personality adjective scales (John, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1985, 1987; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). Second, Costa and McCrae (1992) have shown convergent and discriminant validities of the facet scales with a host of established personality measures. Third, the use of self-report form (Form S) and the peer report form (Form R) together in past studies have allowed Costa and McCrae (1992) to report good consensual validity coefficients for both domain and facet scores. Costa and McCrae (1992) also report correlations between specific domain scores and other measures such as psychological well-being, coping and defending, needs and motivation, Jungian types, and interpersonal traits, thus illustrating the content validity of the NEO PI-R. Finally, McCrae and Costa (1997) have shown the robustness of the measure in obtaining a five-factor structure in other cultures thus demonstrating its external validity. Combined, these findings clearly demonstrate the validity of the NEO PI-R.

Nomination Forms. For the moral exemplar group, recall that executive directors from different agencies were asked to fill out nomination forms providing reasons for their candidate selection. From these descriptions, five-factor trait terms can be extracted to determine the frequency of words that fall into each of the five dimensions. This is possible through the use of the computer program developed by Donahue (1993) called Trait Attribute Flagging for your Convenience (TAFFY-C). This program searches each data file and isolates words that resemble personality trait descriptors, trait-like words that may occur in various grammatical forms, and negations or disaffirmations that
modify trait-like descriptors. The word output file is then manually scanned to ensure that each descriptor fits into the appropriate personality dimension. The edited output file is then scanned by another program that identifies words fitting into one of the five trait dimensions. Words that fit into one of the five dimensions can either represent the high (desirable) pole or the low (undesirable) pole of each of the five factors. Donahue's approach to trait research differs from Costa and McCrae's factor analytic approach to personality inventories in that the former comes to it from a lexical tradition. According to this tradition (Goldberg, 1993), since personality traits are basic to human life it is not surprising to find them embedded in natural language. By isolating these trait terms from language, basic dimensions of personality can be uncovered.

3.6 Results

3.6.1 NEO PI-R

A MANOVA was performed with the five factors of personality as the dependent variables, group and gender as the independent variables, and age and education partialed out. The MANOVA produced a group effect, $F(5, 70) = 4.01; p = .003; \eta^2 = .22$, and thus warranted further investigation with one way, univariate ANOVAs for each of the five factors. The only significant group effect emerging was on Agreeableness, $F(1, 74) = 17.84; p < .001; \eta^2 = .31$, with the exemplar group ($M = 53.5; SD = 9.8$) higher on Agreeableness than the comparison group ($M = 44.4; SD = 9.4$) (see Table 3).

Agreeableness, like the other factors, is comprised of six facets. They include:

- **Trust** – high scorers are honest and well-intentioned;
- **Straightforwardness** – high scorers are frank, sincere, and ingenuous;
- **Altruism** – high scorers are actively concerned for the welfare of others;
- **Compliance** – high scorers inhibit aggression, and are forgiving and
meek; Modesty – high scorers are humble and self-effacing; and Tender-Mindedness – high scorers are sympathetic and concerned for others. Further analyses investigated which of these facets were contributing to the powerful group difference on Agreeableness.

Therefore, additional one-way, univariate ANOVAs were carried out for each of the six Agreeableness facets. Significant results were found for five of the six facets: Trust, $F(1, 78) = 6.61; p = .012$, Straightforwardness, $F(1, 78) = 15.4; p < .001$, Compliance, $F(1, 78) = 6.60; p = .012$, Modesty, $F(1, 78) = 12.21; p = .001$, and Tender-Mindedness, $F(1, 78) = 17.14; p < .001$. Surprisingly, the only facet not significant was Altruism. For each of the significant facets, exemplars consistently scored higher than the individuals in the comparison group (see Table 4).
Table 3

Mean T-scores on the Five Trait Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait Dimensions</th>
<th>Moral Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>54.3 (12.21)</td>
<td>52.4 (9.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>57.7 (10.16)</td>
<td>56.1 (9.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>58.3 (10.62)</td>
<td>58.3 (10.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>53.5 (9.77)</td>
<td>44.4 (9.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>48.0 (13.12)</td>
<td>47.7 (12.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDs are in parentheses.
Table 4

Mean T-scores on the Facets of Agreeableness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreeableness Facets</th>
<th>Moral Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>51.2 (1.67)</td>
<td>45.1 (1.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforwardness</td>
<td>53.9 (1.63)</td>
<td>44.7 (1.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>52.3 (1.50)</td>
<td>51.2 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>50.4 (1.72)</td>
<td>44.1 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>53.4 (1.54)</td>
<td>44.7 (1.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tender-Mindedness</td>
<td>57.8 (1.58)</td>
<td>48.5 (1.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDs are in parentheses.
3.6.2 Nomination Forms

From the nomination forms, a list of trait types words used to describe the moral exemplars was isolated by Donahue’s (1993) computer program. To determine if there were any differences in the frequency of words falling into one of the five trait dimension categories, a gender (male vs. female) X factor (five dimensions) X pole (high vs. low) mixed-model ANOVA was performed with frequency of traits as the dependent variable. Main effects for both factor (indicating differences in frequency of trait terms used across the five dimensions) and pole (indicating more desirable traits than undesirable traits) were revealed, F(4, 152) = 12.40, p < .001 and F(1, 38) = 36.08, p < .001 respectively. As well, there was a pole X factor interaction, F(4, 152) = 16.61, p < .001 effect. Scheffé multiple-comparison tests revealed that on the high pole there were significantly more Conscientiousness and Agreeableness traits than on the other factors. On the low pole, there were significantly more Introversion traits than on the other factors (see Table 5 and Figure 2). Thus, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Introversion appear to be salient dimensions in people’s perception of moral exemplars in contrast to the dimensions of Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience, which appear to be less relevant.

A few notes need to be mentioned: First, while the other dimensions show a large desirability contrast between the poles, the Extroversion/Introversion factor is more evaluatively neutral. That is, introverted-type descriptors such as modest, humble, and servile are not generally considered undesirable traits to possess. Second, Donahue uses the pole label of Emotional Stability, which reflects the positive, desirable pole of the Neuroticism dimension.
Table 5

Most Frequent Attributes Illustrating Each of the Big-Five Personality Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big-Five Personality Factors</th>
<th>Extroversion</th>
<th>Agreeableness</th>
<th>Conscientiousness</th>
<th>Emotional Stability</th>
<th>Openness to Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servile*</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved</td>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Sure</td>
<td>Clear-thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>Unashamed</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Gullible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyful</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thinker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* low pole trait (the rest being high pole traits)

Figure 2. Mean number of attributes reflecting each of the Big-Five personality factors.
3.7 Discussion

The finding that exemplars were significantly higher on Agreeableness, showing a moderate effect size, was supportive of the prediction, and consistent with past findings. Certainly, the higher facet score on Straightforwardness (i.e., sincere) and Compliance (i.e., forgiving) for moral exemplars were consistent with what is known about people's general conception of moral exemplars (Walker & Pitts, 1998). For the facet of Trust, the results were consistent with Hart and Fegley's study. Their care exemplars defined themselves as being trustworthy and honest. On Modesty, the findings supported Colby and Damon's sense of humility within their exemplars. Finally, a pervasive finding in the moral exemplar literature (Colby & Damon, 1992; Oliner & Oliner, 1988) and the volunteer literature (Allen & Rushton, 1983) is that individuals involved in volunteer and other related work are empathic people. Empirical evidence has consistently shown that empathy is causally related to prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). These findings have led Batson (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Batson, Dyck, Brandt, & Batson, 1988; Bateson, O’Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983) to propose and find support for his empathy-altruism hypothesis; that sympathy evokes altruistic motivation to have the other's need reduced, while personal distress does not. These findings are further supported by this study's result which demonstrated moral exemplars to be higher on the facet of Tender-Mindedness (i.e., sympathy) than individuals in the comparison group.

While the above results are informative, also of value are the results showing no significant group differences. First, within Agreeableness, it was curious that there was no difference on Altruism. That is, both groups scored the same on this facet. A potential
reason could be related to what this facet actually represents. First, reading the list of items, most do not reflect what people would consider as capturing the nature of altruism. For example, it is difficult to conceive how people’s responses to the items “I try to be courteous to everyone I meet” and “Some people think of me as cold and calculating” (reversed item) are necessarily reflective of the selfless nature associated with altruism. Second, those items that may be considered to reflect altruism (i.e., “I’m not known for my generosity” and “I go out of my way to help others if I can”), never define how one conceives of “others.” It may be true that both groups are actively helping “others.” However, the difference not reflected in the items is to whom or what “others” is referring. Based on the interviews with the comparison group of individuals, there is the sense that they are actively concerned about “others,” and that these others are comprised of close family and friends with whom they daily interact. However, for the moral exemplars, their concerns seem to extend beyond family and friends to include strangers whom they do not know very well, yet feel obliged to help. Thus, the lack of difference on Altruism is difficult to interpret.

Another important finding was that on four of the five factors no significant differences between the groups emerged. Therefore, Colby and Damon’s (1992) qualitative findings suggesting that exemplars stand out on the factors of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness-to-Experience, and Conscientiousness was not supported by the findings in this study. Whether this was due to the differences between the characteristics of their sample and this sample, or due to the fact that there actually are no differences on these specific factors awaits further investigation.
On Conscientiousness, it was particularly surprising that there were no group differences in light of past empirical studies suggesting otherwise. Recall that Oliner and Oliner (1988) found their rescuers to demonstrate more social responsibility compared to nonrescuers. Allen and Rushton (1983), in their review article on community health volunteers, found volunteers to perceive themselves as more conscientious and self-efficacious than non-volunteers. As well, Piliavin and Charng (1990), in their review article on altruism, cited studies showing that individuals higher in competence are more likely to be involved in prosocial behaviors. Competence is another Conscientiousness facet. Together, there is substantial empirical evidence suggesting a relationship between the Conscientiousness and morally exemplary actions.

Moreover, Schwartz (1970) also found that bone marrow donor registrants were higher on attribution of responsibility to the self relative to non-registrants. This sense of responsibility is best reflected in the Conscientiousness facet of Dutifulness (i.e., sense of moral obligation). In fact, this sense of social responsibility, or what Omoto and Snyder (1990) have referred to as value-expressive concerns, has been found to be a consistent discriminator between volunteers and non-volunteers (Clary & Snyder, 1991). Given these findings, it is somewhat perplexing to find the result from this study bucking the past trends.

In another study on adolescents’ and young adults’ helping behavior by Killen and Turiel (1998), the researchers report that with increasing age, helping behavior became viewed less as an obligation, and more as a personal choice. Further, many of the studies on volunteers cited in Allen and Rushton (1983) focused on college student or other adult samples. In these adult studies, social responsibility was cited as the most
important reason for volunteering. In an attempt to make sense of these studies, it is possible that there is a developmental progression from a sense of duty that is based on authoritarian prescription, to personal choice, followed by social obligation. That is, at a younger age, people help others because adults in authority expect it. As they get older, they realize it is a personal choice. In adulthood, individuals understand helping others to be a social responsibility or a moral obligation. Therefore, it could be that the young adult sample in this study is not at the developmental juncture of understanding helping behavior in a social responsibility perspective. Further investigation into this possible interpretation would be useful.

3.8 Summary

The fact that the other four factors did not reveal any group differences does not diminish the significant and strong finding that the groups do differ on Agreeableness. That is, relative to the individuals in the comparison group, moral exemplars are reported to be more trusting and honest, sincere, forgiving, humble, and sympathetic. This finding adds to the body of literature suggesting that there just may be a "moral exemplar personality." However, to state this emphatically based on only trait-type measures is unwise given the moderate effect size produced. In pointing out the limitation of Oliner and Oliner's (1988) findings, Colby and Damon (1992) write:

To capture the mystery of what these special people did, we surely need to go beyond their happily ordered childhoods, their sense of control over their lives, and their empathic natures. Many people share these fortuitous life conditions and personality attributes, yet not many extend themselves
in the noble and courageous manner of the Holocaust rescuers. (p. 7)

Similarly, there are many people who score high on Agreeableness and yet have not been nominated to be moral exemplars, are not involved in morally exemplary kinds of actions, nor do they desire to become involved in these sorts of endeavors. Thus, to understand what makes moral exemplars unique requires that researchers move beyond traits.

Within the personality psychology body of research, psychologists like McAdams (1992b, 1995) have been critical of those who have been blinded by a trait-only approach to personality, failing to recognize there may be more to people than simply their traits. Admittedly, traits do add important information about the dispositional, decontextualized profile of a person. Yet, McAdams (1995) rightly argues that “trait attributions themselves yield little beyond a ‘psychology of the stranger’” (p. 365). To combat this limiting approach to studying personality, McAdams encourages personologists to continue to explore the other two levels of personality research, personal concerns and life stories, in order to more fully know a person.
CHAPTER IV. Personal Concerns – Personal Projects

4.1 Introduction

One of the strengths of identifying personality traits is that they are believed to be relatively stable across time and situations. However, for some, this is a weakness. Since traits are considered to be relatively stable, critics have argued that trait theories are superficial and reductionistic, and that they merely provide labels without really explaining anything (McAdams, 1995). While such claims seem extreme, it is acknowledged that there may be important contextual factors not accounted for by trait theories. Even McCrae and Costa (1996) suggest that the understanding of people and their life course can be enriched by a more fine-grained or molecular analysis beyond simply knowing their traits, which assesses people’s personality at a molar level.

At a molecular level of analysis, or what has been labeled as personal concerns, attention is drawn to “a person’s conscious articulation of what he or she is trying to do during a given period of life, what goals and goal-based concerns occupy salient positions in everyday consciousness” (McAdams, 1994, p. 304). Many research programs explore personality at this more molecular, middle-level unit of analysis (see Cantor, 1990; McAdams, 1995). They focus on understanding the intentional structure of personality-in-context where measures accommodate to specific life circumstances while still showing enough regularity that individual-difference comparisons can be readily made (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990). Thus, the hallmarks of middle-level measures are that they can be readily concretized with reference to everyday activities and life settings, and still generalized with reference to higher-order themes or meanings in life.
The number of research programs falling within this middle level is substantial. Therefore, to narrow this project's scope, cognitive and developmental research perspectives are taken. Within the cognitive perspective, studying people's personal projects is one approach adopted that reveals the "forward-looking, creative cognitive side of personality" (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990, p. 135). Here the past and the future are linked through the cognitive strategies of planning, implementation, monitoring, and retrospection of experiences designed to meet people's needs within a social-cultural context. In addition to studying people's personal projects, this dissertation explores people's ego functioning (Haan, 1977), which assesses the ego strategies people use to negotiate through the "ups" and "downs" of life. On the development side, the variables considered include ego identity formation, moral reasoning, and faith development. According to McAdams (1995), these development-related variables fall within this middle level of personality research due to their sensitivity to contextual influences, particularly development. In the coming chapters, each of the above variables will be investigated to determine the role they play in distinguishing the moral exemplars from the comparison individuals. To begin with, people's personal projects are considered.

4.2 Personal Projects

One of the middle level approaches adopted in this study is the exploration of people's personal projects (Little, 1983). Generally, personal projects are behavioral acts that are performed in order to accomplish set goals that are personally relevant (Little, Lecci, & Watkinson, 1992). These personal projects reflect the unique actions in which a person is engaged, and can serve to distinguish one person from another at a more concrete level of abstraction. Moreover, these cognitive-motivational units draw explicit
attention to future-oriented, forward-looking aspects of personality in that the projects undertaken relate to higher-order motives and needs. Thus, “individuals can articulate their goals at many levels of abstraction, from the higher-order themes that energize their activity, to the concrete projects in which those themes are reflected and that organize and give special meaning to ongoing daily life activity” (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990, p. 150).

Much of the work on personal projects, and the related concepts of life tasks and personal strivings, comes from three psychologists. Emmons (1986) employs the term personal strivings to refer to “what individuals are characteristically aiming to accomplish through their behavior or the purpose or purposes that a person is trying to carry out” (p. 1058). Unlike personal projects and life tasks, personal strivings are considered at a higher level of abstraction. That is, while the personal strivings approach is sensitive to contextual influences on the sample at any particular time, its purpose is to capture the recurrent, stable, consistently expressed, characteristic forms of goal strivings spanning time and place.

In contrast, Cantor’s life task approach (Cantor, 1990; Cantor & Langston, 1989; Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987) is at a lower level of abstraction. She defines life tasks as “the problem(s) that individuals see themselves as working on in a particular life period or life transition, as a way to characterize each individual’s unique efforts to negotiate the demands of his or her age- and social/cultural-group in a personally viable manner” (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990, p. 150). Within this definition, Cantor makes clear the emphasis she places on contextual factors, which shape the specific actions undertaken to accomplish the tasks.
Similarly, Little's (1983, 1989) personal projects approach is highly context sensitive, and is adopted in this study for that reason and for its methodological versatility. According to Little, people are influenced by competing biological, environmental, social, and cultural systems. A central and continuing task of the human condition is to form a coherent balance between these disparate, and often conflicting, sources of influence. A strategy to deal with this task is through the planning and enactment of one's own personal projects. The substance of these projects, and the style in which they are individually constructed and collectively managed will reflect the environment in which the individual is embedded, as well as reflect aspects of the individual's own personal identity. Therefore, the assessment of personal projects adds to the knowledge about the individual by understanding what is personally salient to him or her within a particular context.

4.3 Personal Projects Assessment

To assess people's personal projects, Little's (1983, 1989) Personal Projects Analysis methodology (PPA) was employed (see Appendix E). The PPA consists of four different instruments, of which three were used in order to keep the battery of questionnaires participants had to complete manageable. The first instrument is called the Personal Projects Elicitation List, which requests respondents to write down the content of their current personal projects. Typically, the mean number of projects listed is 15. The second instrument, the Project Rating Matrix, asks individuals to appraise ten

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4 The fourth instrument is Act-Laddering and Value-Laddering and is too time consuming. It was developed to study the linkages between projects and other units of analysis at different levels of molarity such as superordinate values, motives, or goals. The procedure involves asking participants to generate for each project a series of acts that would answer the following questions, "How will you be carrying out this project over the next week or so?" Participants are also requested to list their answers to the question, "Why are you engaged in this project?"
projects listed that they are most likely to be engaged in on 17 evaluative dimensions (importance, enjoyment, difficulty, visibility, control, initiation, stress, time adequacy, outcome, self-identity, others’ view, value congruency, positive impact, negative impact, progress, challenge, and absorption) using a 11-point scale (0-10). Two additional dimensions were included, one asking participants to list the names of other people involved in each of the projects, and the second to list the places where the project typically takes place. In terms of test-retest reliability, the Project Rating Matrix has shown a moderate degree of stability in project dimensions over a 2-week period (Little, 1988). The third instrument included in the PPA packet is the Project Cross-Impact Matrix. Here a 10 X 10 matrix is constructed with personal projects listed on both axes. Participants are then asked to go down the list of projects and rate the impact that each project has on every other project using positive (+) or negative (-) signs. Ratings range from −2 to +2. Negative two (-2), represented by two negative (−) signs, means that one project is having a very negative impact on the other. A negative one score (-1), represented by a single negative (-) sign, means the project is having a negative impact on the other. In contrast, a single positive (+) sign is coded as +1 meaning the project is having a positive impact, and two positive (++) signs, coded as +2, means that one project is having a very positive impact on the other project. From these ratings, a single score is obtained by adding the positive signs and then subtracting the negative signs. This score provides an indication of the extent to which there is conflict or cohesion in the overall project system.

One of the unique features of the Project Rating Matrix is that given the context, one can add or subtract rating dimensions according to one’s research purpose. The
recommended next step is to factor analyze the dimensions to determine which of them “hang together.” These factors then serve as predictors of the dependent variable of interest. Much of Little’s (see 1988) research has been devoted to confirming a five-factor model from a standard 15 evaluative dimensions. These 15 dimensions load separately on the following factors: Meaning, Structure, Community, Stress, and Efficacy. The Meaning factor (enjoyment, value congruency, self-identity, absorption, importance) taps whether one’s pursuits are seen as worthwhile or worthless. The Structure factor (initiation, control, time adequacy) assesses the extent to which projects are collectively organized or in disarray. The Community factor (visibility, other’s view) evaluates the extent to which projects are both known and supported by others. The Stress factor (stress, challenge, difficulty) captures whether the demands of projects exceed one’s capacity to cope with them. Lastly, the Efficacy factor (progress, outcome) probes how well one’s undertakings have been, and will continue to be progressing. Factor scores are obtained by averaging across the dimension scores making up the factor.

Ideally, the approach to take would be to follow a similar protocol and factor analyze the 15 dimensions to derive a reduced set of factors. Unfortunately, this project’s sample is too small to legitimately do this (see Kline, 1993). Instead, Little’s (1988) five-factor structure is adopted based on his claim that these factors are fairly robust when factor analysis is restricted to the 15 dimensions.

4.4 Predictions

Within moral philosophy, there has been a debate around the issue of personal versus impersonal demands on the individual when facing moral decisions. When our
sense of moral duty comes into conflict with our personal commitments, how are we to act? Williams (1981) questions the Kantian assumption of foregoing personal ties to take an impartial, impersonal perspective. For Williams, there is no good reason one should forego his or her personal projects for the sake of impersonal moral duty. Here, the assumption Williams makes is that personal projects and moral duty are competing commitments. However, in the case of Colby and Damon’s (1992) contemporary moral exemplars, some of their personal projects in fact reflect their moral commitment and duty. Instead of there being tension between moral duty and personal projects, there is unity. Colby and Damon (1992) write:

Our exemplars have been invulnerable to the debilitating psychological effects of privation because all they have needed for personal success is the productive pursuit of their moral mission. Their hopes for themselves and their own destinies are largely defined by their moral goals. In the end, it is this unity between self and morality that makes them exceptional. (pp. 300-301)

These moral exemplars, like the rest of us, have personal projects to which they are committed. One apparent difference though, is the integration of their moral and personal commitments.

While no past studies on moral exemplars have assessed their personal projects through empirical means, there have been studies that have considered this issue in a more qualitative, descriptive fashion. Colby and Damon (1992), for instance, illustrated the importance of personal projects to moral exemplars’ identity. They mentioned that
these projects are "broader than the self." While other people take on tasks motivated by the direct benefit to themselves, moral exemplars have committed their lives to concerns extending beyond their self-interest, such as the welfare of others or society as a whole. This is consistent with Hart et al.'s (1995) observation that the goals of their adolescent exemplars were focused on helping others. Second, for Colby and Damon's moral exemplars, there was a sense of obligation associated with these projects. They believed there was no question of choice whether they should or should not take on the "moral" project. Rather, they simply had to do it! Finally, as mentioned previously, the exemplars' moral goals defined much of their self-concept: "Their hopes for themselves and their own destinies are largely defined by their moral goals" (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 300). Given these observations, it was predicted that there would be more congruence across their projects, as reflected by higher, positive scores on their Cross-Impact Matrix relative to individuals in the comparison group.

As for the five project factors, recalling additional findings from Colby and Damon's (1992) study, it was predicted that moral exemplars would have projects that are rated to be more difficult given the unique challenges involved in their line of work. Thus, exemplars would score higher on the Stress factor compared to those in the comparison group. However, given these challenges, moral exemplars may find their work rewarding and, therefore, more enjoyable and meaningful. Hence, it was predicted that exemplars would score higher on the factor of Meaning. Finally, since their work tended to involve others, moral exemplars' projects would be rated higher on the Community factor.
4.5 Results

4.5.1 Impact Scores

A gender (male vs. female) X group (exemplar vs. comparison) ANOVA was carried out with the Cross-Impact Matrix scores acting as the dependent variable. Again, age and years of education were partialed out of these analyses. The only effect emerging was for gender, $F(1, 74) = 12.86, p < .002, \eta^2 = .15$: Males’ Cross-Impact Matrix ratings were higher ($M = 13.55, SD = 24.14$) than females ($M = -8.95, SD = 31.12$). Thus, our initial prediction that moral exemplars would have a more positive Cross-Impact Matrix did not materialize. Overall, for both groups combined, projects were having only a very slight positive impact on each other (see Table 6). Moreover, for gender, males’ Cross-Impact Matrix scores were significant higher than their female counterparts’ reflecting the fact that, overall, the projects of males are having more of a positive impact on each other compared to females.

An alternate way to assess the impact projects have on one another is to compare groups on the positive and negative impact rating dimensions. The Positive Impact dimension assesses whether the project being evaluated “increases your chances of working on other projects.” Likewise, the Negative Impact dimension assesses whether the project being evaluated “seriously hinders your chances of working on other projects.” Generally, one would expect there to be a strong correlation between these measures and the Cross-Impact Matrix score.

When the groups were compared on these specific dimensions, a significant difference emerged for Positive Impact only, $F(1,74) = 4.65, p = .034, \eta^2 = .06$: Exemplars generally rate their projects as having less of a positive impact on the other
projects (M = 5.72, SD = 2.18) relative to those in the comparison group (M = 6.77, SD = 2.07) (see Table 6). This finding is surprising on two counts. First, it is inconsistent with the Cross-Impact Matrix finding. Second, it is contrary to what was predicted. In regards to the first count, it could be that the positive and negative impact dimensions are capturing something conceptually different from the Cross-Impact Matrix score. The dimensions treat Positive Impact and Negative Impact as independent constructs, while the Cross-Impact Matrix treats positive and negative impact as related constructs. However, the correlation between Positive and Negative Impact is not significant (r = -.03) suggesting that it may be wiser to treat them as separate constructs. In addressing the second count, it is surprising that, overall, exemplars found their projects to have less of a positive impact on each other. There are a number of possible reasons for this; however, this will be saved for later discussion. It also should be noted that the effect size for this variable was small.
Table 6

Mean Scores for Cross-Impact Matrix, Positive Impact, and Negative Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Impact Matrix(^a)</td>
<td>3.63 (29.15)</td>
<td>.98 (30.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact(^b)</td>
<td>5.72 (2.18)</td>
<td>6.77 (2.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impact(^b)</td>
<td>2.71 (2.18)</td>
<td>3.05 (2.13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Cross-Impact Matrix scores can range from \(-180\) to \(+180\).

\(^b\) Positive and Negative Impact dimension scores can range from \(0\) to \(10\).

**Note.** SDs are in parentheses.
4.5.2 Project Rating Scores

In the second set of analyses, participants' project ratings were studied by performing a MANOVA with group and gender as the independent variables, the five project factors as dependent variables, and age and years of education as covariates. A significant main effect emerged for group, $F(5, 70) = 2.57, p = .034, \eta^2 = .16$. Further one-way, univariate ANOVAs for each of the five factors revealed no significant differences between the two groups on Meaning, Community, and Stress factors, as predicted, as well as no significant group difference on the Efficacy factor (see Table 7). However, there was a single significant group effect for the Structure factor, $F(1, 78) = 7.65, p = .007, \eta^2 = .09$. The effect reflects the fact that the moral exemplars ($M = 6.81, SD = .93$) scored lower than the individuals in the comparison group ($M = 7.35, SD = .81$): Moral exemplars felt their personal projects were less "under control" than comparison group individuals. However, the effect size for the group difference on project structure was modest.

In beginning to understand these findings, it needs to be stated that the predictions made were based on the assumption that the personal projects listed would be of personal significance to the individuals. In fact, this may not be the case given that individuals were asked to list everyday kinds of projects. Many of these activities included mundane activities like cleaning the house or shopping. Generally, these projects seem less meaningful than other kinds of projects. To determine whether this was the case, a content analysis of the project was performed to see if the projects could be divided into clear-cut categories, and to determine whether there were differences between groups
within the categories on the project factors and dimensions. These findings are presented next.
Table 7

Mean Factor Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>7.12 (.95)</td>
<td>7.16 (.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>6.81 (.93)</td>
<td>7.35 (.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>5.65 (1.31)</td>
<td>5.88 (1.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>4.87 (1.13)</td>
<td>5.06 (.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>6.33 (.93)</td>
<td>6.74 (1.21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factor scores can range from 0 to 10. SDs are in parentheses.
4.5.3 Content Analyses

Combined, 798 projects were generated by the entire sample, with 399 projects for each group. These 798 projects were sorted into categories based on commonalities in the kinds of activities listed. This exercise led to the distillation of 16 subcategories, which were further collapsed into seven broad categories (see Table 8). The seven categories were Academics, Work, Maintenance/Errands, Interpersonal, Health, Intrapersonal, and Sports & Leisure. Content analysis reliability was performed by a second independent rater who classified the 798 projects into the 17 subcategories. Reliability was measured by the percentage rate of agreement between the two raters, and found to be 90%. When the subcategories were collapsed into the broader categories, the reliability increased to 92%. When the list of projects was divided into the seven categories, the most frequently cited categories were Sports & Leisure followed by Maintenance/Errands, Interpersonal, Work, Academics, Health, and Intrapersonal.

In order to determine group differences in content categories at the individual level, the sum of projects for each of the seven categories were calculated for every participant. A MANOVA was carried out with group and gender as the independent variables, the seven content categories as the dependent variables, and age and years of education as covariates. While there was no gender effect, there was a group effect, $F(7, 68) = 2.88$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .23$. Further one-way, univariate ANOVAs were performed for each of the seven content categories, with Health, $F(1, 78) = 6.71$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .08$ and Intrapersonal, $F(1, 78) = 6.06$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .07$ showing significant group effects. Comparison ($M = 1.25, SD = .95$) individuals listed health-related projects more frequently than exemplars ($M = .77, SD = .66$). In contrast, exemplars ($M = 1.25, SD = $
1.10) listed Intrapersonal projects more frequently than comparisons individuals (M = .70, SD = .88) (see Table 9).
Table 8

Personal Project Content Categories (Percent Composition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>9.5 %</td>
<td>13.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work (job, finances)</td>
<td>13.8 %</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>18.6 %</td>
<td>19.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal (partner, family, friends/others)</td>
<td>13.0 %</td>
<td>16.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal (reading, self-developing, spiritual)</td>
<td>12.3 %</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure (sports &amp; leisure, volunteering, hobbies, group events, traveling, relaxing)</td>
<td>24.8 %</td>
<td>18.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Subcategories are in parentheses.
Table 9

Personal Project Category Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>.95 (1.06)</td>
<td>1.35 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>1.40 (1.50)</td>
<td>1.25 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>1.87 (1.83)</td>
<td>1.88 (1.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>1.25 (1.10)</td>
<td>1.60 (1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.77 (.66)</td>
<td>1.25 (.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>1.25 (1.10)</td>
<td>.70 (.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>2.45 (1.88)</td>
<td>1.88 (1.20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDs are in parentheses.
4.5.4 Project Meaning

While it is informative to know the types of projects people are engaged in, and the frequency in which they are cited, this does not tell us much about their perceived significance. In order to explore this issue, the project meaning scores for each of the seven content categories were further studied. In this set of analyses, the unit of analysis is at the project level. As well, the Project Meaning score was trimmed to include two dimensions thought to be most pertinent to the study of moral exemplars, namely, Self-identity and Value Congruency. Self-identity is an important dimension because it was of interest to know which projects are closely aligned with the self. Value Congruency is important because it reflects those projects that are consistent with one’s values. The scores from these two dimensions were averaged to produce a revised Project Meaning score in this section. Since the number of projects in the content categories was unequal, ANOVAs could not be performed without violating the homogeneity of variance assumption among groups (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Hence, descriptive statistical analyses were pursued instead.

When the means of the revised meaning factor were compared across the seven categories, some group differences were apparent (see Table 10). For the exemplars, the project categories that were rated the most “meaningful” in descending order were Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Academics. In contrast, the comparison individuals rated Sports and Leisure as most meaningful followed by Interpersonal, then Intrapersonal, followed by Academics. These results suggest that the two groups place slightly different priority of importance, as reflected in their value and identity commitments, on different kinds of projects. In particular, the important role sports and
leisure plays is unique to the comparison individuals. Second, there is a greater range of means across the seven content domains for the exemplars as contrasted with the comparison individuals. This suggests that the exemplars perceive their world with clearer distinctions of what is considered more and less meaningful projects. Comparison individuals make less of a distinction between content categories suggesting that, generally speaking, their projects as a collective group are fairly meaningful to them.
Table 10

Mean Project Meaning Scores across Content Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>8.67 (1.61)</td>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>8.31 (1.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>8.63 (8.63)</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>8.17 (1.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>8.24 (1.61)</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>8.10 (8.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>7.70 (2.06)</td>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>8.03 (1.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>7.51 (2.21)</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>7.65 (2.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>7.44 (1.98)</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>7.57 (2.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>6.66 (2.65)</td>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>7.36 (2.39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Project Meaning scores can range from 0 to 10. SDs are in parentheses.
4.5.5 Project Structure

Since Structure was one factor where group differences were found in the initial MANOVA, it was of interest to know if there was one content domain where the discrepancy between the groups was sufficient to account for the finding. Based on the means, on all content categories exemplars scored lower on Structure than comparison individuals (see Table 11). In particular, for the Academic category there was a profound difference with exemplars scoring substantially lower than their comparison counterpart.

4.5.6 Positive Impact

Finally, since Positive Impact was another dimension where group differences emerged, it also was of interest to know if this effect was pervasive across content domains, or an isolated effect. The means suggest that there is a general trend of exemplars scoring lower than comparison individuals: On all content categories except Intrapersonal the exemplar group scored lower (see Table 12). Further, there were large discrepancies between groups on the categories of Academics and Work. Academic and work-related projects appear to be having substantially less of a positive impact on the exemplars' other projects relative to the comparison individuals.
Table 11

Mean Structure Scores across Content Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>6.36 (2.00)</td>
<td>8.00 (1.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>6.55 (1.47)</td>
<td>7.14 (2.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>7.09 (1.65)</td>
<td>7.33 (2.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>6.46 (1.91)</td>
<td>6.60 (1.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>6.65 (2.04)</td>
<td>7.44 (1.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>6.84 (1.92)</td>
<td>7.55 (1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>7.08 (1.87)</td>
<td>7.57 (1.49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Project Structure scores can range from 0 to 10. SDs are in parentheses.
### Table 12

*Mean Positive Impact Scores across Content Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>4.37 (3.31)</td>
<td>7.41 (3.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>5.84 (3.59)</td>
<td>7.56 (3.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Errands</td>
<td>4.86 (3.58)</td>
<td>5.91 (3.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>6.35 (2.93)</td>
<td>7.20 (3.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>6.03 (3.52)</td>
<td>7.34 (3.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>6.94 (3.50)</td>
<td>6.59 (3.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>5.76 (3.25)</td>
<td>6.00 (3.35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Positive Impact scores can range from 0 to 10. SDs are in parentheses.
4.6 Discussion

One of the results reported by Colby and Damon (1992) was the sense of unity between self and morality for their moral exemplars. One way of empirically testing this qualitative finding was to study the personal projects exemplars are engaged in to determine whether there is a sense of unity to these everyday tasks. Little’s Cross-Impact Matrix provides a method by which to assess this. However, the result from this study showed no difference in the Cross-Impact scores between the exemplar and comparison groups. Moreover, when project unity was assessed using Positive and Negative Impact scores, the findings revealed a group difference on Positive Impact scores with the exemplar group scoring lower than the comparison group, contrary to the initial prediction. Therefore, in contrast to Colby and Damon’s finding, the exemplars in this study are not showing the same unity between their personal commitments as assessed by the coherence in their personal projects. Why is this?

There are a number of potential reasons for this finding. One reason could relate to the fact that the PPA measure may be at too low a level of abstraction in the projects it requests from participants. People are asked to generate everyday projects that come to mind, and can include the mundane, daily chores along with noble acts of charity without discrimination. Hence, there is no way to explicitly distinguish between those projects that are designed to fulfill important life goals from those that are designed to complete the routine tasks of everyday living like cleaning the bathroom. They are all combined in the mix. In Colby and Damon’s study, these routine tasks were ignored in order to focus on those projects that contribute to the larger life goals of their exemplars. Hence, the
PPA may not provide the opportunity to fairly assess the unity existing among the important projects that give meaning and significance to one’s life.

At any rate, although the effect sizes are modest, the fact remains that the everyday projects of moral exemplars were reported to be in greater disarray and have less of a positive impact on other projects when contrasted to the comparison group. These findings could reflect demographic differences between the two groups that were not controlled. For instance, while every one of the comparison individuals were full-time or part-time students, many of the moral exemplars were no longer students, having left university to enter the working world. Student life and working life are different lifestyles. It may be that the demands of work may be so pressing as to negatively affect how they negotiate their other projects in comparison to those focusing on their university studies.

Beyond the group differences, the PPA methodology provides a unique glimpse into the lives of people in the context of their everyday activities, and reflects the reality that much of people’s days are devoted to accomplishing mundane tasks associated with living. This is illustrated in the finding that many of participants’ projects were devoted to maintenance jobs and doing errands. Moreover, these types of projects produce the lowest scores in terms of personal meaning to the participants. In contrast, interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and sports and leisure projects were the most meaningful.

However, there were some group differences. For instance, moral exemplars cited intrapersonal projects more frequently than the comparison individuals. In contrast, comparison individuals cited more health-related projects than the moral exemplars. As
well, one significant group difference found was that for the moral exemplar group, their projects were having less of a positive impact on the other projects relative to the comparison group, and this difference was found in six of the seven content categories. These results suggest that the projects as a system seem to have less coherence for the exemplar group. This is further supported by similar findings on the Structure dimension illustrating that the moral exemplars' projects, as a collective group, are in greater disarray than the comparison individuals' projects. While much of the results presented are more descriptive in nature, they provide a sense of what people are engaged in, and how they evaluate their activities. Moreover, these findings give some indication of how the two groups are differing in reference to how they spend their time, the meaning associated with their daily activities, and how they are handling their projects as a collective group. These descriptive results provide a springboard into further empirical research on these and related topics.

4.7 Summary

Certainly knowing about individuals' perception of their personal projects has added contextually rich information missed by a myopic trait view of personality. In this study, moral exemplars expressed that their projects were having less of a positive impact on the other projects, and that as a whole their project systems were less organized. These novel findings shed additional light on the ways the two groups differ. However the effect sizes are small, suggesting there may be additional variables that could help explain group differences.

5 Recall that the comparison participants were recruited from the Department of Psychology subject pool and upper-year psychology classes.
As McAdams (1995) mentioned, the kind of variables falling under this middle-level unit of analysis umbrella is vast. To add to the existing knowledge regarding moral personality at this level, additional variables are considered. In the next chapter, ego functioning (Haan, 1977) is studied to determine its potential role in distinguishing the two groups.
CHAPTER V. Personal Concerns – Ego Functioning

5.1 Introduction

In turning to ego functioning, attention shifts from studying the “Me,” through traits and personal projects, to the “I.” The I, or what also has been referred to as the ego, is the part of the self that processes information regarding the self. In drawing connections between the I and Me, McAdams (1998) places the ego outside of the three levels of personality research: “It [The ego] is the authorial process, the synthetic selfing function that stands outside the three levels, the orienting perspective from which the three levels are subjectively viewed” (p. 35). One of the few ways in which the ego has been studied in its pure form is in Loevinger’s (1976) work on ego development. Other attempts to study the ego have entailed studying both the I and the Me. Included in this latter category are defense mechanisms (Cramer, 1991) and cognitive strategies (Cantor et al., 1987). McAdams (1995) placed these programs under the personal concerns level of personality research.

5.2 Ego Functioning

An alternate approach to studying the ego has come from Haan (1977) in her work on ego functioning. As Haan (1977) writes: “The view of ego to be developed here is that it is exclusively processes, specifically the ceaseless acts of people assimilating new information about themselves and their environments and accommodating to these assimilations by constructing actions that attain and re-attain an unremitting series of dynamic equilibriums” (p. 33). For Haan, the ego serves to maintain a consistent and coherent sense of self by using specific processes. The selection of processes one uses...
also reflects part of one’s personality or character (Lapsley, 1996). Therefore, similar to Cramer’s (1991) defense mechanisms, Haan’s ego functioning represents a bit of both the I and the Me, and thus is categorized at the level of personal concerns.

Haan (1977) identified two general modes of ego functioning, coping and defending. In everyday, low stress situations people will rely on their coping processes. This is considered the normative mode of ego functioning. Coping processes permit the person’s logic, wisdom, productivity, civility, and sensuality to be authentically reflected in his or her actions. In times of high anxiety and stress, a person may act out of the ordinary by resorting to the use of defensive processes. These processes allow the person to negate or distort reality in order to reduce the anxiety without addressing the actual problem.

Further, Haan identifies 20 processes (ten coping and ten corresponding defending processes) people use in dealing with life events (see Appendix I). These 20 processes are grouped into four categories according to their general function: (a) Cognitive processes represent the instrumental aspects of one’s problem-solving efforts and involve the accommodation of other perspectives; (b) Intraceptive-reflexive processes reflect a person’s effort to assimilate his or her thoughts, feelings, and intuitions; (c) Attention-focusing processes reflect the effort to be aware of and to focus on important problems; and (d) Affective-impulse Regulating processes represent the effort to transform primitive feelings and emotions to forms which are accommodating to the social context. By identifying the ego processes people use, insight into another aspect of their personality is gained. While Haan (Haan, Aerts, & Cooper, 1985) admitted
that ego functioning does not encompass all that there is to personality, she believed it
was an important area that will help to explain moral behavior.

5.2.1 Ego Functioning, Cognitive Structures, and Moral Reasoning

Haan’s (1977) work on ego functioning, to some extent, also was a response to
Kohlberg’s narrow conception of morality. Haan stated that “morality cannot solely be a
problem of linear, logical operations” (p. 109). In addition to reasoning, moral actions
involve intersubjective and intrasubjective considerations. That is, in making moral
decisions and taking action, people are not isolated islands. Rather, they are embedded
within a network of relationships where their actions affect others. As well, moral actions
also affect their own good, and therefore their own interests need to be taken into
account. Hence, how people actually negotiate through moral situations requires more
than just the ability to reason. It also requires strategies that enable them to negotiate the
interpersonal and intrapersonal complexities inherent in these situations. By focusing on
ego functioning, Haan was attempting to better understand these strategies.

In her attempt to re-conceptualize the moral domain, Haan laid out her
understanding of how ego processes and cognitive structures relate. According to Haan,
unlike ego processes, cognitive structures are deeper and more stable, fluctuating less
over time and circumstances. These cognitive structures can have both a limiting and
permitting effect on normative ego expression. That is, certain ego processes may require
a level of cognitive sophistication in order to develop. Hence, people’s use of ego
processes may be limited by their cognitive development.

As well, ego processes may function to distort cognitive expressions by negating
incoming information. In a particularly stressful situation, a person’s defensive style of
ego functioning may prevent all the information from being considered leading to actions that may reflect a less sophisticated cognitive structure than exists in reality. Over time, persistent use of defending functions will impede structural development. Defensive processes create a closed system preventing new information, which is important in challenging the existing structure, from being considered. New information that is more cognitively complex (i.e., higher stage reasoning) relative to one’s cognitive structure has been shown to be important in stimulating development (Walker, 1983). Defending processes are believed to act to prevent cognitively stimulating and challenging information from being considered. However, under less stressful, everyday situations, people will use normative coping processes allowing for an accurate expression of their underlying cognitive capabilities. The continual use of coping functions should facilitate structural development. The reason for this is that in a coping mode the person is open to entertaining new information that may end up challenging the existing cognitive structure stimulating the formation of a more complex structure.

There have been numerous studies demonstrating a relationship between ego functioning and moral reasoning. Haan, Stroud, and Holstein (1973) conducted a study of “hippies” that is of relevance to this current project. According to the authors, their hippies had the intention of improving conventional society through their “own loving and inward-looking way of living” (Haan et al., 1973, p. 596). Moral reasoning level, as measured by Kohlberg’s Moral Judgment Interview (MJI), and ego functioning, as determined through a psychiatric interview, were assessed for the hippies group. Haan et al. (1973) reported that there was a significant relationship between seven of the ten coping processes and level of moral reasoning. The seven processes represented the three
ego domains of cognitive, reflexive, and attention functioning. The three processes showing no relationship with moral reasoning were those representing the affective functioning domain. Further, no defensive functions were differentiated by the moral stages. Hence, for hippies, there was a relationship between moral reasoning and specific ego functioning domains.

In a longitudinal study by Hart and Chmiel (1992), moral reasoning levels of their male sample were measured in adolescence and adulthood. As well, adolescents’ general ego functioning based on their moral interview transcript was assessed using Haan’s (1977) Q-sort method. Hart and Chmiel reported that adolescent ego functioning predicted adult moral reasoning even after controlling for adolescent moral reasoning. Further, when looking at the level of individual processes, Hart and Chmiel found that the cognitive coping processes of Objectivity and Intellectuality to be positively associated with advances in moral judgment, and the defending processes of Isolation, Regression, Rationalization, and Denial to be inversely related to moral judgment development. The significance of this study is that the use of ego processes at one phase of life relates to moral reasoning level at a later life phase.

Finally, in Matsuba and Walker’s (1998) longitudinal study, children’s moral development was related to their ego functioning. Specifically, children’s moral reasoning and ego functioning were initially assessed with follow-up assessments of their moral reasoning at 3 years. Their results show that children’s initial ego functioning was predictive of their moral reasoning level 3 years later. Those who tended to use predominantly coping processes evidenced further development in their moral reasoning compared to those using predominantly defending processes.
5.3 Predictions

The past studies on ego functioning and morality have revolved around moral reasoning. In this study, it was of interest to know whether ego functioning styles was associated with morally exemplary behavior, a relationship not previously studied. Generally, it was predicted that moral exemplars would function under the coping mode more than the comparison individuals. This prediction is made in light of Colby and Damon’s (1992) finding that their exemplars tended to maintain a sense of positivity and hope in the face of adversity. Moreover, Colby and Damon reported that there is a strong sense of unity and integration to the identities of their moral exemplars. Therefore, it was predicted that moral exemplars would use more coping intraceptive-reflexive processes relative to those in the comparison group. Finally, given that exemplars were expected to be higher moral “reasoners” than the norm and that high moral reasoning has been positively associated with coping and negatively associated with defending cognitive processes, it was hypothesized that moral exemplars would use more coping and less defending cognitive processes than individuals in the comparison group.

5.4 Method

Participants’ ego functioning was assessed based on their life narratives. Through listening to their entire life stories, it is expected that one would be able to get a sense of how they deal with their triumphs and tragedies. It was believed that these life narratives would provide a rich source in which to determine each individual’s ego functioning.

Once the life narratives were transcribed, an experimenter read the transcript while listening to the audio-taped interview. Once that was completed, Haan’s (1977) Ego Q-Sort procedure was employed to assess ego functioning. The Ego Q-Sort
procedure involves sorting through 60 descriptive items and placing them into a fixed 9-step quasi-normal distribution, ranging from most uncharacteristic of the person (+1) through neutral (+5) to most characteristic (+9). The 60 items reflected the 10 coping and 10 defending processes with three items for each process. The score for each process was given by the average of the scores for the three items. The eight ego function scores were calculated by averaging the processes scores within that function. For instance, the cognitive coping function score was determined by averaging the cognitive coping processes Objectivity, Intellectuality, and Logical Analysis. Lastly, general coping was calculated as the sum of the difference between the coping functions and the defending functions (ranging from −16.44 to +16.44).

Interrater reliability for the Q-Sort was determined by independently coding 25% of the life narrative interview transcripts, and was calculated in terms of Q-correlation, assessing the similarity between the Q-sort distributions of the two raters (Block, 1962). Good interrater reliability is indicated by a Q-correlation above .40. Reliability averaged .70, which is well above the acceptable level.

5.5 Results

The first analysis looked at group differences on general coping. When an ANOVA was conducted with group and gender as the independent variables, and age and education as covariates, no significant main or interaction effects were found. Hence, the moral exemplars as a group do not appear to be coping more compared to individuals in the other group as predicted. The participants as a whole scored high on overall coping ($M = +13.00$, $SD = 1.60$).
The next set of analyses involved each of the eight ego functions, separating the coping processes from the defending processes for each of the four functions. A MANOVA was carried out with group and gender being the independent variables, age and education as covariates, and the eight ego function scores being the dependent variables. Once again, no significant group effect emerged. Together these findings clearly show that there is no apparent relationship between being a moral exemplar and being a better "coper" in general, and being a better cognitive and intraceptive-reflexive "coper" specifically.

The MANOVA did produce a gender effect, \( F(1, 67) = 2.72, p = .012, \eta^2 = .25 \).

Further one-way, univariate ANOVAs were performed for each of the eight ego functions, producing four significant effects: (a) Coping cognitive function, \( F(1, 78) = 8.79, p = .004, \eta^2 = .10 \), (b) Defending cognitive function, \( F(1, 78) = 4.02, p = .048, \eta^2 = .05 \), (c) Defending intraceptive function, \( F(1, 78) = 5.55, p = .021, \eta^2 = .07 \), and (d) Coping affective function, \( F(1, 78) = 4.80, p = .032, \eta^2 = .06 \). For cognitive coping and cognitive defending, males scored higher than the females. For intraceptive defending and affective coping, females scored higher than the males (see Table 13). Hence, males appear to be using more cognitive processes, both coping and defending, compared to females, while females appear to be using more intraceptive processes such as doubt, projection and regression, as well as affective process like sublimation, substitution, and suppression. It should be noted that the effect sizes were small.
Table 13

**Ego Function Scores by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ego Functions</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coping Cognitive</td>
<td>6.88 (.65)</td>
<td>6.50 (.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending Cognitive</td>
<td>4.08 (.53)</td>
<td>3.85 (.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intraceptive Coping</td>
<td>6.71 (.58)</td>
<td>6.76 (.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending Intraceptive</td>
<td>3.02 (.48)</td>
<td>3.43 (.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping Attention</td>
<td>7.09 (1.52)</td>
<td>7.34 (1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending Attention</td>
<td>3.79 (.75)</td>
<td>3.57 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping Affective</td>
<td>6.03 (.50)</td>
<td>6.28 (.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending Affective</td>
<td>2.94 (.34)</td>
<td>3.03 (.56)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Ego Function scores can range from 1 to 9. SDs are in parentheses.
5.6 Discussion

The results in this chapter show no group differences between moral exemplars and comparison individuals on measures of ego functioning. This is surprising given that past research has shown associations between ego functioning and moral reasoning, and moral reasoning development. In addition, the results from Colby and Damon’s study lead one to believe that what makes moral exemplars exemplary, in part, has to do with how they successfully cope in the diverse situations they face. However, in this project’s sample, both groups were scoring high on overall coping. Recall that coping means that “people accurately identify and adhere to the “realities” of their own mind and their situation,” and “defending means that people twist or negate the realities of their situation and their own feelings when they feel that above all they must protect themselves” (Haan et al., 1985, p. 170). In the context of this study where they were asked to share their life stories, participants did so willingly and naturally with minimal signs of stress or anxiety that would warrant defending. Once the narrative began, people seemed to lose themselves in their own story, laying down their defenses to reveal intimate details both of triumph and defeat. In contrast, past studies assessing ego functioning having used moral judgment interview transcripts (Hart & Chmiel, 1992), psychiatric interviews (Haan et al., 1973), and videotapes of moral dilemma discussions between people (Matsuba & Walker, 1998), contexts that may be inducing more stress. In a series of studies by Haan et al. (1985), ego functioning was found to vary with different moral conflict situations suggesting that the context in which ego functioning is assessed does matter.
There were gender effects found on four of the eight ego functioning scores. On the two cognitive functions, coping and defending, men scored higher on both reflecting their general tendency to use more cognitive-types processes. This cognitive orientation may be part of the broader orientation of men to be rational and agentic. Women were found to use more Intraceptive processes of doubt, projection, and regression, which reflect their uncertainty regarding their own judgments, their suspicion of others, and a tendency to avoid responsibility as well as aggressive and unpleasant situations. As well, women were found to use more Affective processes like sublimation, substitution, and suppression, which demonstrates their ability to better deal with their feelings than men.

5.7 Summary

Based on the findings in this section, it is apparent that ego functioning was not able to discriminate between the two groups as predicted. While one could interpret this finding to mean that there is no relationship between ego functioning and moral action, such interpretation would be premature. As Haan et al. (1985) have shown conceptually and empirically, ego functioning does vary across situations given the level of threat to the self. In the context of telling their life stories, participants were coping well, suggesting this was not a stress-inducing task. In future studies, an exploration of how moral exemplars cope in more stressful contexts may be useful as a way to empirically verify the truth to Colby and Damon's claim that moral exemplars possess a sense of positivity and hope in the face of adversity.

Ego functioning is a measure of personality that taps into both the I and Me of the self. The ego processes people daily use in their interactions with the world are very much a part of who they are even though they may not consciously be aware of it. In the
next chapter, another empirical approach to studying the ego is taken with a developmental emphasis.
CHAPTER VI. Personal Concerns – Ego Identity Formation

6.1 Introduction

One of the best-known theories on identity has been proposed by Erikson (1968). Breaking from Freud’s emphasis on the sexual drive, Erikson emphasized the role social environment has on the development of the individual and his or her identity: Identity is formed through a transactional process between the environment and the person. According to his model, people proceed sequentially through eight psychosocial stages during their lifetime. Each stage takes into account the interacting influences of the individual’s physical development, social context, and the psychological meaning he or she derives from social experiences. Furthermore, within each stage a specific challenge arises that needs to be resolved. How it is resolved has direct and indirect implications on subsequent stages.

On the road to forming an adult identity, how one negotiates Erikson’s fifth stage of psychosocial development is critical. The fifth stage, known as Identity versus Identity Diffusion, is developmentally associated with the late adolescent to early adulthood years. During this period adolescents are finally able to begin integrating the constituents important to identity. These constituents include gender, mature physical capacities, sexual maturation, formal reasoning abilities, and an ability to respond to adult social expectations. It is not until adolescence when these constituents are available to be integrated. And “never again in the life cycle will there be the fortuitous confluence of individual physical, cognitive, and psychosexual changes with relevant social sanctions
and expectations" (Marcia, 1994, p. 68). Therefore, adolescence is truly a unique period in the life of the individual.

However, the simple availability of these constituents does not guarantee mature identity formation. The main challenge for adolescents is to face the conflict between identity and identity diffusion, and to find a resolution. To form an adult identity involves clearly delineating a definition of the self that consists of a set of goals, values, and beliefs to which a person is committed. These commitments are important for the direction, purpose, and meaning they provide to one’s life. As well, these commitments provide coherence to the many characteristics of one’s self, and allow for a sense of continuity between the past, present, and future selves (Marcia, 1994). Thus, adult identity is about making life commitments that span across important spheres of life.

Although there are many life commitments to be made, Waterman (1985) isolated four: “1) selecting and preparing for a future career, 2) re-evaluating religious and moral beliefs, 3) working out a political ideology, and 4) adopting a set of social roles, including a social sex role and anticipation of marriage and parenting” (p. 7). The job of the ego, or “I,” is to resolve these concerns in order to achieve an adult identity. How it resolves these concerns reflects where the ego is at in its own development, what Marcia refers to as ego growth.

Through his efforts to find a way to empirically measure Erikson’s conception of identity, Marcia (1966, 1980) realized that the dichotomy between Identity and Identity Diffusion did not capture all the different ways in which people come to form their identity. His observations led to the proposal that people could be categorized into four identity statuses. In assigning people into one of four statuses, two criteria are considered.
The first is crisis (or exploration), and refers to the extent to which a person has experimented with different options and beliefs in terms of his or her developmental concerns such as vocation, ideology, and interpersonal values. The second is commitment, and refers to the choosing of one out of many possible options and beliefs. Further, once committed, it is difficult for the person to abandon his or her identity. Through these two criteria, four identity statuses are derived. The first is Identity Achievement, and is characteristic of those who have gone through the exploration process and have made commitments to particular options and beliefs. The second status is Moratorium, and is characteristic of those who are currently in an exploratory period, and, therefore, have not made any commitments, but are striving to make them. The third status is Foreclosure, and is associated with those who have made premature commitments without going through the exploratory period; thus, they have retained, virtually unquestioned, the values and occupational directions of their childhood. The last status is Identity Diffusion, and is exemplified by those who have gone through tentative exploration processes, but have not made a commitment nor are they striving to do so. Marcia describes this status as being more like “wondering” than exploring. Together, the four statuses represent the possible paths the ego takes in forming an adult identity.

While identity formation begins in adolescence, some research suggests this process continues beyond adolescence and into adulthood. For example, in his cross-sectional analyses, Waterman (1985) determined the identity statuses of five age groups: pre-high school years (grades 6 through 8), high school lower-class years (grades 9 and 10), high school upper-class years (grades 11 and 12), college lower-class years (freshman and sophomore years), and college upper-class years (junior and senior years).
Moreover, he assessed the statuses of each age group in three life domains (vocation, religion, and politics). Waterman noted that in each of the three domains there was an increase in the percentage of people classified as identity achieved with age. In the domains of vocation and religion during the high school years, Waterman reported a substantial number of students becoming “identity achieved.” Within the domain of politics, a similar increase in Identity Achievement does not occur until the upper years of college. For the Moratorium status, in all three domains, levels peaked in the college lower-class years and declined in the college upper-class years. For Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion statuses, no clear patterns emerged across the domains. These findings suggest that identity formation begins in early adolescence and proceeds into young adulthood in the domains of vocation and religion. However, it is important to note that in each of the domains, the majority of the people did not attain Identity Achievement. By the upper years of college, while people who were identity achieved formed the plurality in the vocational domain, this did not occur in the religious or the political domains. In these domains, most senior college students were either foreclosed (religion) or identity diffused (politics). Therefore, while identity formation begins in adolescence, reaching Identity Achievement does not appear to happen, if at all, until after adolescence.

6.2 Predictions

Existing research on moral exemplars has focused on either adolescence (Hart & Fegley, 1995) or adulthood (Colby & Damon, 1992; Oliner & Oliner, 1988). None of these projects have studied exemplars during the crucial period of young adulthood defined here as between the ages of 18 to 30 years. Nevertheless, findings from Colby
and Damon would lead one to suspect that many of these individuals should be either identity achieved or on their way towards that goal. In order to be fully committed to moral causes, one would suspect that they would have to have a strong commitment to some of the values that underlie these causes, whether they are philosophically, religiously, or socio-politically motivated. This seems to be supported by Colby and Damon’s research. Take, for instance, Virginia Durr’s work championing the rights of the poor and ethnic minority, work stemming from her moral, religious and political beliefs. Her strong beliefs, evident in later adulthood, were not always so clearly entrenched. Her deep convictions formed over time having been influenced by early adulthood experiences. In the excerpt below, Colby and Damon describe one such experience where Virginia’s self-interested decision led to further interactions with African-Americans, and a deeper understanding of their experiences during a time when racial prejudice was more blatantly obvious and accepted:

Her goal in agreeing to sit at the dining table with the black student was very clearly to be allowed to remain at Wellesley and continue her active and entertaining social life. It was not an immediate awakening to a new perspective on race relations and civil rights, but it did move her a perceptible step in that direction. (p. 99)

For Durr, the experience at Wellesley College began the process of stirring her beliefs on ethical issues such as human rights. Although one would be hard pressed to call her a moral exemplar at that particular moment, her experiences at Wellesley were important in
challenging her existing childhood beliefs in the process of coming to her own adult beliefs.

The importance of this young adulthood period to the process of identity formation is further illustrated in the work of Hart and Fegley (1995). Hart and Fegley were interested in understanding how adolescent care exemplars constructed their sense of self. They discovered that their exemplars' were more likely to construct theories of self that incorporated personal beliefs and philosophies than the comparison individuals. This suggests that these adolescent exemplars may be grappling with deeper philosophical issues as they form their own belief systems. This finding, combined with those of Colby and Damon, leads to the prediction that moral exemplars should be further along the path towards Identity Achievement relative to their comparison cohorts.

6.3 Method

To assess identity status, participants completed the Revised, Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2R) (Adams et al., 1989). The EOMEIS-2R is a 64-item self-report measure designed to assess individuals on identity status dimensions. It was designed to be a less time-consuming identity status measure than Marcia’s (1966) labor-intensive clinical interview. Individuals are asked to respond to each item by recording the extent to which the statement reflects their own thoughts and feelings. The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 6 (Strongly Disagree).

The EOMEIS-2R includes two content domains, ideological and interpersonal. The ideological domain includes items reflecting commitments towards occupational, religious, political and philosophical values. The interpersonal domain includes items
reflecting commitments towards values regarding friendship, dating, sex roles and recreational activities. Since participants respond to items from the eight sub-domains, interval data can be generated for each of these sub-domains. The sub-domain status scores are calculated by summing the six item-scores representing each domain status. Overall total status scores are calculated by adding the status scores in each of the two domains. The status scores allow for statistically comparing between the two groups on one or all of the sub-domains. Alternatively, Adams et al. have set a cut-off criterion for each of the four identity statuses (Achievement, Moratorium, Diffusion, and Foreclosure) thus allowing the placement of people into a status category. In cases where participants score high on more than one status category, the participant is placed in the developmentally lowest status category. Generally it is believed that there is a developmental advancement in identity from Diffusion to Foreclosure to Moratorium to Achievement (Adams et al., 1989). Therefore, in instances where a person scores high on Achievement and Moratorium, he or she is placed in the Moratorium status. Finally, in those situations where participants score low on all four statuses, they are placed in a sub-category within Moratorium called Low Profile Moratorium.

The EOMEIS-2R has been reported by Adams et al. (1989) to be a reliable measure. In terms of convergent and divergent validity, they reported a significant relationship with theoretically related measures such as self-acceptance, intimacy, and authoritarianism, and no relationship with social desirability.

### 6.4 Results

To begin with, a MANOVA was performed with gender and group as the independent variables, age and education as the covariates, and the four status scores as
the dependent variables. The only significant effect emerging was for group, $F(4, 71) = 6.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$. Further one-way, univariate ANOVAs found that there were significant group effects on Total Diffusion, $F(1, 78) = 25.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$ and Moratorium, $F(1, 78) = 5.49$, $p < .022$, $\eta^2 = .07$, status scores with comparison individuals scoring higher than the moral exemplars on both (see Table 14).

To determine whether there were group differences within both domains, a second MANOVA was carried out. Here, gender and group were the independent variables, age and education were the covariates, and the eight sub-domain status scores were the dependent variables. The MANOVA produced a single significant effect for group, $F(8, 67) = 3.69$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .31$. To determine which of the eight status scores were responsible for the group effect, one-way, univariate ANOVAs were performed. Of the eight statuses, three were found to have significant group differences: Ideological Diffusion, $F(1, 78) = 26.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$; Ideological Moratorium, $F(1, 78) = 4.82$, $p = .031$, $\eta^2 = .06$; and Interpersonal Diffusion, $F(1, 78) = 6.01$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .07$. In each of these statuses, comparison individuals scored higher than the moral exemplars (see Table 9). While it was anticipated that comparison individuals would score higher on Ideological Diffusion, it was surprising to find them scoring higher on Ideological Moratorium given that Moratorium is considered developmentally more advanced. When the correlation matrix of status scores was studied, there was a significant positive correlation between Ideological Diffusion and Ideological Moratorium, $r = .44$. 
Table 14

Mean Identity Status Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Status Categories</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total(^a) (both domains)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>37.47 (9.13)</td>
<td>46.77 (7.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>33.47 (11.46)</td>
<td>30.10 (8.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>45.10 (8.25)</td>
<td>49.37 (8.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>68.65 (8.08)</td>
<td>67.70 (8.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Domains(^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>19.70 (6.17)</td>
<td>26.33 (5.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>16.25 (5.93)</td>
<td>15.15 (5.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>22.37 (5.14)</td>
<td>24.93 (5.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>35.02 (4.45)</td>
<td>33.82 (4.48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Interpersonal Domains\(^b\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>17.77 (4.64)</td>
<td>20.45 (5.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>17.22 (6.54)</td>
<td>14.95 (4.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>22.73 (4.99)</td>
<td>24.45 (4.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>33.62 (5.27)</td>
<td>33.88 (5.49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Total Mean Identity scores can range from 16 to 96.

\(^b\) Domain Mean Identity scores can range from 8 to 48.

**Note.** SDs are in parentheses.
An alternate way to present the findings is through assigning participants into one of the four status categories within each domain. Through a series of rules (see Adams et al., 1989) the status scores were used to determine the identity status category into which each participant belonged. When this was done in the ideological domain, it was found that the majority of the participants were in the Moratorium category followed by Diffusion and Achievement, and a few in Foreclosure (see Table 15). When differences between cells were explored, it was found that the distribution of participants in the categories across groups was not the same, $\chi^2(3, N = 80) = 7.88, p = .048$. There appeared to be substantially more exemplars in the Moratorium category and more comparison individuals in the Diffusion category. For the other two categories, Foreclosure and Achievement, there were no apparent differences.

In the interpersonal domain, the majority of individuals were in the Moratorium category followed by Achievement, with Diffusion and Foreclosure rounding out the list. Differences between cells were also found here, $\chi^2(3, N = 80) = 8.50, p = .037$, with substantially more exemplars falling into the Foreclosure status, and more comparison individuals being placed in the Diffusion status. The rest of the two categories showed no apparent group differences.

While the Ideological Diffusion finding was consistent with this study's previous results, the Ideological Moratorium finding was not. The reason for this inconsistency was that the majority of participants who were classified in Moratorium were actually in Low Profile Moratorium since they had low scores on all four statuses. Twenty of the 21 exemplars and 12 of the 14 comparison individuals in Moratorium belonged to the sub-category Low Profile Moratorium. Given that there were more exemplars than
comparison individuals who were classified into Low Profile Moratorium, it is not surprising that the comparison group had higher scores on Moratorium than the moral exemplar group.

In the literature, there is some concern whether participants in Low Profile Moratorium should be treated in the same fashion as those in "pure" Moratorium (Adams et al., 1989). Ideally, the pure and Low Profile cases should be tested for equivalence on the dependent variables. However, in this study, there are so few participants in pure Moratorium. As a result, it was believed it would be prudent to exclude the Low Profile cases from the analyses.

When the Low Profile Moratorium participants are excluded from the classification process, the picture changed (see Table 16). Since there were a high number of participants classified in Low Profile Moratorium it led to a high incidence of cells having expected counts less than five in both domains. According to Siegel (1956), when performing a $\Pi^2$ test, the expected frequencies in each cell should not be too small or else the test may not be properly used. As a result, $\Pi^2$ tests were not performed.
Table 15

Identity Status Category Frequencies including Low Profile Moratorium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideological Domains</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Domains</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

Identity Status Category Frequencies excluding Low Profile Moratorium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological Domains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Domains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 Discussion

In a world where there are many occupational, social, sports, and entertainment opportunities fighting for our attention, to make a conscious decision to volunteer time to work with people in need requires some thought. To actually devote one’s career to caring for and defending the rights of people at risk requires a motivation beyond the material. These are the people that make up the moral exemplar sample. Given this knowledge about the present exemplars, and in light of the research on past exemplars, it was proposed that moral exemplars would be further on their way towards achieving an adult identity in contrast to comparison individuals.

The results from this section were mixed. One finding in support of the prediction was that comparison individuals were scoring higher on Diffusion than the moral exemplars, and this is true for both the ideological and interpersonal domains, although the effect size was larger for the ideological domain. These results suggested that the comparison individuals were showing a lack of interest in committing to a set of religious and political beliefs, an occupation, relationships, and recreational activities. This is consistent with the prediction made that moral exemplars will be further along in their identity development since the Diffusion status was considered less mature than the other three.

Moreover, near half of the comparison group were formally categorized into Ideological Diffusion clearly showing that on these ideological issues, many comparison individuals have no apparent interest. The fact that more exemplars have moved out of Ideological Diffusion may relate to the fact that their moral activities may either stimulate or be the result of their thinking about philosophy of life, religion and politics. Caring for
the poor and sick and dying can often challenge one's belief system in a number of profound ways, and cause a reassessment of one's social, relational commitments. This may be what is underlying the results.

Somewhat perplexing was the finding that comparison individuals were also scoring higher on Ideological Moratorium relative to the moral exemplars. Moratorium is considered an important period where people explore areas relevant to their adult identity, such as career and a philosophical belief system. As a result, this finding goes against this study's prediction in that the higher scores on this status measure reflects comparison individuals' greater exploration into ideological-related issues.

However, a number of points need to be made. First, the effect size was small. Second, once the Low Profile Moratorium cases were isolated out, very few people from either group were classified into the Moratorium status. This suggests that, in reality, few of the participants are in the process of deeply exploring issues of identity. Third, the positive correlation between Ideological Diffusion and Moratorium suggests that what the two scores may be tapping is a lack of interest or ability on the part of comparison individuals to make identity commitments since this dimension is shared between the two statuses. Therefore, the two findings may better represent comparison individuals' lack of commitment to religious and political beliefs, occupation, and a philosophy of life.

Again, a potential confound in this study was the fact that all of the comparison participants were university students while many of the exemplars were working full-time. The fact that comparison students were less likely to make ideological commitments could reflect the fact that they are at a different place in life as students than many of the exemplar individuals who have chosen career paths. Attending
The study of ego identity formation is another example of how a middle level personality variable can provide additional information that helps to distinguish the two groups in this study. This variable is sensitive to the socio-developmental context in which young adults find themselves, and illustrates the need to take developmental considerations into account. Continuing in this developmental vein, the next chapter considers level of moral reasoning as a discriminating variable.
CHAPTER VII. Personal Concerns – Moral Reasoning

7.1 Introduction

For a long time, researchers in the field of moral psychology, having been influenced by Kohlberg, have taken a cognitive approach to the field. In response to the preoccupation with moral action by behaviorists and social learning theorists during the 1950s and 1960s, Kohlberg’s (1958) work was to have a tempering influence by emphasizing the importance of one’s reasoning behind moral action. Unfortunately, this tempering influence gave way to a flood of research preoccupied with moral cognition at the expense of other considerations including moral action. And in response, there has been justified criticism in this cognitive preoccupation. The end result has been efforts made to expand the domain beyond reasoning.

The goal of this study, in part, was to continue to stretch the field beyond this limiting perspective. However, it is important to make clear that the purpose behind these general criticisms is not for the abandonment of moral reasoning. Rather the point being pressed is to not overemphasize this aspect of functioning at the expense of other aspects. Even those individuals who have pushed for alternate approaches to studying this field argue for the necessity of reasoning. Blasi (1995), for instance, claimed that moral reasoning plays an important role in moral identity; that is, a person’s moral cognitive abilities are critical aspects of the self that become integrated into his or her moral identity. Similarly, Haan (1977) conveyed the worth of cognitive abilities in shaping moral character: “If the character of men’s intellect is critical in determining their fate, then the level, specifically the stage, of cognitive development must be both a limiting
and permitting condition of normative personality-ego expression” (p. 50). Therefore, even those who have been critical of the Kohlbergian approach, such as Vitz (1990), comment that cognition is a necessary component in any psychological investigation of morality.

As well, in philosophy, while there has been justified criticism that Enlightenment theories overemphasize the importance of reasoning, all would agree that reasoning should play a significant role in ethics. Certainly MacIntyre (1984) saw the importance of reasoning in a virtues model: “reason instructs us both as to what our true end is and as to how to reach it” (p. 53). If this is the case, it is difficult to imagine an ethical theory that does not rely on human reasoning to some extent.

As mentioned previously much of the current psychological work on moral reasoning has been stimulated by Kohlberg’s (1958, 1981, 1984) research program. His six-stage model of moral reasoning has received substantial attention over the decades, and many of its empirical claims have been tested and verified (see Walker, 1988). As well, in his review article, Blasi (1980) showed moral reasoning to be associated with a number of moral behaviors such as delinquency, resistance to temptation, honesty and altruism. Yet this relationship is far from perfect, and many have pondered the relevance of moral reasoning to moral behavior in the light of other stronger predictors. Walker and Hennig (1997) have referred to this imperfect relationship as the gappiness of moral life: “There remains a yawning chasm between knowledge and action which requires some accounting. The Kohlbergian focus on moral cognition does not adequately capture the complexity of moral functioning” (p. 307). In the same way, Colby and Damon (1992)
have stated: “After decades of moral judgment research, we are still highly uncertain about the connection between reflection and everyday social conduct” (p. 6).

7.2 Moral Reasoning of Moral Exemplars

The feeling of uncertainty mentioned in the last chapter is compounded by the finding that not all moral exemplars are high, principled moral reasoners as some would expect. In their study, Colby and Damon reported that their moral exemplars did not “endlessly reflect” on moral issues. Their reasoning ranged from Stage 3 to Stage 5, with half of the group scoring at the conventional level (Stages 3, 3/4, and 4). Further, there was a strong correlation between moral reasoning and educational achievement suggesting that higher moral reasoning levels in this group could be attributed to years of education. For Hart and Fegley (1995), there were no differences in moral reasoning level between their two adolescent groups. Both groups were reasoning at the conventional level (with WAS scores of approximately 300). Interestingly enough, both groups seemed to have comparable educational experience. Thus, these studies suggest that, once educational level is controlled, moral reasoning level may not be a discriminating factor between the moral exemplar and comparison groups.

While the growing consensus is that exemplars are not necessarily “high-level reasoners” (Youniss & Yates, 1999), there is some contradicting evidence suggesting that level of moral reasoning may in fact be associated with morally exemplary forms of behavior. In a study by Boss (1994), she compared one class of college students who participated in community service work as part of their class requirements, and one that did not. In addition, she had students in both classes participate in moral discussions as part of the class curriculum. In comparing pre- and post-test scores on moral reasoning,
Boss reported that the experimental group posted significantly higher gains in moral reasoning than the control group. Moreover, there was no significant group difference between participation in community service work in the past (prior to the beginning of the semester), or in students' pre-test moral reasoning scores. This indicates that a critical component in moral reasoning advances may be the opportunity to reflect on and discuss moral issues that arise from service work performed concurrently.

Moreover, in past research on moral exemplars and community service work, the findings have demonstrated that these individuals are generally scoring at the conventional or post-conventional level. In some cases, as Youniss and Yates (1999) pointed out, “exemplars were more apt to justify their moral actions in terms of preserving social norms than in expressing abstract universal principles focused on individual rights” (p. 371). As well, in Colby and Damon’s study, some exemplars did reach post-conventional levels. Yet there are no studies on exemplars where the group as a whole averaged scores below the conventional level. Given this fact, while not all exemplars were expected to reason at the post-conventional level in our study, it was anticipated that more would than in the comparison group. As well, it was expected that fewer exemplars would reason at the preconventional level than individuals in the comparison group. Overall, it was anticipate that as a group, more moral exemplars would score higher in moral reasoning than the comparison individuals.

7.3 Method

Participants were interviewed using McAdams’ (1993) Life Narrative Interview protocol. Embedded in this interview script were questions inquiring about a moral conflict. Each participant was asked to describe a moral conflict they are having or have
had recently. Most people had no problem immediately generating a conflict. For those who did have difficulty, when given more time they eventually came up with one. Once they described the conflict, the interviewer asked a series of probing questions (see Appendix G) designed to help participants clarify their reasoning on positions taken in the conflict. Based on their responses, participants’ level of moral reasoning was assessed using the Standard Issue Scoring Manual (Colby et al., 1987a) to derive the Weighted Average Score (WAS). The WAS is calculated by multiplying the percent usage of each stage by the stage number and then summing the totals (ranging from 100-500). While the first rater scored the entire sample for level of moral reasoning, a second independent rater randomly selected 25% of the sample, and scored them in order to obtain inter-rater reliability. The correlation between the two raters was $r = .74$, lower than typically reported when scoring from MJI hypothetical moral dilemmas (Colby et al., 1987b) but still acceptable. In this study, real-life moral dilemmas were used which makes it more difficult to obtain high levels of reliability since the manual is keyed to specific hypothetical dilemmas.

In addition, Global Stage Scores (GSS) were calculated to provide an ordinal stage score ranging from stages 1 to 5, including half stage scores to produce a 9-point scale. GSS are determined based on the percentage of responses at each stage or half-stage. When reliability was calculated using GSS scores, the percentage of exact agreement was 75%, and the percentage of agreement within a $\frac{1}{2}$ stage was 95%, both of which were acceptable (Colby et al., 1987b).
7.4 Results

An ANOVA was conducted with gender and group being the independent variables, age and years of education as the covariates, and moral reasoning, as expressed in WAS scores, as the dependent variable. The only significant effect that emerged was for group, $F(1, 74) = 6.42, p = .013, \eta^2 = .08$. As predicted, the moral exemplar group ($M = 331, SD = 38$) scored higher than the comparison group ($M = 305, SD = 53$).

In addition, when the GSS scores were studied, it was found that none of the participants were reasoning at post-conventional stages. However, more of the moral exemplars (95%) were reasoning at conventional moral stages in contrast to the comparison group (77.5%) (see Figure 3). A $\chi^2$ could not be done to determine if there was a significant group difference in the number of people classified into the moral reasoning major and transitional stages due to there being too many cells below the expected count of five (Siegel, 1956). However, when the cells were merged to form two moral reasoning levels, preconventional and conventional, a $\chi^2$ could be legitimately calculated. A group differences was found, $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 5.17, p = .023$. More comparison individuals were found at the preconventional level, while more moral exemplars were found at the conventional level of moral reasoning (see Table 17).
Figure 3. Distribution of participants according to stage of moral reasoning.

![Bar chart showing distribution of stages of moral reasoning for Exemplars and Comparison groups.]

Table 17

**Group Frequencies for Preconventional and Conventional Moral Reasoning Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Reasoning Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.5 Discussion

The finding in this study showed moral exemplars to be higher moral reasoners than their comparison counterparts, even when controlling for age and education (strong predictors of moral development), although the effect size is modest. This result was consistent with the study’s hypothesis. The results illustrated that moral reasoning tends to be at the conventional level for both groups. In this way, the results supported the claims made by Colby and Damon, Hart and Fegley, and Youniss and Yates that one does not need to be a principled, post-conventional moral reasoner to be a moral exemplar. As well, the distribution of GSS scores illustrated that very few moral exemplars were at the preconventional level as was hypothesized. This is consistent with the expectation that moral exemplars will have attained a minimum level of moral reasoning, which would be the conventional level. At these stages, people have moved beyond self-interested morality of how actions impact them personally to broader considerations involving others either in the context of relationships or larger society.

From a broader perspective, the findings here continue to support the contention that moral reasoning is an important variable, and needs to be taken into account when studying moral behavior. Similar to past studies, it has been demonstrated that morally exemplary behavior is associated with conventional or higher levels of moral reasoning. Thus, there is further evidence of the link between moral cognition and moral behavior.

Finally, this study showed that these exemplary forms of behavior are related to higher levels of moral reasoning when contrasted with a comparison group. Boss (1994) suggested that moral reflection along with moral action both stimulates moral reasoning advancement as well as prolongs commitment towards community service. Knowing the
direction of influence is uncertain however. Further investigation needs to be performed to determine whether moral actions stimulate moral reasoning or vice versa. It is likely that this interaction is bi-directional.

In light of the past debate in the field regarding gender differences in moral reasoning (Baumrind, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Walker, 1984), it should be noted that in this study there were no gender differences found when real-life moral dilemmas were used. This finding is consistent with those found by Colby and Damon's (1992) who reported no differences between males and females in terms of the number attaining post-conventional reasoning using MJ1 hypothetical moral dilemmas. Similarly, Hart and Fegley (1995) did not report of any gender differences in moral reasoning on hypothetical dilemmas in their study of care exemplars. Therefore, there is no evidence illustrating that male and female moral exemplars reason at different levels on moral issues.

7.6 Summary

The results presented here illustrate the importance of moral cognition in predicting moral action, results past studies on moral exemplars have failed to find. The significance of this finding is that it supports those in the field who are working hard to ensure that cognition not be relegated to the sidelines in future studies in the field of moral psychology. While there may continue to be a gappiness between moral thought and moral action, cognition, as Walker and Hennig (1997) remind us, can serve as an important foundation on which to extend the field.

As well, the finding that level of moral reasoning was able to discriminate between the moral exemplars and the comparison individuals was significant for it shows the legitimacy of those variables that take development into consideration as measures of
individual differences, as McAdams (1995) envisioned in his model. Thus, moral reasoning and ego identity development have proven to be valuable middle-level research programs. In the next chapter, faith development, another development-related variable, comes under scrutiny.
CHAPTER VIII. Personal Concerns – Faith Development

8.1 Introduction

We believe it is accurate to say that, among the twenty-three exemplars, there was a common sense of faith in the human potential to realize its ideal. Although the substance of the faith and its ideals was too varied and too elusive to be captured in a final generalization, it can perhaps best be described as an intimation of transcendence: a faith in something above and beyond the self. The final paradox of our study is that the exemplars’ unity of self was realized through their faith in a meaning greater than the self.

(Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 311)

With these words, Colby and Damon draw their book to a close. Particularly salient is their report that faith helped to bring unity to the self. Their study is one of many that have demonstrated a relationship between faith and religion with prosocial behavior. In Oliner and Oliner’s (1988) study, for instance, many of the rescuers cited their faith as prompting them to action. In their review article on volunteerism, Clary and Snyder (1991) reported that religious concerns were often cited as reasons for volunteering. Moreover, many of the most well-known moral exemplars possessed faith in some transcendent being, people such as Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, and
Mahatma Gandhi. Hence, in this study of moral exemplars, issues of faith were of interest.

Within the last century, a number of prominent psychologists have written on the psychological implications, both positive and negative, of religion (see Wulff, 1996). In terms of empirical research, a number of people from a humanistic tradition have attempted to create scales to measure various facets of religiosity. For example, Allport (1950) created a scale assessing intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation, to which Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) have added a third orientation, Quest, reflecting a more mature and flexible religious outlook. However, there have been serious criticisms made against these scales on both conceptual and psychometric grounds. Many of the items are ambiguous in meaning or presuppose certain experiences or forms of religious commitment (Wulff, 1996). This latter criticism poses a significant problem as many Western cultures have entered a post-Christian era where the term religion, often associated with the Christian church, carries negative connotations. For many people, religion seems to be “an abstract, definable, and fixed system of ideas” (Wulff, 1996, p. 46). Lost in its present conceptualization is the dynamic, personal element that can and does exist for many religious people.

In studying laypeople’s conception of moral, religious and spiritual exemplars, Walker (1999) reported that laypeople conceived highly religious people as having fewer agreeable traits and more disagreeable ones compared to other exemplar types. As well, laypeople conceived highly religious people to be less open to new and diverse experiences: The participants in his study gave negative attributes to religious types and more positive attributes to the spiritual types on this particular dimension. Together, these
results seem to reflect the negative perception people have towards religion in general, and religious people in particular, substantiating Wulff's comment that "the words religious and religion fail today to denote certain positive inward qualities and perceptions but, to the contrary, seem increasingly to be associated with prejudicial attitudes, violence, and narrow social agendas" (p. 47).

In an attempt to capture the essence of religion and at the same time avoid religious terminology, and all the negative baggage associated with it, this study settled on the term faith, and chose to investigate people's faith commitment. Further, the assessment of faith development selected originating from Fowler's (1981) Stages of Faith model since it is one of the better known and used method that measures people's understanding of a "transcendent power" without them having to be affiliated with any religious tradition.

Fowler's conceptualization of faith is rather complicated. In the broadest sense, faith refers to the process, or quest, we undertake to find meaning in life. Borrowing from the theologians Tillich (1957) and Niebuhr (1960), Fowler understands faith to involve the search for values around which people center their lives, and that these values develop within the contexts of people's earliest relationships through experiences of trust and betrayal. Therefore, faith is seen as "an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a center of value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning" (Fowler, 1981, p. 5).

In addition, Fowler is clear in distinguishing faith from religion. Through the influence of his mentor Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1963), Fowler considers religion as "cumulative traditions" that include texts of scripture, symbols, oral traditions, music,
dance, liturgies, and other elements. From within these traditions centering values arise, and people respond to these values by adopting a faith in them. Thus, faith involves the alignment of the will in accordance with the transcendent values and power that can originate from religious traditions.

Another facet of faith Fowler mentions is its relational quality. According to Fowler, faith develops initially in the context of the trust relationship an infant has with his or her parents.

Long before the child can sort out clearly the values and beliefs of the parents, he or she senses a structure of meaning and begins to form nascent images of the centers of value and power that animate the parental faith. As love, attachment, and dependence bind the new one into the family, he or she begins to form a disposition of shared trust and loyalty to (or through) the family’s faith ethos.

(pp. 16-17)

Emerging from this primal stage of faith is a triadic relational structure with the self, other, and shared centers of value and power forming the end points. As the child grows, his or her social sphere expands leading to an increase in the number of people within the “other” category. As this social sphere expands, the shared values between self and other evolve accordingly. Initially, the “other” members are made up of the parents. As the child develops, the “other” expands to include the larger family and then peers. In adolescence and early adulthood, the “other” can include institutions, religious and non-religious. In fact, during this developmental period commitment to shared values
becomes important in one’s identity formation. Commitment to and trust in these shared values and power shape one’s identity. One of the challenges faced by individuals is to bring the diverse roles played on life’s stage into line with one’s faith in order to create an integrated unity to the self.

To assess faith development, Fowler adopts a cognitive-developmental stage perspective. Drawing on the work of Piaget (1970), Selman (1976), Kohlberg (1976), and Kegan (1982), Fowler (1981, 1986) proposed a six-stage model of faith development. During the first stage (Primal faith), a disposition of trust forms in the mutuality of one’s relationship with parents. In the second stage (Intuitive-projective faith), imagination combines with perception and feelings to create long-lasting images representing the protective and the threatening powers surrounding one’s life. At the third stage (Synthetic-conventional faith), emerging cognitive abilities allows for mutual perspective taking enabling the individual to integrate diverse self-images into a coherent identity. “A personal and largely unreflective synthesis of beliefs and values evolves to support identity and to unite one emotional solidarity with others” (p. 170). During stage four (Individuative-reflexive faith), critical reflection on one’s beliefs and values arises using third-person perspective taking. As well, there is an understanding of the self and others as part of a social system and internalization of authority. In stage five (Conjunctive faith), people are able to embrace the tension, polarities and multiple perspectives in life. Symbols and story, metaphor and myth from different traditions can represent a common truth. Finally, at stage six (Universalizing faith), beyond the tension and polarities is a oneness with the power of being. “Their visions and commitments free them for a passionate yet detached spending of self in love, devoted to overcoming division,
oppression, and violence, and in effective anticipatory response to an inbreaking commonwealth of love and justice” (p. 170). While these one-sentence descriptions are too brief, they do allow the reader to get a sense of Fowler’s six stages.

When scoring for stages of faith, there are seven different aspects to consider. Within each of these aspects, or content domains, the complexity in one’s cognitive operations can be assessed. These content domains include the following: Logic captures a person’s logical thinking in a Piagetian sense; Perspective Taking reflects one’s ability to construct the relationship between self and other; Moral Judgment assesses how people think about issues of moral significance; Bounds of Social Awareness determines how a person constructs the group to which he or she is a member; Locus of Authority encapsulates the significance of authority-type figures; World Coherence describes how a person makes sense of his or her world; and Symbolic Functioning illustrates how a person understands, appropriates, and utilizes symbols (DeNicola, 1993). These domains are interrelated, and each stage of faith represents an integration of these seven aspects of knowing which leads to a “structural whole.” As in other constructivist theories, successive stages are considered better since they are more complex in their inner differentiation between aspects, involve more elaborate cognitive operations, are broader in their comprehensiveness, and are greater in flexibility of functioning.

Empirical support for the stage validity of Fowler’s model has come from Snarey (1991) and Pitts, Walker, Chandler, and Lehman (1992). Both studies found high stage consistency in level of faith development across the seven aspects of faith development thereby supporting the structure criterion. As well, Pitts et al. reported a significant positive correlation between faith development and cognitive complexity as assessed by
Baker-Brown, Ballard, Bluck, de Vries, Suedfeld, and Tetlock’s (1992) coding system. This finding was in support of the hierarchy criterion, which claims that higher stages are better because they are more complex. Snarey (1991) demonstrated positive, moderately strong correlations between faith development and both moral reasoning and ego development, thus illustrating the measure’s criterion validity. Snarey also reviewed past studies using the faith development measure on participants from a variety of faith traditions. A similar distribution of scores was obtained for every faith tradition thereby supporting the universality of the measure. Combined, these findings provide some evidence for the validity to Fowler’s faith development model.

8.2 Predictions

The purpose of including faith development in this study was to obtain some understanding of moral exemplars’ faith commitments. Given past research suggesting the importance of faith in traditional forms of religion for moral exemplars, we were interested in exploring whether there was a relationship between faith development and morally exemplary actions. Given Fowler’s emphasis on centering transcendent values or power which give unity to one’s life, it was believed Fowler’s measure would be valuable in helping to distinguish our group of moral exemplars from the group of comparison individuals. If moral exemplar’s prosocial actions are an integral part of their centering values, then it was predicted that these values may form the core of a more complex system of faith than those who are not invested in the same sorts of actions. For moral exemplars, prosocial actions can be part of the search for meaning to life that leads them to ask more cognitively complex and abstract questions. If this is the case, then such cognitive capabilities would be reflected in more advanced stages of faith development.
with moral exemplars scoring higher on stages of faith than individuals in the comparison group.

8.3 Method

To assess faith development, participants in this study underwent an abbreviated form of the Fowler's Faith Development Interview (DeNicola, 1993), which followed the Life Narrative Interview. Since there was some overlap with McAdam's (1993) Life Narrative Interview, responses to some of the questions from this interview were scored for stages of faith development. Stage of faith development was assessed using the Revised Manual for Faith Development Research (DeNicola, 1993). A series of questions from each of the seven faith aspects were asked in the interview. The responses were recorded on audiotape and later transcribed. Passages from the transcript were identified and matched to specific criteria set out in the manual. For each of the seven faith aspects, a stage score was obtained by averaging the scores assigned to each passage with that aspect. Each aspect score can range from 1.00 to 6.00, and contributes equally to the interview's Global Average Score (GAS). GAS was determined by averaging across the seven faith aspect stage scores.

As well, inter-rater reliability was performed with a second, independent experimenter on 25% of the interview protocols, and produced an acceptable $r = .80$ (DeNicola, 1993).

8.4 Results

An ANOVA was performed with gender and group being the independent variables, age and post-secondary education being covariates, and faith development being the dependent variable. The only significant effect that emerged was for group, $F(1,$
74) = 26.68, \( p < .001 \), \( \theta^2 = .27 \), with the moral exemplar group (\( M = 4.05 \), \( SD = .39 \)) scoring higher than the comparison group (\( M = 3.61 \), \( SD = .39 \)) in their level of faith development. Hence, moral exemplars as a group were at Stage 4 in their faith development, which signifies an ability to reflect upon centering values and powers in a more abstract way than those individuals in the comparison group.

### 8.5 Discussion

The finding that moral exemplars were scoring higher on faith development demonstrates that this group was more reflective and abstract in their thinking regarding issues surrounding faith. This finding was moderate in its effect size, and was supportive of the prediction made in this study. Moreover, this finding was consistent with past studies that have demonstrated a relationship between faith and moral behavior.

Faith in centering values, whether they be adopted from an established religious tradition or generated from one’s own unique belief system, seems to be influencing people into prosocial action. Part of this could be related to the values people adopt. Many belief systems place emphasis on acts of love, generosity and compassion towards their neighbor. Such systems may be important in both challenging us to reflect on the significance of these values, and to respond through action. Again, the direction of influence stated here is from faith to moral action. However, it is very possible that moral actions may trigger one to consider matters of faith, and stimulate thinking on this topic.

There is the possibility of a potential confound with the finding. Many of the participants in the moral exemplar group were nominated from Protestant or Catholic churches or para-church organizations. These exemplars were nominated based on their active involvement within these organizations. Due to their involvement, it is likely that
they would have reflected on the centering values within their faith tradition. It should be noted that a majority of the participants in both groups had faith in some centering power. Fowler's measure was designed to assess people independent of a particular faith tradition. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the measure is biased towards the exemplar group based on their particular religious affiliation.

Nevertheless, as a check to see whether the moral exemplars nominated from church and para-church organizations differ from those that were nominated from other institutions, an ANOVA was conducted with group (church vs. non-church group) and gender as the independent variables, age and post-secondary education as covariates, and faith development as the dependent variable. No significant differences emerged on the group variable, $F(1, 34) = .71$, suggesting that there are no differences on faith development between the two groups. This finding lends support to the belief that the church affiliation is not confounded with group affiliation (moral versus comparison), and that the difference in faith development can be attributed to differences between the moral exemplar and comparison group independent of religious affiliation.

8.6 Summary

Faith development is an additional variable that has been useful in distinguishing between groups in this study, and is consistent with past studies that have found faith an important predictor of prosocial action. Moreover, like moral reasoning, the findings here illustrate the important contribution that cognitive developmental variables can make in personality research. Through these variables along with other middle-level variables, one is able to obtain a better understanding of the differences between people. Yet there
is a third level of research in McAdams’ (1995) model that warrants attention. This is the
life narrative tradition presented next.
CHAPTER IX. Life Narrative

9.1 Introduction

To know people's personality traits is informative, but it fails to take contextual considerations into account. By adding variables that are sensitive to context, a better, more thorough understanding of the person is achieved. Yet even these additional variables leave gaps in fully understanding who a person is. While it may be impossible to achieve complete knowledge about a single person, it is possible to go a level deeper to uncover a more detailed account of a person. For McAdams (1995), this third level takes the form of life stories:

A full description of personality commonly requires a consideration of the extent to which a human life expresses unity and purpose, which are hallmarks of identity. Identity in adulthood is an inner story of the self that integrates the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future to provide a life with unity, purpose, and meaning. (p. 365)

For McAdams (1988, 1995), people's identities are defined by their life stories. A story serves the purpose of collecting the different characteristics of an individual and creating a coherent whole person. In addition, a story is able to weave together the different temporal strands of a person's life. It connects experiences of the past, present, and future into a singular, continuous narrative: It illustrates how one has changed over time, yet is still the same person. These two elements represent the synchronic and diachronic nature of identity.
However to state that a story itself integrates facets and temporal events is not quite accurate. In reality, as Marcia and Strayer (1996) pointed out, a story itself cannot integrate anymore than an identity can integrate. Rather, it is the ego behind the story that pulls the material together to form the narrative. Likewise, it is the ego that binds the different facets of the self together to form an identity. Returning to the Jamesian "I-Me" distinction, it is the ego, or "I," that constructs one's identity. For McAdams, this identity takes the form of a life story. This narrative account is produced by the ego, and therefore, reflects characteristics of the ego.

Furthermore, proponents of narratology, such as McAdams (1993) and Polkinghorne (1988), believe a narrative approach can be an alternative to uncovering the structure to the self, which typically has been studied from a socio-cognitive tradition (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Markus & Sentis, 1982). According to Polkinghorne, "we achieve our personal identities and self concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story" (p. 150).

There has been some debate within philosophy and literary theory regarding the nature of narrative structure. At issue is the relationship between narrative and the "real world." According to Carr (1986), many philosophers, such as Mink and Ricouer, argue for a position of "discontinuity" between narrative and the real world. The narrative structure is a feature in literary work that functions to bring harmony to disparate elements of the world. Moreover, Mink considers this to be a consciously creative act of the author. In contrast, Carr stresses the continuity between narrative and real life. That is, Carr sees the narrative structure "prefigured in certain features of life, action, and
communication.” He continues, “Historical and fictional narratives will reveal themselves to be not distortions of, denials of, or escapes from reality, but extensions and configurations of its primary features” (p. 16). Similarly, Sarbin (1986), in arguing for the narrative as a root metaphor (see Pepper, 1942), believes the narrative to be an organizing principle: “I propose the narratory principle: that human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures” (p. 8). Furthermore, the pervasiveness of narratives in other cultures supports Sarbin’s claim that the ability to construct narratives is “tied to the acquisition of skill in using symbols, learning to talk about absent things as if they were present (that is, imagining), making use of the concept of time, and, of course, participation in social life” (pp. 14-15).

As narrative structure is an organizing principle for experiences and acts, so too is it an organizing principle for the self (Carr, 1986). The narrative approach defines the self as a meaningful story, emphasizing the process. In this approach, the self-concept and personal identities are achieved through the use of narrative configurations that provide unity to past personal events, and include the anticipation of future experiences. These personal events, which form the material of our life stories, are determined through “accidents, organic or social givens, and unintended consequences as well as personal motivation” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 152). Through the use of plots, the narrative is able to link together these personal events and the imagined possibilities into a coherent and meaningful unity.

In adopting a narrative approach to investigating personality-related issues, McAdams (1993) has drawn on the works of Polkinghorne, Ricoeur, and MacIntyre. Of interest to him is uncovering a person’s identity. To understand personality in detail
where context is taken into full account is to understand a person's unique identity. This can be accomplished through life narratives. "In my own life-story model of adult identity, I conceive identity as an internalized and evolving story that integrates a reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future into a coherent and vitalizing life myth" (McAdams, 1995, p. 306).

Applying a narrative approach to better understanding moral exemplars is certainly not without precedence. Colby and Damon (1992) used an "assisted autobiographical" approach in collecting their data. Oliner and Oliner (1988) interviewed their participants asking questions about people and events in their lives. Through studying each life narrative, these researchers were able to identify important common themes that emerged from the narrative text. Thus, in one sense, life narratives do reveal the unique aspects of an individual's identity. In a broader sense, life narratives can reveal universal themes that spans across people, culture and time (Winter & Stewart, 1995). In this study, one of the goals was to identify some of these broader themes from the autobiographical materials saving a more fine-grained analysis of the narrative text for a later day.

9.2 Life-Story Model of Identity

McAdams' (1987) Life-Story Model of Identity offers a method by which to analyze life stories in a systematic fashion. Implicit in his model is the assumption that there is some sort of structure to the text that is to be identified in all narratives. This is characteristic of the structuralist position in literary theory (see Eagleton, 1983). In McAdams' analysis of narrative, life stories can be divided into four components. The first component is the ideological setting. This setting refers to one's personal beliefs and
values in which one’s life story is embedded. The second component is what McAdams refers to as imagoes. These are idealized and personified images of the self that function as semiautonomous characters in one’s story. The third component is nuclear episodes, which are the scenes that mark the high points, low points, or turning points in the story. Finally, there is the generativity script, a narrative extending beyond the existing life story illustrating the lasting contributions a person has made. Thus, McAdams’ model presents a way to segment the life story into smaller analyzable chunks.

McAdams (1987) also includes two second-order variables in his model, thematic lines and narrative complexity. According to McAdams, thematic lines are “recurrent content clusterings in stories, clusterings that may manifest themselves on any of the four major components of the life story” (p. 22). Borrowing from Bakan (1966), McAdams proposes two major thematic lines, agency (power/mastery/autonomy) and communion (intimacy/care/union). These thematic lines are believed to underlie the four major components of a person’s life story. As well, these thematic lines could be used to categorize identities (i.e., highly agentic, highly communal, highly agentic and highly communal, and neither agentic nor communal) (see Appendix H).

While the thematic lines emerge from the content of life stories, narrative complexity is determined based on the structure of the life story. Structure refers to the organization, pattern, or shape that the content takes. According to McAdams (1987), a complex story is one that is highly differentiated and integrated, which is to say that it would contain a multitude of parts that are intricately tied. Together, narrative complexity and thematic lines provide meaningful data that helps one to understand an individual’s identity.
9.2.1 Agency and Communion

Information from life stories has been used in numerous ways. In using a case study approach, life narratives provide rich, detailed information about a single individual that allows one to obtain an in-depth understanding of the person. This is evident in Colby and Damon’s study on moral exemplars. In addition, life stories have been helpful in generating nomothetic data. In this chapter, the data gathered from life narratives are used in a nomothetic way. The area explored here is the frequency of agency and communion themes that can be identified from the portions of the narrative texts. This is an area that has been empirically explored in the past by McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield, and Day (1996).

In a series of studies, McAdams et al. (1996) analyzed significant autobiographical scenes for these two themes. In one study, they obtained from subjects seven autobiographical scenes: (a) a peak experience, (b) earliest recollection, (c) “turning-point” experience, and memorable event from (d) childhood, (e) adolescence, and (f) adulthood, and (g) one “other significant scene” from anywhere in life. These scenes were coded for four themes of agency (self-mastery, status/victory, achievement/responsibility, and empowerment), and four themes of communion (love/friendship, dialogue, care/help, and community). Finally, the participants were administered the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). The TAT stories were scored for power, achievement, and intimacy motivation. McAdams et al. reported that scores on the eight themes are fairly independent of each other suggesting that there does not seem to be a simple two-factor model. For agency, self-mastery and empowerment were correlated, but they did not correlate with the other two agentic themes. Likewise
communion, dialogue and care/help were correlated, but they did not correlate with love/friendship and community. All other correlations were low and nonsignificant.

Moreover, when the theme scores were correlated with the TAT scores, McAdams et al. reported that the agentic themes were positively associated with power and achievement motivation, and the communion themes were positively associated with intimacy motivation. The only exception to the rule was the agentic theme of status. It failed to correlate with either power or achievement motivation. Finally, motive scores were most strongly associated with the corresponding agency and communion themes in peak experiences, turning points and “other” memories. Other narrative scenes did not show significant associations. Hence, there are associations between the agentic and communal themes with their respective TAT motives, and that these themes can be isolated from narrative texts.

9.3 Predictions

McAdams’ method of coding for themes of agency and communion is useful in its application to the life narratives generated by individuals in this study. It provides a method to determine whether there are differences between the two groups on these particular themes. On the communion side, since many of the moral exemplars in Colby and Damon’s (1992) and Hart and Fegley’s (1995) studies were involved in caring for others, it was predicted that moral exemplars would have stronger themes of caring/help than the individuals in the comparison group. In addition, it was predicted that the exemplar group would have stronger themes of unity/togetherness since these individuals would be working in association with others in their moral pursuits.
As for themes of agency, it was predicted that if exemplars do have a stronger sense of unity to the self, it could be manifest in more themes of self mastery. Moreover, given the finding that many exemplars have faith (Colby & Damon, 1992), it was predicted they will show stronger themes of empowerment. In contrast, it was believed exemplars would score lower on the themes of status/victory because these individuals appear to be more concerned about working together in helping others than in competing against one another.

9.4 Method

Participants were administered a modified version of McAdams’ (1993) Life Narrative Interview protocol (see Appendix G). In the context of this interview, participants were asked to describe two autobiographical scenes, a peak experience and a “turning point” experience in their lives. These interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcribed autobiographical scenes were then coded for themes of agency and communion, which involved determining the presence (score +1) or absence (score 0) of the eight different themes (four under agency and four under communion). A theme is scored only once per scene. Theme scores are summed across agency and across communion categories within a scene to provide summary scores for agency and communion respectively.

To obtain inter-rater reliability, a second, independent experimenter coded 25% of the interview protocols. For peak experiences, the two experimenters showed reliabilities of .92 for agency, and .63 for communion. For turning point experiences, the two experimenters showed reliabilities of .83 for agency, and .82 for communion. Although
the peak experiences communion reliability is lower than standard, the other reliability scores are consistent with past results (see McAdams et al., 1996).

9.5 Results

For each experience, turning point and peak, ANOVAs were performed, with overall agency and overall communion themes being the dependent variables. In each ANOVA, gender and group were the independent variables, and age and post-secondary education were covariates. For turning point experiences, there were no significant main or interaction effects for either ANOVAs. However, group differences in agency approached significance, $F(1, 74) = 3.29, p = .074$, with exemplars tending to score higher ($M = 1.15, SD = .62$) than comparison individuals ($M = .90, SD = .47$). For peak experiences, the only significant effect emerging was for group on agency themes, $F(1, 74) = 4.33, p = .041, \eta^2 = .05$. Here, the exemplars had more agency themes ($M = 1.03, SD = .73$) than the comparison individuals ($M = .70, SD = .65$) (see Table 18).

Additional one-way, univariate ANOVAs were performed within the peak experiences to determine whether there were group differences on particular agency theme categories, self mastery, status, achievement, and empowerment. The only significant effect found was on empowerment, $F(1, 78) = 9.75, p = .003, \eta^2 = .11$. Exemplars had more empowerment themes ($M = .20, SD = .405$) than comparison individuals ($M = .00, SD = .00$) (see Table 19).
Table 18

Frequencies of Agency and Communion Themes for Peak Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Mastery</td>
<td>.40 (.50)</td>
<td>.28 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>.13 (.34)</td>
<td>.20 (.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.30 (.46)</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>.20 (.41)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.03 (.73)</td>
<td>.70 (.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love/Friendship</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/Help</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>.28 (.45)</td>
<td>.13 (.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.58 (.64)</td>
<td>.35 (.53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDs are in parentheses.
Table 19

Frequencies of Agency and Communion Themes for Turning Point Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplar Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.78 (.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Self Mastery</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>.82 (.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.18 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love/Friendship</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring/Help</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.18 (.45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDs are in parentheses.
9.6 Discussion

The results from this section showed that participants were generating more agency themes than communion themes for both scenes. That is, peak and turning point experiences revolved around the accomplishments or empowerment of the self rather than involving relations with people. And of the four agency themes, self-mastery was the most common.

When themes were compared between groups, there were more agency themes for the exemplar group than the comparison group for peak experiences. Further ANOVAs for each of the specific agency themes revealed a group effect for empowerment themes producing a modest effect size. Within the peak episodes of the exemplar group, themes of empowerment of the self by significant people, God, or nature more frequently emerged. This finding is similar with that of Colby and Damon who found in their sample the important role faith played in the lives of their exemplars: “But 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 or gain” (p. 311). In this sample, it is difficult to obtain the same sense of pervasiveness of the importance of “faith” in the participants’ life narrative since only a small portion of the interviews were studied. Nevertheless, peak experiences are important episodes in one’s life, and the fact that many exemplars are empowered by something “larger” than themselves is a significant finding.

Surprisingly, there were no significant group differences on agency themes within turning point scenes, although they did approach significance in the predicted direction. As well, there were no group differences on any of the communion themes, which is
contrary to the predictions made. This may be due to fact that there were so few themes emerging for both groups overall. In McAdams’ work (1993; McAdams et al., 1996), he found similar low rates on themes being generated from the nuclear episodes. It also could be that these two nuclear episodes, peak and turning point experiences, pull for agency themes at this particular period in the lives of young adults. As they enter into adulthood and are in the process of developing an identity, many of the peak experiences and turning points are self-focused. The majority of the sample was not married nor had started families, significant events that involve others. In any case, further work needs to be done to explore the nuclear episodes in the context of life span development.

Recently, a study by McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, and Mansfield (1997) has compared the life stories of highly generative adults, and contrasted them with life stories from less generative adults. The mean age of the sample was approximately 43 years. Generativity was assessed on three measures. First, highly generative adults were recruited from a pool of teachers known for their professional excellence and also from a group recognized for their substantial contribution to unpaid volunteer work with children, families, and students. As well, scores of the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) and on the Generativity Behavior Checklist (GBC; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) were used to isolate the highly generative group of adults. From the narrative text of five highly generative individuals, McAdams et al. (1997) were able to isolate five important areas: (a) early advantages in life; (b) early awareness of others’ suffering; (c) steadfast commitment to a clear and detailed personal ideology; (d) the sequencing of positive and negative events; and (e) future goals. When they investigated these areas with the entire sample, they reported that, in comparison to
the less generative individuals, the highly generative group had enjoyed being blessed with and received advantages, and had been sensitized to the suffering of others at an early age. They were guided by a personal ideology, and set future goals where society was to benefit. Finally, they had the ability to redeem negative life experiences into positive outcomes.

With a similar interview protocol used in this study as in McAdams et al.'s (1997) study, the coding of these variables is one avenue future work can go. It is of interest to determine whether similar results would emerge with a younger age group of individuals involved in a broader array of prosocial actions. The age issue is potentially significant given that the themes emerging from the nuclear episodes of participants in this study are agency-dominant, suggesting the Eriksonian crisis they are dealing with revolves around identity. Generativity issues are later developmental concerns associated with middle-aged adulthood, and therefore, may be less salient with the younger sample in this study in comparison to McAdams et al.'s sample.

9.7 Summary

Identifying themes in the life narratives of the sample adds additional dimensions to the understanding of people beyond their personality traits and other personal project-related measures. In one sense, as mentioned, narratives provide rich information about each individual. On a broader level, life narratives provide an opportunity to identify general, overarching themes that may reflect information about a culture or general humanity. Certainly the themes of agency and communion are examples of universal themes. Whether or not there are other themes in this sample has yet to be determined.
Nonetheless, the information taken from this section is that the exemplar group generated more empowerment themes in their peak and "turning point" experiences, which is something not previously known, and is consistent with past findings by Colby and Damon that faith in something larger is an important characteristic of exemplars. Hence, another valuable piece of information is added to the understanding of moral exemplars.
10.1 Introduction

There has been much ground covered over these one hundred plus pages of words and ideas presented here. The purpose of this chapter is to attempt to bring together the findings discovered in order to form a coherent narrative account of this project. So far, each of the chapters has covered a specific variable in isolation, and there has been no accounting for shared variance among these variables. Therefore, a discriminant analysis was performed to determine which of the variables are most important in discriminating between the two groups. Once these variables were identified, an attempt was made to connect these variables to obtain a holistic understanding of how moral exemplars differ from comparison individuals.

10.2 In Review

The general goal of this dissertation project was to identify specific variables that serve to distinguish the moral exemplars from the comparison group of individuals. To aid this process, a personality framework was borrowed to help organize the structure of this dissertation. This framework was proposed by McAdams (1995) and divides personality research into three broad levels. At the first level, an understanding of how exemplars differ in their dispositional character traits was explored. It was discovered that at this general level moral exemplars rated themselves as more agreeable with higher ratings on the facets of Trust, Straightforwardness, Compliance, Modesty and Tender-Mindedness relative to the comparison individuals’ ratings. These are important findings in that the two groups can be discriminated in predictable ways. Agreeableness traits have
often been associated with moral character and virtue (i.e., Bennett, 1974; Blum, 1980; Nussbaum, 1988).

While knowing that exemplars rate themselves as more agreeable is informative, there is still much that is missing in a full understanding of moral exemplars. The fact is one can think of many people who are agreeable and yet not morally exemplary. Realizing the limitation of the informative power of personality traits, McAdams (1992b) argued that personologists look beyond traits to the second level of personality research, personal concerns. Seeing the wisdom in McAdams’ words, a group of variables at this level was studied, the first being people’s perceptions of their personal projects. On this variable, it was found that exemplars rate their daily undertakings lower on the dimensions of Structure and Positive Impact. These findings suggest that moral exemplars have a difficult time managing their personal projects, and that these projects have less of a positive impact on each other. Therefore, in contradiction to Colby and Damon’s (1992) sense of unity to the lives of their moral exemplars, there seems to be more disunity and disarray to their everyday projects.

In addition, at this middle-level of analysis, ego functioning was assessed in order to obtain an understanding how the participants were dealing with life events. Using Haan’s (1977) Ego Q-sort methodology, participants’ ego functioning was measured using the life narrative interview material. It was hypothesized that moral exemplars would cope more and defend less in contrast to the comparison individuals. However, there were no differences found on any of the ego functioning measures.

Beyond personality-related variables, this study also tackled development-related issues including identity formation, moral reasoning, and faith development, all of which
fall under the middle-level variables category. The participants in this study were within the young adulthood years. Traditionally, this age period has been considered a time when people search and make commitments to jobs, to religious, political and philosophical values, and to marriage and family. For moral exemplars, in the ideological domain, they scored lower on Diffusion and Moratorium relative to the comparison group. In the interpersonal domain, moral exemplars scored lower on Diffusion. These results provide moderate support to the claim that moral exemplars are further along in their identity achievement by the fact that they are scoring lower on Diffusion. That is, the moral exemplar group seems more interested in exploring identity related issues and making commitments than the comparison group.

In addition to identity development, both moral reasoning and faith development were considered. On these two measures, moral exemplars scored at higher levels. The significance of this finding is that moral reasoning is related to moral behavior. While very few moral exemplars reached post-conventional thinking on real-life moral issues, they did score higher within conventional levels. Moreover, moral exemplars scored higher on faith development illustrating their ability to think of centering values that give meaning to their life in more abstract, broad ways. For both variables, the results demonstrate the cognitive maturity of the moral exemplars.

As informative as these middle-level variables have been, McAdams proposed a third level that involves understanding the unique identity of the individual. One method of accomplishing this is by listening to people’s life stories. From these autobiographical accounts, both nomothetic and idiographic data can be obtained. For empirical purposes, a nomothetic approach was taken with the life stories. Two events in the participants’
lives were isolated, a peak and a turning point experience. These episodes were coded for themes of agency and communion. It was discovered that for moral exemplars, their episodes contained more themes of agency, particularly themes of empowerment. These themes illustrate moral exemplars' sense of empowerment by significant people, God, or nature during critical moments in their life.

For the most part, the variables included in the project have been studied in an independent fashion. The danger in this is that some of the significant univariate F-values are intercorrelated (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984) (see Table 20). Hence, for some of these variables, they may be contributing little in way of helping to discriminate between the two groups beyond what other variables have already accomplished. In order to assess the extent of this danger, a discriminant analysis was performed.
Table 20

Correlation Matrix of Variables that Produced Group Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Structure</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideo. Diffusion</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideo. Moratorium</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter. Diffusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Reasoning</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Empowerment</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
10.3 Discriminant Analysis

The rationale for including discriminant analysis is that it allows researchers to study two or more defined groups along several variables all at the same time (Klecka, 1980). It does so by determining which variables are the most powerful discriminators, and how well they as a collective group are able to separate the sample into their respective groups.

For this project, the goal was to find which variables are the most powerful discriminators. The discriminant variables incorporated into the analyses were those that have already been shown to differentiate the two groups in the previous sets of analyses. They included Agreeableness, Project Structure, Positive Impact, identity status (Ideological Diffusion, Ideological Moratorium, and Interpersonal Diffusion scores), Moral Reasoning, Faith Development, and Peak Empowerment themes. Also, it was of interest to know how successful the significant discriminant variables would be in correctly classifying the sample into their respective groups.

Using a stepwise procedure, discriminant analysis was performed with the nine variables mentioned above entering into the equation. At the end of the stepwise procedure, a single discriminant function emerged, and four variables were found to significantly contribute to the discriminant scores. The four variables, in decreasing order of importance, were Agreeableness ($c = .491$), Faith Development ($c = .467$), Ideological Diffusion ($c = -.466$), and Project Structure ($c = -.364$). Thus, these four variables are the most powerful discriminators. Moreover, the discriminant function generated was able to classify 80% of the participants correctly (see Table 21). As well,
the canonical correlation coefficient was 0.665, which can be converted to produce $\theta^2 = .44$. Eta squared is the proportion of variance in the discriminant function explained by the groups (Klecka, 1980). Therefore, the personality variables making up the discriminant function did a reasonable job in distinguishing between the groups. However, the proportion of variance explained was not 100% indicating there are other variables (personality and non-personality) that can help to explain more of the variance. Future work is needed to identify these other factors.

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6 $c$ refers to standardized coefficients. Of importance here is the magnitude of the coefficient ignoring the sign (+ or -) (Klecka, 1980). The sign of the coefficient reflects the algebraic role the variable plays in the discriminant function equation.
Table 21

**Group Classification based on the Discriminant Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Groupings</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th>Exemplar</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exemplar</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80% of original grouped cases correctly classified.
10.4 Discussion

The findings from this project support the belief that personality variables are related to moral actions thus providing empirical evidence for some of the claims made by Colby and Damon (1992) in their study. Using their work and the work of McAdams (1992b) as springboards, the goal of this project was to understand how moral exemplars differ in their personality from comparison individuals. Moreover, a specific purpose was to capture a broader understanding of the individual through the inclusion of a variety of established, methodologically sound measures. To accomplish this task, measures from each of the three levels in McAdams' model of personality research were selected. They included a measure of traits, personal projects, ego functioning, identity formation, moral reasoning, faith development, and agency and communion themes. With the exception of ego functioning, at least one variable was identified from each measure that was able to discriminate the moral exemplar from the comparison group of individuals. In this chapter of the study, the discriminant analysis isolated the four most important discriminating variables for their contribution to the discriminant function. They included Agreeableness, Project Structure, Ideological Diffusion, and Faith Development, and explained 44% of the variance in the discriminant function. Based on these variables, a general profile of the moral exemplars in this study is presented.

10.4.1 An Empirical Profile

The exemplars in this study were nominated for their work in supporting and helping people, and advocating for the rights of minority and marginalized groups. In addition to their work, moral exemplars were recognized for their character. Words such as integrity, compassion and care, honesty, gentle, generosity, and humility, were often
used to describe this unique group of individuals. It is no surprise that when lined up against the comparison group of individuals, moral exemplars stood out on the trait dimension of Agreeableness. In particular, the moral exemplars in this study were found to be more trustworthy, sincere, willing to help, humble, and empathic, characteristics often associated with past moral exemplars such as Mother Teresa. While the findings are not surprising, they are important in demonstrating that at a basic personality trait level, this group of moral exemplars differs from a comparison group, as one would predict.

Moreover, the results from this study are consistent with past studies. In both Hart and Fegley's (1995) study, and Colby and Damon's (1992) book, a common reported finding was that the moral exemplars were described using terms reflecting their caring and honest nature. The moral exemplars in this project were no different.

As well, findings from the nomination forms show that people are able to identify moral exemplars living in our community, and they describe them in terms reflecting both agreeableness traits, as mentioned above, and also conscientiousness traits, words like committed, reliable, dedicated and responsible. This finding is particularly significant because when asked to describe morally exemplary people, their reasoning abilities and intellect were not the most frequently cited words. Further, these results support the recent work in virtue ethics in philosophy and moral personality in psychology in demonstrating that when people think about moral behavior it is often associated with moral character.

As important as traits are in identifying someone's moral character, it is not the only valuable information to have about a moral exemplar. The goal of this dissertation project was to deepen the existing knowledge about moral character. Both Hart and
Fegley, and Colby and Damon have been successful in their work to uncover new and interesting information about the character of their exemplars. One way in which this dissertation project differs from these predecessors is that this sample was made up of young adults. Hart and Fegley studied teenagers in high school while a majority of Colby and Damon's exemplars were older adults spanning the mid-thirties to the mid-eighties. In this study, the reason why young adults were singled out was because of the belief that at this period in their lives these individuals are making a number of important adult identity commitments. For moral exemplars, their moral commitments may be integrally wrapped up with other identity commitments they are making, and may aid in their striving for identity achievement.

Results from this study show modest support for this claim. The discriminant analyses show that Ideological Diffusion was an important discriminant variable. Moral exemplars appeared to be less ideologically diffused than comparison individuals suggesting that this former group is more interested in exploring and making adult ideological commitments whether they are politically, philosophically, occupationally, or religiously related. This finding was consistent with the prediction made that moral exemplars are further along towards identity achievement. Moreover, this finding is important in illustrating the significant role the identity formation process may have in leading people to make commitments including moral ones. The discovery of the exemplars' interest in exploring and committing to ideological positions on issues suggests that behind the virtuous traits for which they are readily recognized lies an interest to know more about issues that give life meaning. It seems in most cases, sustained moral commitment begins with an exploration of the issues related to politics,
philosophy, religion and occupation since many of the causes moral exemplars are invested in touch upon one or more of these areas. For instance, caring or considering caring for the homeless can lead one to evaluate or re-evaluate his or her political, philosophical and/or religious stance, as well as his or her occupational pursuits. Young adulthood may mark the beginning of a sustained moral commitment. For many of Colby and Damon's moral exemplars, evidence of sustained moral commitment did not appear until mid-adulthood or later. Therefore, it may be premature to expect this study's moral exemplars to have a strong sense of identity as it relates to their moral commitment this early in life. Rather, it may be more realistic to expect the beginnings of an exploration process that, for some, may grow over time to reach a level of sustainability comparable to Colby and Damon's exemplars.

One important identity commitment typically listed by ego identity researchers is that of religious commitment. In the work of Colby and Damon, Hart and Fegley, Oliner and Oliner, a common theme that has emerged has been religious faith. In some cases, the faith has been in an institutional, traditional religion. In other cases, the faith has been in a power less tangible and explainable. In any case, faith in something appears to be an important predictor of exemplary moral action.

In this study, Fowler's Faith Development measure was employed to assess this facet of human functioning. While the measure, and its underlying theory, does have Protestant roots, Fowler claims that the Faith Development measure is applicable to all kinds of faith traditions and beliefs without prejudice. In this project, it was discovered that the moral exemplars were at more advanced levels of faith development relative to their comparison counterparts. Faith development reflects people's ability to reason on
logical, social and moral problems. As well, it incorporates how people construct the world, see the significance of authority-type figures, make sense of the world, and understand symbols. Fowler believes these seven aspects capture faith. His conception of faith is cognitive in its orientation since it taps how people think on issues related to faith. In this study, the results illustrated moral exemplars’ more advanced abilities to think about these different aspects of faith in contrast to comparison individuals. This mature cognitive reasoning ability may lead people to grow aware of moral issues, and in turn propel them to actions. It is also possible that moral behavior may stimulate people’s thoughts on concerns related to faith. Again, the direction of influence requires closer examination.

The faith development finding is important for two reasons. First, it implicitly supports other studies by revealing a relationship between faith and moral action. Second, given the cognitive nature of the faith development measure, the finding supports those who claim that rationality is a critical consideration in any study of moral action. Hence, behind the behavior and the character traits of moral exemplars are people who possess a faith and an ability to reason through issues related to their faith. This ability has the potential to serve them well as they face challenges along the path towards sustained moral commitment.

Thus far, the findings have shown that moral exemplars differ in their character, in their identity status, and in their cognitive reasoning ability as it relates to faith. When considering these variables, there remains a sense of contextual abstractness. That is, these variables are somewhat immune to the ebb and flow of everyday life. In contrast, Little’s (1983) Personal Project methodology captures this sense of everyday life by
asking participants to list the current projects they are engaged in, and to rate them on a number of dimensions. An emergent finding was that moral exemplars were less able to keep their everyday projects organized when contrasted to the comparison individuals. That is, while moral exemplars were more agreeable, less ideologically diffused, more cognitively advanced in their faith development, when it came to maintaining a sense of order to their daily projects, they were less able to do so. Like so many of us, trying to juggle the demands of each day is a challenge for this group of moral exemplars.

10.4.2 Intercorrelations

While the four significant discriminant variables were important predictors, this does not mean that the other variables that showed group effects were not also important predictors. Rather, the significant discriminant predictors share common variance with the other variables making these latter variables no longer able to explain much additional variance. For instance, Ideological Diffusion was significantly correlated with many of the other variables such as Agreeableness, Ideological Moratorium, Interpersonal Diffusion, Moral Reasoning, Faith Development, and Peak Empowerment Themes (see Table 20). Once Ideological Diffusion was removed, many of the variables' F-to-Enter value dropped below the minimum signifying they were no longer able to significantly contribute in discriminating between the two groups. This was true for Ideological Moratorium, Interpersonal Diffusion, Moral Reasoning, Positive Impact, and Peak Empowerment Themes. Again, these variables were important predictors in and of themselves. However, when Ideological Diffusion is included, these other variables provided little additional help in distinguishing between the groups. It will be useful in
future studies to identify the specific aspect of personality these variables have in common.

10.5 Summary

The value of this dissertation project, in part, has been in illustrating the ways moral exemplars differ from other individuals on trait measures as well as other measures beyond traits. The discriminant analysis served to isolate those variables that contributed significantly and uniquely to the discriminant equation, thereby demonstrating their importance in distinguishing the two groups. In addition to trait measures, Ideological Diffusion, Faith Development, and Project Structure were able to add layers of depth to the character of moral exemplars not previously known. Yet despite this knowledge, there are still gaps in one’s understanding of the character of moral exemplars, which is indicative of the moderate effect size produced by the variables included in the discriminant function. To help fill some of these gaps, this study returns to McAdams’ work on life narrative. While the past chapter on life narratives focused on nomothetic data in the form of agency and communion themes, the next chapter takes an idiographic, case study approach by focusing on the life of one of this study’s moral exemplars.
CHAPTER XI. Tom Smith: A Case Study

11.1 Introduction

For the past few chapters, efforts have been made to understand, as a group, how moral exemplars differ from comparison individuals: How are moral exemplars unique? In many ways, the dissertation project has been successful in accomplishing that goal.

In this chapter, the general identity of the group was set aside to study in closer detail the identity of the individual. Specifically, a case study approach was taken to unravel the unique identity of a single moral exemplar through information gathered from his life narrative account.

11.2 Case Studies

For Stakes (1994), a case study is not a methodology so much as a choice of objects to be studied. Once the object is selected, there is a plethora of methods one can employ to study the case. The one chosen will depend on the purpose behind studying the selected case. Drawing on a variety of academic disciplines, Stakes offers three general purposes for doing case studies. First, intrinsic case studies are performed solely for the purpose of understanding the particular case of interest. There is no interest in generalizing the results or test theories in such cases. In contrast, those who perform instrumental case studies consider the objects of study to be of secondary concern. Here cases serve a greater purpose of providing insight into an issue or the refinement of a theory. Thirdly, collective case studies investigate a number of cases concurrently in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon, population or general condition that may
arise across these cases. This is the purpose of Colby and Damon's (1992) case study approach in their attempt to uncover common themes between their moral exemplars.

In personality psychology specifically, articles featuring case studies are rare in empirical, academic journals. In defending the importance of case studies to personality psychologists, McAdams and West (1997) drew upon the words of Allport who strongly argued for a focus on the single human life: "As long as psychology deals with universals and not with particulars, it won't deal with much – least of all human personality" (Allport, 1960, p. 146). For McAdams and West, case studies in personality psychology can serve three main functions. First, case studies exemplify an a priori conceptualization of a theory. This was illustrated in the case of Dora, which Freud used to explain psychoanalytic theory. A second purpose is that of discovery. Through case studies, a psychologist may be able to formulate general propositions or a theory from the data gathered. Finally, case studies have been used for the purpose of comparisons, whether it is a comparison between a person's life with a theory of personality, between case studies in an attempt to uncover commonalities, or between case studies to compare different personality theories. It should be noted that these purposes are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive. Many case studies serve a number of different functions.

11.3 Purpose

In this chapter, a case study was performed on one of the moral exemplars, Tom Smith (not his real name). The purpose of this case study was twofold. First, it was designed to provide detailed information about a particular individual in order to have a more complete understanding of his identity. As informative as the trait and personal concerns data are, they fail to provide a clear sense of the uniqueness of each person.
Second, this case study functioned to provide valuable insights into a moral exemplar's life, which may represent common themes in the lives of other moral exemplars. In this way, the case study can be considered to be instrumental in theory building.

11.4 Method

There is no single methodology that is exclusive to doing case studies. Different disciplines and sub-disciplines in academia have conducted case studies using different methodologies. At a most basic level lies the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. Some case studies rely on qualitative information, some use quantitative information, while others use both. In this project's case study, the source of information comes from qualitative, autobiographical material attained from conducting McAdams' (1993) Life Narrative Interview with participants. In studying a particular person, the biographical method has been a common tool used in qualitative research. Biographical materials are useful in obtaining a substantial amount of information from the selected person. This information, to some extent, needs to be interpreted by the researcher, and ranges in level of subjectivity (Smith, 1994). At one end, there is the "objective biography" that leans towards a factual collation of material with minimal intrusions made by the biographer. On the other extreme there is the "fictional biography," which relies on little factual and much fictional information to create a riveting story. Typically in psychology, a "scholarly-historical" biography is written with a heavy reliance on factual information, chronological structure, as in an objective biography, but with the added feature of the researcher interpreting the character within a socio-historical context. This interpretative feature has the researcher organizing the text
in an attempt to present a coherent biographical account built around emerging themes from the text (Smith, 1994). This is the approach taken in this study.

While there were 40 moral exemplars to choose from for further in-depth investigation, not all of them appeared as deeply devoted personally to the work for which they were nominated. Of those that did show a deep devotion, Tom Smith was one of a very few whose work permeated into so many aspects of his life story thus demonstrating an inextricable link between his moral behavior and identity.

11.5 Tom Smith

At the time of the interview, Tom Smith was 29 years of age, married, no children, and employed full-time as a special education teacher working with kids with severe learning disabilities. The school was located in a poor area of a large metropolitan city. He came into this study through a nomination made by the ministerial staff from the church of which he was a member. It was not just his work with street youth, but his genuine care and compassionate heart towards these individuals that secured him the nomination. In reality, the ministerial staff's too-brief description of Tom's volunteer work with street youth underestimated its significance.

For the past 7 years, Tom had been working for a Christian outreach society delivering food to people wandering the poor neighborhoods in a downtown urban center. Over the years, he managed to take on a number of jobs and responsibilities with this organization from painting the bus that delivers the food, to developing and leading a training program for volunteers, to administrative work. With regards to his work with the society, most of the interview conversation revolved around building relationships
with the people he met on the street. For Tom, the people he ministered to were the reasons why he was there.

I basically spent a lot of time listening to people who'd been alcoholics for decades – longer than I'd been alive – to street kids who'd been, you know, running for 10, 12, 13 years, to the mentally ill – spending a lot of time with them listening to them, learning to love them, with people with AIDS, visiting in hospitals – all these kinds of things, listening and working with the poor. And I think those relationships I still treasure as very precious. (R12)

The fact that he values these relationships is clear in the stories he shares about the people with whom he has developed relationships over his 7 years of volunteering. Numerous times he mentions the concern he has for their well-being and the love he has for them. In one incident, Tom recalls talking with a young gay man who was experiencing great difficulties in life. It was at night and in the pouring rain. Tom and this young man stood talking for 2 hours getting "totally drenched," after which the young man turns to Tom and asks:

"I don't understand it, why are you here?" he says. "You could have anything you want in the world, you know."

"You could be earning $40,000 a year and yet," he said, "you are here with me in the pouring rain and I don't get it." (R12)
For Tom, standing out in the pouring rain listening and supporting the young man through his difficult time is all part of being a friend and providing unconditional love. Yet his ability to provide unconditional love had not always been there. It, in fact, developed through the earlier life experiences he had endured.

Tom, the younger of two boys, grew up in a troubled family environment. Although he does not have many early childhood memories, the ones he does have seem to center on his dad. Growing up, Tom’s dad was an alcoholic. One of his earliest memories was finding a bottle of liquor in his Lego. When he took the bottle to his mom, she was understandably upset. The apparent consequence of this, according to Tom, was his dad no longer being allowed to live at home. And following this event, Tom reveals the unfortunate death of his dad. He was 9 years old at the time.

The day my dad died, it was May 20th, 1978. I’d been sleeping over at a friend’s house the night before and, you know, I just came back to get a hammer because we were going to be constructing something or other and my mom said, “Well, Tom, your father died.” And I don’t know what was going on, but I knew I had to cry so I cried, you know. Didn’t really understand all that then. Got my hammer and went back and told the family I was staying with that my father had died, and then I went on with my nailing. (R05)

According to Tom, outside the above event, he does not remember much about that whole period. In a matter of fact way he states that he grew up without a dad as if it
had no direct effect on him. Yet shortly later in the interview, Tom recalls the responsibility he felt for his father’s death.

I’m not sure how it happens but a 9-year-old mind works a lot differently to adult minds, and my dad had come to my Sports Day the day before he died. In my head I know that I internalized that because he came to my sports day, it is my fault that he died. (R06)

His dad’s death had a profound effect on him and sent the family spiraling into a turbulent time. His relationship with his brother took a turn for the worse. While Tom experienced his childhood as one without a father, Tom’s brother, 6 years his senior, experienced the rest of his childhood as one of loss of a father, and there was a lot of anger stemming from this loss. This anger affected his relationship with both Tom and their mother. Often the anger would take the form of physical fights with Tom. Being 6 years younger and 100 pounds lighter, Tom was always on the losing end. It was not until the last 3 or 4 years that their relationship had shown signs of improvement with the help of their respective wives.

As for Tom himself, life after his father’s death was not a positive time. The guilt associated with his father’s death affected his self-esteem. This was compounded by his poor academic performance in high school, and having to live in the shadow of his best friend who happened to be “perfect” academically, socially, and physically. Particularly salient to Tom was his poor body image and having to endure the labeling by his classmates as his best friend’s “fat friend.” And with no success at obtaining a girlfriend during this time, Tom was “pretty down” on himself, which he claimed was not atypical
for teenagers. With the guilt associated with his dad's death, and the rejection he felt from his peers, Tom yearned for loving acceptance, and worked hard to win people's affection.

The turning point in Tom’s life came in his early 20’s when he discovered the concept of grace in his search for his own identity. The precursors to this turning point came after his father’s death when his family started getting more involved in church. The church was able to provide Tom with a stable group of supportive friends, a faith ideology, and a male adult mentor. Combined, these influences would shape Tom’s future life direction.

Tom’s church friends were important sources of support. With poor interactions with his brother and relations with his mother that were described as only “reasonably well,” his friends formed the core of his social and emotional support. In describing them he states: “I realize how incredibly fortunate I am, and a blessing to have them because I know so many people who have never had a friend, have never sort of had any connections in that sort of way” (R06). Even now, some 20 years later, Tom describes the closeness he feels towards these friends, and how he is able to share the intimate struggles of life with them.

In addition to the social support, his church involvement provided opportunities for him to explore meaning-of-life questions, and to provide a belief system that gave comfort to his past wounds, and direction to his future life path. A key opportunity came at the age of 22 when he spent 2 months living on the edge of a slum in East Africa, a trip organized in association with his church. During those 2 months, Tom would wake up
each morning next to a million blacks living in desperate poverty, a sight that was emotionally overwhelming.

Further, his church involvement was key in his understanding of Christian grace, which he came to fully grasp just prior to his trip to Africa through the reading of a book given to him by a pastoral staff member at his church. In retrospect Tom claims that there was “nothing particularly special about that book.” Yet reading this book at that particular juncture in his life was completely overwhelming as he came to the realization of God’s unconditional love for him:

I had judged myself. The concept of grace said that I was wrong and it was literally as though scales falling off my eyes. Everything changed. I experienced God’s love and wholeness, in a sense. In a sense, it seemed like it seemed for the first time. And that’s not to put down my mom. That’s not to put down anybody who would have loved me in the past. But that was the first time I understood it and it came through that book. (R11)

Through the realization of God’s grace, his experiences in Africa, and a growing awareness of the suffering and pain in the world, Tom came to the conclusion that the world was a terrible place for most people, and that those who are more privileged have a responsibility to help the less fortunate. This feeling of responsibility developed into a passion and longing to make his life “significant.” The direction this passion would take was profoundly influenced by his church youth leader and mentor, Jeff.
Jeff was both a youth leader and the organizer of the trip to Africa. It was in these contexts that Tom and Jeff were able to develop a relationship. Currently Jeff is working part-time at an art school teaching math and science, and spending the other half of his time as a volunteer church-based community worker with Somali refugees. In addition to being motivated by Jeff’s work, Tom has been inspired by his humility, peace, love of life, gentleness, and willingness to be different.

As Tom looks towards the future, he does so with a specific plan. Life Jeff, Tom hopes to eventually split his time working as a teacher and getting involved again in street outreach in a volunteer capacity. For Tom, there is a lot of meaning he derived from working with the poor.

11.6 Discussion

This brief summary of Tom’s life experiences, and how they led to his work with the poor, is a simple attempt to obtain a better understanding of Tom’s unique personality. By studying one’s life in this much detail provides insights into the person not possible through a battery of questionnaires, which was one of the reasons for including this case study.

But life stories have the potential to do more than provide information about a person. They have the power to move people emotionally as well as physically. This is evidenced by the recently burgeoning book business marketing inspirational stories led by Canfield and Hanson’s (1993) Chicken Soup for the Soul. Moreover, thousands of people have joined the Missionaries of Charity as a result of hearing Mother Teresa’s life story. People are influenced by stories, and the life narrative accounts of many of the moral exemplars are no different.
On an empirical level, Tom’s case study provided opportunities to identify variables that were significant influences in leading Tom towards his work with the poor. For instance, there were number of salient experiences in Tom’s childhood that he had to overcome, including the death of his father and peer rejection. Both experiences seem to contribute to a negative self-image, which, in turn, may have played a role in his sensitivity to those marginalized in society. In addition, the role of a mentor in providing guidance to Tom in his adolescent and early adult years was an important influence: Jeff was instrumental in being a male role-model for Tom after his father’s death, and introduced him to a larger world beyond himself and his community. Third, his African experience was a life-changing one, possibly stimulating his thoughts and raising concerns for less fortunate people. These variables highlighted in Tom’s biography could be important influences in the lives of other moral exemplars, and therefore, worth investigating further.

While there are many benefits to case studies, there are many limitations too. For one, the salient variables identified and highlighted are at the discretion of the researcher. There is no guarantee that the variables isolated from Tom’s life story would be the same variables singled out by another researcher reading it. However, there are a number of ways to combat this. First, as a solitary case study, the one presented above is a condensed version. A thorough case study, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation project, would involve a number of additional processes that would ensure the conclusions drawn are accurate. These include a more detailed analysis of the content text, providing an opportunity for the case study participant to make edits to the interview...
transcript, and additional interviews with the participant. These checks help to insure that the information gathered and interpretation given most accurately reflects the person.

As well, in their study, McAdams et al. (1997) selected five life narrative interview protocols of highly generative adults and scoured the text in search of common themes in their effort to identity important variables associated with generativity. To make sure these variables had reliability, independent raters were included. A similar approach can and will be used in exploring additional narrative protocols in an attempt to isolate common themes associated with exemplary moral behavior.

11.7 Summary

This case study nicely illustrates areas underemphasized in this research project. For the most part, this project has highlighted specific personality and development-related variables that predict moral action. Beyond these variables, findings from the case study draw attention to the potentially important role certain influential individuals have in the lives of moral exemplars, people such as primary caregivers or mentor-figures. As well, findings from the case study suggest that critical events and opportunities in one’s life can play a pivotal part in shaping the character of the individual. Moreover, the timing of these events is also an important consideration. The case study presented demonstrated how events in childhood had ramifications through adolescence and into adulthood. These temporal events will be worth exploring in future research.
CHAPTER XII. Conclusion

12.1 Moral Action and Identity

Over the past 40 years, researchers in moral psychology have approached the field from a cognitive perspective. Understanding moral behavior requires an understanding of how people reason about moral issues. However, as studies have shown, there is not a perfect correspondence between moral thought and moral action. Gaps exist, and there have been recent attempts to fill those gaps. One of these attempts has been to explore the area of moral personality. Although this may be a new research approach to studying moral psychology, it is not a new approach to studying ethics. Well before the age of Enlightenment, back to the times when the ancient Greek civilization dominated the known world stage, Aristotle wrote on the civic importance of specific moral virtues such as courage, wisdom, and temperance. It is this philosophical tradition to which we are indebted.

In this dissertation project, the interest in moral personality took the form of a study on the personality of moral exemplars, people who can arguably be called modern day moral heroes. The project provided the opportunity to explore the kinds of work associated with being a moral exemplar, to investigate the kinds of trait terms used to describe these unique individuals, and to uncover the different personality layers that distinguish them from a comparable group of individuals.

The moral exemplars were involved in an assortment of activities. Some of them were Big Brothers, some worked as peer counselors for a crisis line, while others were heavily involved with their church or para-church groups. In all cases, they were helping
people by meeting their immediate physical, social, or psychological needs with minimal to no material benefits to themselves. In fact, some have sacrificed materially to serve others. In these general ways, the kinds of work the exemplars were involved in were similar to the activities of Colby and Damon’s exemplars (just on a smaller scale) and Hart and Fegley’s exemplars.

Further, when nomination forms were checked for specific personality trait terms, the most frequently listed terms were those that loaded high on the dimensions of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. That is, exemplars were nominated for being helpful, loving, patient, giving, and caring. They were also nominated for their committed, moral, dedicated, reliable, and responsible nature. These trait terms reflect how people in this present age not only conceive of moral excellence, but where they place the emphasis. With the Western World living in a time of peace, the Aristotelian virtue of courage lived out in a hero of war is no longer at the fore of moral excellence. Neither is the virtue of temperance in this age of excess. This is not to say that these qualities are not considered virtuous. Rather, these virtues no longer seem to be salient in the minds of people in this present age (Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1995).

Beyond the interest in laypeople’s perception of moral excellence, the study’s purpose was to explore how moral exemplars differ from comparison individuals. This information is important in understanding the relationship between personality and moral behavior. In their model of moral identity (see Figure 1), Hart et al. (1999) proposed specific variables they believe shape moral identity directly or indirectly. Included in their list are ones that capture personality, social influences, moral judgment, self-evaluation, and prosocial action opportunities. Assumed here is that moral actions and
personal resilience are markers of moral identity. In each case, there is evidence to support the connection between these predictor variables and moral identity. In the case of personality, Hart et al. (1999) cited research demonstrating a direct link between personality (as measured by ego resilience) and social and moral thought, and propose that social and moral thought may mediate the effect of ego resilience on moral identity. The findings in this study add empirical support to the model by showing a direct relationship between personality traits (i.e., Agreeableness trait terms) and moral identity (as reflected by moral behavior). In addition, this study found no relationship between ego resilience (as measured by ego functioning) and moral identity suggesting that if ego resilience has an effect on moral identity it may be mediated through social and moral thought, or other yet-to-be-determined variables.

To the variables categorized under self, this study adds ego identity as a direct predictor of moral identity. Ego identity assesses the extent to which people have explored and committed to adult ideals. It was found that moral exemplars were lower on Ideological Diffusion relative to comparison individuals. Moreover, this was the strongest predictor found in the study illustrating the significance of this variable in predicting moral identity.

To the variables moral judgment and social attitudes, this study adds faith development as a direct predictor of moral identity. Faith development is a cognitive-developmental variable, and reflects people's reasoning over issues related to faith. While links have been reported between personality and cognitive-developmental measures, significant correlations between cognitive-developmental measures such as moral judgment and moral identity have been lacking. The finding here provides evidence of
the importance of cognitive-developmental measures like faith development to moral identity.

Fourthly, the dimension of Project Structure was found to be a direct predictor of moral identity. Since Project Structure does not belong conceptually into the three categories of mediating variables, it was placed in a fourth category labeled Personal Projects. Personal Projects category represents variables that assess how people individually construct and collectively manage their daily projects. Admittedly, these variables are affected by social and temporal influences.

Finally, the case study provides anecdotal support to the Opportunity and Social Influence categories. On Social Influence, a mentoring relationship was a critical influence in leading Tom Smith to his work with the poor. While past studies have illustrated the relevance of family relationships as predictors of moral reasoning (Hart, 1988; Walker & Taylor, 1991), and moral identity (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Hart et al., 1999), this study suggests that adult mentor figures may be a key predictor of moral identity, particularly for those people who have poor relations with their primary caregivers. Hence, this variable may be worthy of further investigation.

The second category highlighted in the case study was Opportunity. For Tom Smith, the church he attended also played a pivotal role in his work with the poor, particularly the church-affiliated community service trip to Kenya. The opportunity to help people in need outside his cultural setting had a tremendous impact of Tom. Recently there has been an abundance of studies demonstrating the benefits of community service and civic action (Crystal & DeBell, 2000; Metz & McLellan, 2000; Santilli & Falbo, 2000; Youniss & Yates, 1997).
Adapting Hart et al.'s model, the figure below (Figure 4) illustrates the unique contributions this study has made in identifying variables that are important predictors of moral identity as represented by exemplary forms of moral behavior. As the figure shows, moral identity is influenced by a range of personality variables, with personality being used in the broadest sense. It is influenced by one’s personality traits, reasoning abilities, ego growth, and handling of his or her daily projects. It is also affected by social influences and social opportunities. While this is a significant gain in our understanding of moral identity, there is much work that lies ahead.
Figure 4. Revised model of moral identity: Influence of personality, social influences, moral judgment and faith development, self, opportunity, and personal projects on moral identity.

12.2 Volunteerism, Altruism, and Prosocial Behavior

So far, this project has been clothed within the moral psychology and personality psychology literatures. However, there is an extensive body of work within the social psychological field that pertains to this current discussion on moral exemplars. There has been extensive work studying volunteerism, altruism, and helping behavior within social psychology, and the results of this study fits within the context of that literature. In particular, there has been substantial empirical support for personality dispositional differences between volunteers and non-volunteers, particularly on the dimension of Agreeableness. Past research on altruism has found a relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Also, those who have donated a kidney differed from non-donors in having greater faith in people (Simmons et al., 1977). These measures of empathy and faith in people well reflect facets of Agreeableness. In this regard, the results from this study support the research in altruism.

While there is an abundance of research on differences in personality disposition between volunteers and non-volunteers, there is comparatively little research studying the differences between these two groups on identity issues. Past research has suggested that commitment to some prosocial actions shape one’s identity. For example, a longitudinal study of adult blood donors reported that repeated donations and perceived expectations of significant others that one will continue to donate were two factors that predicted continuing giving (Piliavin & Callero, 1990). Hence, in this project, taking a more developmental perspective in understanding identity formation is a new avenue of research. Yet the research on continued donation raises an important question in regards to sustained commitment: Does giving shape one’s role-identity as a donor, or does one’s
identity lead to further donations? It is believed that developmental research looking at the process of identity formation can help answer this question in the future.

Another significant finding from the volunteer literature relates to “internal moral standards.” Allen and Rushton (1983) report on a number of studies showing volunteers to be “more morally concerned,” “more ethical,” and “more concerned with religion” than non-volunteers. While there has been a tendency within these studies to treat these items as trait-like facets, one can also interpret these findings beyond the personality domain by creating developmental links. The results from this project are important in demonstrating that not only are people who are committed to prosocial behaviors more concerned about ethical and religious issues, as Allen and Rushton’s findings would suggest, they also have a better ability to reason about these issues as evidenced in moral exemplars’ advanced faith development over comparison group individuals.

12.3 Gender

While in other areas of moral psychology, particularly moral reasoning and moral orientation, there have been heated discussions over the issue of gender differences (i.e., Hoff Sommers, 2000). In this study, there were no gender-by-group interaction effects found on the variables studied when age and years of post-secondary education were controlled. When it comes to prosocial community work in which the moral exemplars in this study were involved, for both males and females, there personality profiles were similar. Past studies in the altruism literature (Piliavin & Charng, 1990), report that women are more likely to intervene in situations where there are low levels of harm, and that women have lower thresholds for noticing situations of harm (Austin, 1977). This could translate to more women than men participating in service-oriented work where
there is little physical harm to the self, and a general need for workers. However, once both genders are participating in these activities, whatever gender differences that existed have been weeded out: Service work may be attracting specific-types of people independent of their gender-affiliation. It may be that more of these “types” are women than men. Such a claim requires empirical investigation.

12.4 Limitations

12.4.1 Sample

As in any empirical study, there are flaws in this research project that have implications in how the results are interpreted. Some of the more significant ones are mentioned in this section. To begin with, there are serious concerns that stem from how the two groups were recruited. For the moral exemplars, they were found through the solicitation of nominations from social, health, religious, human rights, and animal rights organizations. It was believed that these groups represented a diverse array of morally worthy causes.

Nominations came from social, health, and religious organizations mostly because there are far more of these agencies listed in the Yellow Pages than the others. As well, half the moral exemplars were nominated from church and para-church groups. This roughly represents the proportion of church and para-church groups listed relative to the other organizations found in the Yellow Pages. Hence, the moral exemplars in this study were of a particular kind, and, borrowing from Hart and Fegley (1995), may be better labeled as care exemplars for the direct help they provide to those in need. Admittedly, the moral exemplars in this study represent a general type of moral exemplars. Missing from the sample are those people who are considered moral exemplars for a single act of
bravery, generous acts of philanthropy, and behind-the-scenes work that is rarely mentioned. This is a concerned mentioned by Hart and Fegley in their study: “we suspect that there are many adolescents in the city with unusual family-care responsibilities, although few adolescents were nominated on this basis” (p. 1350). Similar to Hart and Fegley, this study included no such exemplars.

Similar issues have been raised within the altruism literature. In their review articles, Piliavin and Charng (1990), and Clary and Snyder (1991) make the distinction between spontaneous helping versus non-spontaneous helping. Research on spontaneous helping has focused attention on understanding the situational cues that influence the spontaneous decision-making process. Such studies have isolated several important situational influences such as presence of others (Latane & Darley, 1970), the pressure of time (Darley & Batson, 1973), and the exposure to helpful models (Bryan & Test, 1967). In contrast, there is little evidence that personality disposition influences spontaneous helping behavior (Darley & Batson, 1973). If this is true, then the idea of a moral personality would best apply in cases involving non-spontaneous helping behaviors.

Moreover, in focusing on non-spontaneous behaviors alone, there are still a variety of different kinds of prosocial actions to be involved, and that the personality profile for each action, blood donors, rescuers of Jews, kidney donors, volunteers, etc., seems to differ (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Piliavin and Charng, 1990). Hence, it may be wise to study different types of moral exemplars instead of assuming them to be similar as this study and other parallel studies have done, and to understand how the nature of the work may influence the kinds of moral exemplars involved in that work.
Another potential limitation with this study is the fact that many of the moral exemplars were religious, and therefore, can make religion a confounding variable. Past studies, both in the volunteer and moral exemplar literatures, have suffered this same weakness. Many participants in those studies had a religious affiliation. It is unclear to what extent religion alone contributed to the differences found in these studies. Further work is planned to investigate difference between moral exemplars based on religious affiliation (i.e., religious vs. non-religious).

As for the comparison group, there are potential confounds based on how these individuals were selected. Although key demographic variables were controlled for, such as age, gender, years of post-secondary education and ethnicity, there were other ones that were not. Of particular concern is the fact that the comparison individuals are all students, taking at least one psychology course, and studying at a top-ranked university. In contrast, many of the moral exemplars were working full-time. The fact that the two groups were at different places in their occupational career could be a significant confound, particularly on the Ego Identity since occupation is one of the ideological sub-domains within the measure.

In addition, having a comparison group of people taking psychology courses may underestimate differences between the groups. For instance, people taking psychology courses may have a genuine interest and concern for people, more so than would be found in the general population. In fact, in the life narrative interviews, it was revealed that many individuals in the comparison group were involved in or have been involved in volunteer work. Hence, given these similarities, the findings reported may underestimate differences if comparison individuals were obtained from a larger pool of people.
Finally, while the sample size was an increase over Hart and Fegley’s study, having 40 moral exemplars and 40 comparison individuals was still small for an empirical study. Along with the general methodological limitations, having a small N also prevented Factor Analyses from being performed with the Personal Projects rating dimensions. While the sample may be small from a quantitative perspective, it is large from a qualitative perspective. From each of the 80 participants, rich, detailed information about their lives was obtained, and will be of value in future research.

12.4.2 Procedure

There are also concerns over the different protocol used to recruit the two groups. When the moral exemplars were contacted and informed about the study, most had already been briefed about the study by the nominator. Therefore, a majority knew at some level they were nominated for being a moral exemplar. In contrast, when the comparison individuals were recruited, they were told that they would be members of a comparison group, and that the research project entailed studying personality-related issues. However, no mention was made that the experimental group were moral exemplars. Thus the difference in recruitment may reflect differences in motivation for and attitude in being part of the study, which in turn can affect performance.

12.4.3 Results

It may seem that the results are showing causal relationships with those variables isolated in the study directly influencing moral behavior. And it may seem that less attention has been given to the reverse influence, how moral behavior may be affecting personality. If this is true, the fault lies with the author. Given the correlational nature of the study, there is no way to determine the flow of influence. For personality traits, Hart
et al. (1999) believe the direction of influence flows from traits to moral behavior given
the contextual stability to traits. Yet even for this relationship, no empirical evidence has
been found to categorically support this direction of influence. The work of Boss (1994),
however, showed the impact community service work had on raising moral judgment
scores from pre- to post-test, thereby illustrating the influence service work has on
variables associated with moral identity. This is illustrated in the bi-directional arrow
between moral identity and moral thinking in Hart et al.'s (1999) model (see Figure 1).
Clearly, more attention needs to be given to understanding the direction of influence.

Many of the weaknesses of this research project are common to other similar
studies, and reveal the challenges of conducting research in this area. For instance,
deciding on a procedure to define a moral exemplar was difficult, knowing that any one
way would be met with disagreement reflective of a different philosophical and/or
methodological perspective. As well, finding moral exemplars was not an easy process as
testified in the rate of success. For every one moral exemplar nominated, approximately
eleven agencies had to be contacted. And finding a readily available pool of people to act
as a comparison group was an obstacle given the age, gender, ethnicity and years of post-
secondary education restrictions. While it may be ideal to choose a comparison group of
individuals from the same or similar organizations as the exemplars, this was not
realistically possible given the already difficult task of recruiting the moral exemplars. To
try and find people within these organizations, matched on the four demographic
variables would be an unreasonable expectation.

Finally, the findings illustrate some of the personality differences that appear to
exist between moral exemplars and a comparison group of individuals. However, what
remains unclear is to what extent these personality variables identified are hallmarks of moral exemplars specifically, or exemplars in a more general sense. That is, the possibility exists that the differences between the two groups could have little to do with issues of moral commitment. Rather, what may be important is their general commitment to a cause, and the kinds of causes may be less relevant. Future work in identifying the uniqueness and similarity between different kinds of exemplars is warranted.

12.5 Future Directions

12.5.1 Current Study

There remain undiscovered riches to be had from further excavation of the data collect for this dissertation project. This is one of the immediate tasks that awaits. Through re-reading the narrative texts of selected exemplars, common themes can be identified. This collective case study approach is similar to one used by McAdams et al. (1998) in their work on generative adults. By isolating new variables, a better understanding of the importance influences on moral exemplars is hoped to be achieved.

12.5.2 Moral Identity

Although at the beginning stages, both models of Hart et al. (1999) and Blasi (1995) have been important in providing a way to think about all the influences that shape moral identity. In the case of Blasi’s model, there is much intuitive appeal but little empirical support. This is not because his ideas are wrong or ill-conceived. Blasi has always commanded the greatest respect for his critical eye on the field of moral psychology, and for his contribution of ideas to help expand the field. Rather, coming up with ways to operationalize many of his ideas, and then verifying the proposed relationships between ideas have been the challenges.
As for Hart et al. (1999), their model has had more empirical support, in part, with the help of this dissertation study. But the relationships between existing variables need to be further investigated, as well as the identification of other important ones. A potentially useful technique may be structural equation modeling to better understand the direction of influence between variables. This is one method that will be explored with the data generated from this project.

12.5.3 Types of Moral Exemplars

Studies researching moral exemplars have tended not to discriminate between the activities in which people were involved. In most cases, as in this study, the moral exemplars were associated with ministries of compassion through caring for those in need or protecting others who are in some way vulnerable. This reflects, however, only one kind of moral exemplar. As the ancient Greeks remind us, there are many moral virtues that have been lived out in the lives of people. In addition to the virtue of love, another important one, historically speaking, has been courage. Examples of morally courageous people include figures such as Martin Luther and Nelson Mandela, with both enduring persecution for their beliefs. In the end, the impact of their lives was profound. One helped to reform a religion, the other a nation. Yet in what ways are these moral exemplars different from those who are known for their acts of compassion? Moreover, treating these virtues in isolation may prove difficult since virtues seem to hang together. For instance, many consider Mother Teresa as a moral exemplar for both her compassion and courage in her work with destitute people. As well, many rescuers of Jews were courageous and compassionate in their willingness to risk their own lives to save lives. And in Colby and Damon’s study, courage was a common theme among their exemplars.
These questions and queries are evidence of the additional work needed in order to know more about moral virtues, and to understand the intricate relationships between them.

12.5.4 Situational Effects

In this discussion, there has been a tendency to assume that virtues guide the behavior, that Mother Teresa’s compassionate nature led her to work with the poor. In reality, it is often the environmental opportunities that bring out or help to shape a particular character virtue. In writing about different types of moral exemplars, a closer investigation into the interaction between the situational opportunities that arise, and the type of people that heed the call to service is needed. Those researching altruism and volunteerism within social psychology have been better at isolating these situational factors. Future researchers studying the different kinds of moral exemplars must explore the influence that the environment has on the individual.

12.5.5 Transmission of Virtues

As more becomes known about the nature of particular virtues as lived out in people, attention needs to be given to understanding the formation of these virtues within the identity structure of individuals. Particularly important will be revealing the role parents, family and culture play in influencing this formation process. Already Hart et al. (1999) have found family environment and parental-child joint activities to be important predictors of voluntary participation. A next step would be to begin understanding at a more micro level, the dynamics of the interaction between parents and children. How are parents communicating such virtues as compassion, courage, honesty, and patience? To what extent do parents possess these qualities themselves?
12.5.6 Future Goals

Substantial attention within this dissertation was given to highlighting the differences between the two groups. As significant as these differences are, in reality there are many things the two groups share in common. This is an important finding in and of itself for it demonstrates an "ordinariness" to the moral exemplar group. That is, on many facets of their personality, the moral exemplars do not differ from other people. They go through peak times and low moments. They are faced with moral dilemmas. They struggle in and out of relationships. In fact, one may be hard pressed to distinguish the moral exemplars from comparison individuals in casual encounters. And yet these moral exemplars are actively working in tangible ways for the betterment of their community. As one contributor stated in Canfield and Hansen’s (1993) popular book, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, "It takes ordinary people to do extraordinary things" (p. 272).

Moreover, the finding that the moral exemplars seem to be disorganized in their life demonstrates the moral exemplars’ humanity. There seems to be this expectation that moral exemplars are in someway “perfect” people, whatever that may mean. Certainly this is not the case here. Like Mahatma Gandhi or Oskar Schindler, the moral exemplars in this study have character flaws. In fact, like Gandhi and Schindler, one would question whether some of the exemplars should have been included in this study, and for justifiable reasons. The answer to the question seems to pivot on balancing the good with the bad. In this study, the nominators may have overlooked the exemplars’ daily disorganization in light of their compassionate heart and conscientiousness towards their work. The humanness of the exemplar sample seems to support Colby and Damon’s (1992) notion that moral excellence is a matter of degree than kind. Unlike Meldin (1984)
and Blum (1994) who see moral excellence in more absolute ways, Colby and Damon see it on a continuum and that we are constantly striving to move further along that continuum. This continuous perspective has important practical implications. If it is in the realm of possibility for people to reach for moral excellence then one role of moral exemplars may be to stimulate others to stretch beyond their current level of complacency. Yet are there other ways to stimulating moral excellence outside of inspiration?

For Oliner and Oliner (1988), a key reason for studying rescuers of Jews was the hope that their research would eventually lead to the deliberate nurturance of identified attributes found to be associated with the act of rescuing. For those in this field, a common interest is to apply the knowledge discovered in order to cultivate moral excellence. One of the few researchers that have accomplished this task is Kohlberg. From his theory of moral judgment, Kohlberg was able to develop a “Just Community” approach to education (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). The purpose of incorporating his Just Community approach into schools was to create an environment where everyone was treated in a democratic fashion with equal rights. Examples of the benefits of such programs included a decrease in incidents of theft and increases in trust among the students. However, other research programs studying moral excellence have not progressed this far. It is hoped that as the predictors of moral identity are isolated, and their direction of influence is clearly determined, that attention will move towards the establishment of programs, large or small, to facilitate moral excellence.
12.6 Final Remarks

As we cross the bridge into the twenty-first century, we cannot help but marvel at the technological feats human beings have achieved. It is simply astounding what human ingenuity can and has accomplished. With all the latest breakthroughs in computer technology, genetic research, and drug therapy being announced daily, it is easy to think that our world is at the most advanced state in human history. From a technological and biomedical perspective, it is true. But for the majority of people in the world, they will never experience these advances. For them, their main concern is the struggle to survive. In Zimbabwe, people live in the constant fear of death with one quarter of their population currently infected with the AIDS virus. Those living in Congo live in the midst of a civil war that has gripped the country. And yet within each of these countries live people who are taking on personal risks to help save lives and bring peace. Why?

Even in industrialized countries that have been the beneficiaries of these advances, poverty, homelessness, racial prejudice, abuse of the disabled, and the AIDS epidemic are some of the examples of societal problems that continue to plague large portions of the population. To which of these problems, Postman (2000) asks, is technology the solution? And yet within these so-called “have” countries, there are people making personal sacrifices to be solutions to the problems, to be light to the places where there is darkness. The purpose of this dissertation project was to study such people. It is hoped that the information learned from this lengthy exercise will aid in the process of building up an army of “solution-makers” who have the heart to care and the courage to fight for the betterment of their community, nation, and world.
References


Appendix B

PARTICIPANT NOMINATION FORM

In completing this form, please print clearly or type the information. If you complete this questionnaire, we will assume that you are consenting to being a part of this study through your nomination of a potential candidate.

Candidate’s Name: __________________________________________

Age: __________________________ Gender: _______________________

Work Address: ______________________________________________

Telephone: ______________________ E-mail: ______________________

Home Address: ______________________________________________

Telephone: ________________________________________________

Please provide a detailed explanation why you believe this candidate is a moral exemplar:

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(please use back if necessary)

Can we use your name when we contact the candidate? _____ yes _____ no
Appendix D

Revised NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

Item Booklet – Form S

Instructions for use with the Hand-Scoring Answer Sheet

This questionnaire contains 240 statements. Please read each item carefully and circle the one answer that best corresponds to your agreement or disagreement.

Circle “SD” if the statement is definitely false or if you strongly disagree.
Circle “D” if the statement is mostly false or if you disagree.
Circle “N” if the statement is about equally true or false, if you cannot decided, or if you are neutral on the statement.
Circle “A” if the statement is mostly true or if you agree.
Circle “SA” if the statement is definitely true or it you strongly agree.

There are no right or wrong answers, and you need not be an “expert” to complete this questionnaire. Describe yourself honestly and state your opinions as accurately as possible.

Answer every item. Note that the answers are numbered down the columns on the answer sheet. Please make sure that your answer is marked in the correctly numbered space. If you make a mistake or change your mind, DO NOT ERASE! Make an “X” through the incorrect response and then draw a circle around the correct response. After you have answered the 240 items, answer the three questions labeled A, B, and C on the answer sheet. Turn to page 3 in this booklet and begin with item 1.

1. I am not a worrier.
2. I really like most people I meet.
3. I have a very active imagination.
4. I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others’ intention.
5. I’m known for my prudence and common sense.
6. I often get angry at the way people treat me.
7. I shy away from crowds of people.
8. Aesthetic and artistic concerns aren’t very important to me.
9. I’m not crafty or sly.
10. I would rather keep my options open than plan everything in advance.
11. I rarely feel lonely or blue.
12. I am dominant, forceful, and assertive.
13. Without strong emotions, life would be uninteresting to me.
14. Some people think I’m selfish and egotistical.
15. I try to perform all the tasks assigned to me conscientiously.
16. In dealing with other people, I always dread making a social blunder.
17. I have a leisurely style in work and play.
18. I'm pretty set in my ways.
19. I would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.
20. I am easy-going and lackadaisical.
21. I rarely overindulge in anything.
22. I often crave excitement.
23. I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.
24. I don't mind bragging about my talents and accomplishments.
25. I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time.
26. I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems.
27. I have never literally jumped for joy.
28. I believe letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.
29. Political leaders need to be more aware of the human side of their policies.
30. Over the years I've done some pretty stupid things.
31. I am easily frightened.
32. I don't get much pleasure from chatting with people.
33. I try to keep all my thoughts directly along realistic lines and avoid flights of fancy.
34. I believe that most people are basically well-intentioned.
35. I don't take civic duties like voting very seriously.
36. I'm an even-tempered person.
37. I like to have a lot of people around me.
38. I am sometimes completely absorbed in music I am listening to.
39. If necessary, I am willing to manipulate people to get what I want.
40. I keep my belongings neat and clean.
41. Sometimes I feel completely worthless.
42. I sometimes fail to assert myself as much as I should.
43. I rarely experience strong emotions.
44. I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.
45. Sometimes I'm not as dependable or reliable as I should be.
46. I seldom feel self-conscious when I'm around people.
47. When I do things, I do them vigorously.
48. I think it's interesting to learn and develop new hobbies.
49. I can be sarcastic and cutting when I need to be.
50. I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion.
51. I have trouble resisting my cravings.
52. I wouldn't enjoy vacationing in Las Vegas.
53. I find philosophical arguments boring.
54. I'd rather not talk about myself and my achievements.
55. I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.
56. I feel I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
57. I have sometimes experienced intense joy or ecstasy.
58. I believe that laws and social policies should change to reflect the needs of a changing world.
59. I'm hard-headed and tough-minded in my attitudes.
60. I think things through before coming to a decision.
61. I rarely feel fearful or anxious.
62. I’m known as a warm and friendly person.
63. I have an active fantasy life.
64. I believe that most people will take advantage of you if you let them.
65. I keep myself informed and usually make intelligent decisions.
66. I am known as hot-blooded and quick-tempered.
67. I usually prefer to do things alone.
68. Watching ballet and modern dance bores me.
69. I couldn’t deceive anyone even if I wanted to.
70. I am not a very methodical person.
71. I am seldom sad or depressed.
72. I have often been a leader of groups I have belonged to.
73. How I feel about things is important to me.
74. Some people think of me as cold and calculating.
75. I pay my debts promptly and in full.
76. At times I have been so ashamed I just want to hide.
77. My work is likely to be slow but steady.
78. Once I find the right way to do something, I stick to it.
79. I hesitate to express my anger even when it’s justified.
80. When I start a self-improvement program, I usually let it slide after a few days.
81. I have little difficulty resisting temptation.
82. I have sometimes done things just for “kicks” or “thrills.”
83. I enjoy solving problems or puzzles.
84. I’m better than most people, and I know it.
85. I am a productive person who always gets the job done.
86. When I’m under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I’m going to pieces.
87. I am not a cheerful optimist.
88. I believe we should look to our religious authorities for decisions on moral issues.
89. We can never do too much for the poor and elderly.
90. Occasionally I act first and think later.
91. I often feel tense and jittery.
92. Many people think of me as somewhat cold and distant.
93. I don’t like to waste my time daydreaming.
94. I think most of the people I deal with are honest and trustworthy.
95. I often come into situations without being fully prepared.
96. I am not considered a touchy or temperamental person.
97. I really feel the need for other people if I am by myself for long.
98. I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature.
99. Being perfectly honest is a bad way to do business.
100. I like to keep everything in its place so I know just where it is.
101. I have sometimes experienced a deep sense of guilt or sinfulness.
102. In meetings, I usually let others do the talking.
103. I seldom pay much attention to my feelings of the moment.
104. I generally try to be thoughtful and considerate.
105. Sometimes I cheat when I play solitaire.
106. It doesn’t embarrass me too much if people ridicule and tease me.
107. I often feel as if I’m bursting with energy.
108. I often try new and foreign foods.
109. If I don’t like people, I let them know it.
110. I work hard to accomplish my goals.
111. When I am having my favorite foods, I tend to eat too much.
112. I tend to avoid movies that are shocking or scary.
113. I sometimes lose interest when people talk about very abstract, theoretical matters.
114. I try to be humble.
115. I have trouble making myself do what I should.
116. I keep a cool head in emergencies.
117. Sometimes I bubble with happiness.
118. I believe that the different ideas of right and wrong that people in other societies have may be valid for them.
119. I have no sympathy for panhandlers.
120. I always consider the consequences before I take action.
121. I’m seldom apprehensive about the future.
122. I really enjoy talking to people.
123. I enjoy concentrating on a fantasy or daydream and exploring all its possibilities, letting it grow and develop.
124. I’m suspicious when someone does something nice for me.
125. I pride myself on my sound judgment.
126. I often get disgusted with people I have to deal with.
127. I prefer jobs that let me work alone without being bothered by other people.
128. Poetry has little or no effect on me.
129. I would hate to be thought of as a hypocrite.
130. I never seem to be able to get organized.
131. I tend to blame myself when anything goes wrong.
132. Other people often look to me to make decisions.
133. I experience a wide range of emotions or feelings.
134. I’m not known for my generosity.
135. When I make a commitment, I can always be counted on to follow through.
136. I often feel inferior to others.
137. I’m not as quick and lively as other people.
138. I prefer to spend my time in familiar surroundings.
139. When I’ve been insulted, I just try to forgive and forget.
140. I don’t feel like I’m driven to get ahead.
141. I seldom give in to my impulses.
142. I like to be where the action is.
143. I enjoy working on “mind-twister”-type puzzles.
144. I have a very high opinion of myself.
145. Once I start a project, I almost always finish it.
146. It’s often hard for me to make up my mind.
I don’t consider myself especially “light-hearted.”
I believe that loyalty to one’s ideals and principles is more important than “open-mindedness.”
Human need should always take priority over economic considerations.
I often do things on the spur of the moment.
I often worry about things that might go wrong.
I find it easy to smile and be outgoing with strangers.
If I feel my mind starting to drift off into daydreams, I usually get busy and start concentrating on some work or activity instead.
My first reaction is to trust people.
I don’t seem to be completely successful at anything.
It takes a lot to get me mad.
I’d rather vacation at a popular beach than an isolated cabin in the woods.
Certain kinds of music have an endless fascination for me.
Sometimes I trick people into doing what I want.
I tend to be somewhat fastidious or exacting.
I have a low opinion of myself.
I would rather go my own way than be a leader of others.
I seldom notice the moods or feelings that different environments produce.
Most people I know like me.
I adhere strictly to my ethical principles.
I feel comfortable in the presence of my bosses or other authorities.
I usually seem to be in a hurry.
Sometimes I make changes around the house just to try something different.
If someone starts a fight, I’m ready to fight back.
I strive to achieve all I can.
I sometimes eat myself sick.
I love the excitement of roller coasters.
I have little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition.
I feel that I am no better than others, no matter what their condition.
When a project gets too difficult, I’m inclined to start a new one.
I can handle myself pretty well in a crisis.
I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.
I consider myself broad-minded and tolerant of other people’s lifestyles.
I believe all human beings are worthy of respect.
I rarely make hasty decisions.
I have fewer fears than most people.
I have strong emotional attachments to my friends.
As a child I rarely enjoyed games of make believe.
I tend to assume the best about people.
I’m a very competent person.
At times I have felt bitter and resentful.
Social gatherings are usually boring to me.
Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work of art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement.
At times I bully or flatter people into doing what I want them to.
I'm not compulsive about cleaning.
Sometimes things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me.
In conversations, I tend to do most of the talking.
I find it easy to empathize – to feel myself what others are feeling.
I think of myself as a charitable person.
I try to do jobs carefully, so they won’t have to be done again.
If I have said or done the wrong thing to someone, I can hardly bear to face them again.
My life is fast-paced.
On a vacation, I prefer to going back to a tried and true spot.
I'm hard-headed and stubborn.
I strive for excellence in everything I do.
Sometimes I do things on impulse that I later regret.
I’m attracted to bright colors and flashy styles.
I have a lot of intellectual curiosity.
I would rather praise others than be praised myself.
There are so many little jobs that need to be done that I sometimes just ignore them all.
When everything seems to be going wrong, I can still make good decisions.
I rarely use words like “fantastic!” or “sensational!” to describe my experiences.
I think that if people don’t know what they believe in by the time they’re 25, there’s something wrong with them.
I have sympathy for others less fortunate than me.
I plan ahead carefully when I go on a trip.
Frightened thoughts sometimes come into my head.
I take a personal interest in the people I work with.
I would have difficulty just letting my mind wander without control or guidance.
I have a good deal of faith in human nature.
I am efficient and effective at my work.
Even minor annoyances can be frustrating to me.
I enjoy parties with lots of people.
I enjoy reading poetry that emphasizes feelings and images more than story lines.
I pride myself on my shrewdness in handling people.
I spend a lot of time looking for things I’ve misplaced.
Too often, when things go wrong, I get discouraged and feel like giving up.
I don’t find it easy to take charge of a situation.
Odd things – like certain scents or the names of distant places – can evoke strong moods in me.
I go out of my way to help others if I can.
I’d really have to be sick before I’d miss a day of work.
When people I know do foolish things, I get embarrassed for them.
I am a very active person.
228. I follow the same route when I go someplace.
229. I often get into arguments with my family and co-workers.
230. I'm something of a "workaholic."
231. I am always able to keep my feelings under control.
232. I like being part of the crowd at sporting events.
233. I have a wide range of intellectual interests.
234. I'm a superior person.
235. I have a lot of self-discipline.
236. I'm pretty stable emotionally.
237. I laugh easily.
238. I believe that the "new morality" of permissiveness is no morality at all.
239. I would rather be known as "merciful" than as "just."
240. I think twice before I answer a question.
Appendix E

Personal Projects Analysis

Instructions

We are interested in studying the kinds of activities and concerns that people have at different stages of their life. We call these personal projects. All of us have a number of personal projects at any given time that we think about, plan for, carry out, and sometimes (though not always) complete.

Here are some examples of projects:

- Completing my English essay.
- Trying to help Gary get along better with others.
- Overcoming fear of meeting new people.
- Getting more outdoor exercise.
- Trying to finish the book Allan gave me.
- Taking a trip to Victoria.
- Cutting the grass.
- Finding a part-time job.
- Redecorating my bedroom.
- Trying to clarify my religious beliefs.
- Losing ten pounds.
- Making a birthday present for my friend.

We are also very interested in finding out how people feel about these personal projects, how enjoyable they are, and so on. We would appreciate it if you could begin by just writing down in the next ten minutes as many personal projects as you can that you are engaged in or thinking about at the present time—remember these are not necessarily formal projects, or important ones—we would prefer you to give us more of the everyday kinds of activity or concerns that characterize your life at present.
List Projects

Please go ahead and write down as many as you can in ten minutes.

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Now copy the projects in as brief a form as possible on page 5. Just make your description long enough to keep each project clearly in mind. As you can see, there is space for 10 projects. If your initial list contains more than 10, select the 10 that you are most likely to engage in over the next month or so. If you wrote down fewer than 10, see if you can think of several more, or break down some of those you listed into several projects. It is important for everyone to try to fill in 10 projects.

In columns 1 to 17 please rate each one of your projects using any number from 0 to 10 on the following dimensions. Remember that numbers between 0 and 10 can also be used.
1. Importance: how important each project is to you at the present time (use 10 if the project is very important to you and 0 if it is not at all important to you).

2. Enjoyment: how you enjoy working on each project (use 10 if you enjoy it a great deal and 0 if you do not enjoy it at all).

3. Difficulty: how difficult you find it to carry out each project (use 10 for a project that you find very difficult to carry out and 0 for one that you do not find difficult at all).

4. Visibility: how visible each project is to the relevant people who are close to you, that is how aware are they that you are engaged in this project (use 10 for a project which is very visible to those around you and 0 for a project which is not at all visible to those around you).

5. Control: how much you feel you are in control of each project (use 10 for a project over which you feel in complete control and 0 for a project over which you feel you have no control at all).

6. Initiation: how much you feel responsible for having initiated each project (use 10 if you feel fully responsible for having initiated a project and 0 if you feel you have taken no part whatsoever in initiating a project).

7. Stress: how stressful it is for you to carry out each project (use 10 if a project is very stressful to carry out and 0 if a project is very relaxing to carry out).

8. Time adequacy: how much you feel that the amount of time you spend working on each project is adequate (use 10 if you feel that the amount of time spent on a project is perfectly adequate and 0 if you feel, for one reason or another, that the amount of time you spend working on a project is not at all adequate).

9. Outcome: what you anticipate the outcome of each project to be (use 10 if you think that a project will be extremely successful and 0 if you think that a project will turn out to be a total failure).

10. Self-identity: how typical of you each project is (use 10 if a project is very typical of you and 0 if it is not at all typical of you).

11. Others' view: how important each project is seen to be by relevant people who are close to you (use 10 if a project is seen by others as very important and 0 if it is seen as not important at all).

12. Value congruency: to what extent is each project consistent with the values which guide your life (use 10 if a project is totally consistent with your values and 0 if a project is totally at odds with them).

13. Positive impact: how much you feel that each project helps the others. Don't worry whether it hinders or not, we'll get to that on the next dimension (use 10 to indicate that a project greatly increases your chances of working on other projects and 0 to indicate that a project has no positive effect).

14. Negative impact: how much you feel that each project hinders other projects (use 10 to indicate that a project seriously hinders your chances of working on other projects and 0 to indicate that it does not have any negative effect).

15. Progress: how successful you have been in a project so far (use 10 to indicate that you have been very successful and 0 to indicate that you have had no success at all).

16. Challenge: to what extent each project is demanding and challenging to you (use 10 if a project is most challenging and 0 if it is not challenging at all).

17. Absorption: to what extent you become engrossed or deeply involved in a project (use 10 if you generally get absorbed in an activity and 0 if you tend to be uninvolved when doing it).

18. Please write down the names of the other people involved in each project with you. You can use only first names, but include the initial of the last name to differentiate people who share the same first name. If there is no one else involved in a project with you, leave the corresponding space blank.

19. Please indicate the setting in which you would most likely or most typically carry out each project. Some projects may not be taking place in any particular setting, in which case you leave the corresponding space blank.
### Personal Projects Matrix

List the 10 projects on the right

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Project Cross-Impact Matrix

In the cross-impact matrix, each project will be compared to another project in terms of how one affects doing the other. One project can be related to another project in one of four ways:

(1) First, doing one project may help another project further along. For example, if one of your projects is "playing squash twice a week", and another is "getting to know Jan better", then playing squash may help you get to know Jan better if Jan is the person with whom you play squash.

(2) A second possibility is that doing one project may in some way hinder or conflict with another project. For example, one of your projects may be "quitting smoking", and another might be "losing weight". Many people find that the project of "quitting smoking" has a negative effect on "losing weight" since people frequently do more eating as a replacement for cigarettes.

(3) A third possible relation between a pair of projects is that doing one project may in some ways help, but in other ways hinder the second project. One of my projects, for example, is "taking the dog for walks", while another is "writing a paper". On the one hand, taking the dog for walks conflicts with writing my paper, since the fact that I'm walking the dog means that I am not writing. On the other hand, I find that taking the dog for walks helps in some ways since it provides a bit of a break, gives me some "breathing" time, and allows me to come back to my writing refreshed.

(4) And finally, the fourth possible relation between a pair of projects is that doing one project may not be related at all to doing another project, i.e., it neither helps nor hinder.

In completing the matrix, work down one row at a time. Start at row one, which is the first project listed. Look across the first row to the first empty square, which is where project (row) one intersects with project (column) two. The question to ask is: what is the effect of doing project one (row project) on doing project number two (column project)? If doing project one in some way helps doing project number two, you would put a plus sign (+) in that square. If doing project one in some way hinders or conflicts with doing project number two, you would put a minus sign (-) in that square. Doing those two steps will leave you with one of the four possibilities outlined earlier. You might have a plus sign in the square, indicating that doing project number one helps project number two in some way. You might have just a minus sign in the square, indicating that doing project number one in some way conflicts with doing project number two. You might have both a plus sign and a minus sign in the square, indicating that doing project one in some ways helps and in some ways conflicts with doing project number two. Or you may have nothing in the square, indicating that doing project one has no effect at all on doing project two. If this last one is the case, then put a zero (0) in the square, indicating that it has no effect one way of the other. Finally, you might want to indicate in some cases that doing one project really helps or really conflicts with another project. If that's the case, feel free to indicate this magnitude by putting two plus signs or minus signs in the appropriate square.
## Project Cross-Impact Matrix

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Appendix F

The Revised, Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity

Instructions: Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Indicate your answer on the line preceding the question number.

1 = strongly agree 4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree 5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree 6 = strongly disagree

1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along.

2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.

3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.

4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.

5. There's a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.

6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.

7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style." I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.

8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.
For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree 4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree 5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree 6 = strongly disagree

9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.
10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.
11. There are so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.
12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "lifestyle" view, but I haven't found it yet.
13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.
14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can truly enjoy.
15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.
16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.
17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted.
18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.
For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree         4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree       5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree                  6 = strongly disagree

___  20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.

___  21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.

___  22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.

___  23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.

___  24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.

___  25. I'm really not interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.

___  26. I'm not so sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.

___  27. My ideas about men's and women's roles came right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.

___  28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.

___  29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.

___  30. Sometimes I join leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.

___  31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.
For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.
1 = strongly agree 4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree 5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree 6 = strongly disagree

____ 32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.
____ 33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.
____ 34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.
____ 35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.
____ 36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.
____ 37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.
____ 38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.
____ 39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.
____ 40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.
____ 41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through their plans.
____ 42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.
____ 43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.
____ 44. My parent's views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.
For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree                  4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree                5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree                           6 = strongly disagree

45. I’ve tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.
46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I’ve found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.
47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven’t fully decided yet.
48. I’m not sure about my political beliefs, but I’m trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.
49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.
50. I attend the same church/synagogue/temple my family has always attended. I’ve never really questioned why.
51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I’ve thought about lots of ways and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.
52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don’t see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.
53. I don’t have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.
54. I’ve been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.
55. I’ve dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own “unwritten rules” for dating are and who I will date.
56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to make a firm stand one way or the other.
57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.

58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it might be right for me.

59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.

60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.

61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.

62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.

63. I date only people my parents would approve of.

64. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.
Appendix G

McAdams' Life Narrative Interview Protocol

I. Life Chapters

I would like you to begin by thinking about your life as if it were a book. Each part of your life composes a chapter in the book. Certainly, the book is unfinished at this point; still, it probably already contains a few interesting and well-defined chapters. Please divide your life into its major chapters and briefly describe each chapter. You may have as many or as few chapters as you like, but I would suggest dividing it into at least two or three chapters and at most about seven or eight. Give each chapter a name and describe the overall contents of each chapter. Discuss briefly what makes for a transition from one chapter to the next. This first part of the interview can expand forever, but I would urge you to keep it relatively brief. Therefore, you don’t want to tell me “the whole story” here. Just give me a sense of the story’s outline—the major chapters in your life.

II. Nuclear Episodes

I am going to ask you about three key events. A key event should be a specific happening, a critical incident or a significant episode in your past set in a particular time and place. It is helpful to think of such an event as constituting a specific moment in your life that stands out for some reason. Thus, a particular conversation you had with your mother when you were twelve years old or a particular decision you made one afternoon last summer might qualify as a key event in your life story. These are particular moments in a particular time and place, complete with particular characters, actions, thoughts, and feelings. An entire summer vacation—be it very happy or very sad or very important in some way—or a very difficult year in high school, on the other hand, would not qualify as key events, because these take place over an extended period of time. For each event, describe in detail what happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event. Also, try to convey the impact this event has had in your life story and what this event says about who you are or were as a person. Did this event change you in any way? If so, in what way? Please be very specific here.

You should focus considerable time and energy on each event recalled. Provide as much detail as possible. Work hard to comprehend the significance of the particular moment in the encompassing pattern of your overall life narrative.

1. **Peak experience:** A high point in the life story; the most wonderful moment in your life. [Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life’s meaning?]

2. **Nadir experience:** A low point in the life story; the worst moment in your life.

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7 *Note.* Adapted from McAdams (1993).
3. **Turning point:** An episode wherein you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself. It is not necessary that you comprehended the turning point as a turning point when it in fact happened. What is important is that now, in retrospect, you see the event as a turning point, or at minimum as symbolizing a significant change in your life.

III. **Relationships**

Every person's life story is populated by a few significant people who have a major impact on the narrative. These may include, but not be limited to parents, children, siblings, spouses, lovers, friends, teachers, coworkers, and mentors. I want you to describe two of the most important people in your life story. At least one of these should be a person to whom you are not related. Please specify the kind of relationship you had or have with each person and the specific way he or she has had an impact on your life story.

Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?

Focusing on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them? Have there been any changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years? If so, what caused the change?

After describing each of these, tell me about any particular heroes or heroines you have in your life.

IV. **Stress and Conflict**

All life stories include significant conflicts, unresolved issues, problems to be solved, and periods of great stress. I would like you to consider some of these now. Please describe an area in your life where at present you are experiencing at least one of the following: significant stress, a major conflict, or a difficult problem or challenge that must be addressed. Describe the nature of the stress, problem, or conflict in some detail, outlining the source of the concern, a brief history of its development, and your plan, if you have one, for dealing with it in the future.

Have you experienced times of crises or suffering in your life when you felt profound disillusionment, or that life had no meaning? What happened to you at these times? How have these experiences affected you?

Describe a situation you are having, or have recently had where you faced a **moral** conflict and had to make a decision but weren't sure what was the right thing to do? Could you describe the situation?
- Who were involved and what role did they play?
- How would you characterize the nature of the relationship?
What did you see to be the issues involved; that is, what was at stake?
What were you feeling or experiencing at the time?
In deciding what to do, what options did you consider?
How was the conflict resolved?
What do you think would have been the right thing to do?
Did you have a duty, obligation, or responsibility to do that?

V. Future Script

Now that you have told me a bit about your past and present, I would like you to consider the future. As your life story extends into the future, what might be the script or plan for what is to happen next in your life? I would like you to describe your overall plan, outline, or dream for your own future. Most of us have plans or dreams that concern what we would like to get out of life and what we would like to put into it in the future. These dreams or plans provide our lives with goals, interests, hopes, aspirations, and wishes. Furthermore, our dreams or plans may change over time, reflecting growth and changing experiences. Describe your present dream, plan, or outline for the future. Also, tell me how, if at all, your dream, plan, or outline enables you (1) to be creative in the future and (2) to make a contribution to others.

VI. Personal Ideology

Now I will ask you a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values. Please give some thought to each of these questions, and answer each with as much detail as you can.

1. Do you think that human life has a purpose? If so, what do you think it is? Is there a plan for our lives, or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?

2. Do you believe in the existence of some kind of God, deity, or force that reigns over or in some way influences or organizes the universe? Explain.

3. Are there any religious ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you? If so, what are these and why are they important?

4. Please describe how your religious beliefs have changed over time. Have you experienced any periods of rapid change in orientation? Explain.

5. In what ways, if any, are your beliefs different from those held by most people you know?

6. If people disagree about a religious issue, how can such religious conflicts be resolved?

7. Do you have a particular political orientation? Explain.
8. Are there any groups, institutions, or causes that you identify with? Why do you think that these are important to you?

9. Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?

10. Do you think actions can be right or wrong? If so, in your opinion, what makes an action right?

11. Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances? Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?

VII. Overall Life Themes

    Looking back over your entire life story as a book with chapters, episodes, and characters, can you discern a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the text? What is the major theme of your life? Explain.
Appendix H

Themes of Agency and Communion

Themes of Agency

1. Self Mastery (SM)
   The subject strives successfully to master, control, enlarge, or perfect the self.... A relatively common expression of the theme involves the subject’s attaining a dramatic insight into the meaning of his or her own life. The insight is not a mere “lesson in life,” but rather a fundamental transformation in self-awareness or a quantum leap forward in self-understanding that entails the realization of dramatically new goals, plans, or mission in life—a profound insight into one’s identity. Another relatively common expression of SM involves the subject’s experiencing a greatly enhanced sense of control over his or her destiny, in the wake of an important life event (e.g., divorce, death of a loved one, reaching a life milestone, etc.). Other examples of SM typically show up in accounts in which the subject reports that he or she felt “strengthened” by an event, or in which a person explicitly says that the experience provided him or her with a feeling of power.

2. Status/Victory (SV)
   The subject attains a heightened status of prestige among his or her peers, through receiving a special recognition or honor or winning a contest or competition.... SV refers to significant recognition, especially prestigious honors, and various kinds of victories over others. Simply doing a “good job,” getting good grades, or successfully achieving a goal, no matter how important the goal, is not enough to score for SV.

3. Achievement/Responsibility (AR)
   The subject reports substantial success in the achievement of tasks, jobs, or instrumental goals or in the assumption of important responsibilities. The subject feels proud, confident, masterful, accomplished, or successful in (1) meeting significant challenges or overcoming important obstacles concerning instrumental achievement in life or (2) taking on major responsibilities for other people and assuming roles that require the person to be in charge of things and/or people.

4. Empowerment (EM)
   The subject is enlarged, enhanced, empowered, ennobled, built up, or made better through his or her association with something larger and more powerful than the self.... In EM, the empowering force is usually either (1) God, nature, the cosmos, or some other manifestation of a larger power in the universe; or (2) a highly influential teacher, mentor, minister, therapist, or authority figure who provides critical assistance or guidance for the subject.

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Note. Adapted from McAdams’ (1992) Coding Autobiographical Episodes for Themes of Agency and Communion.
Themes of Communion

5. Love/Friendship (LF)
   A subject experiences an enhancement of erotic love or friendship toward another person. LF refers primarily to love and friendship among peers, as in heterosexual or homosexual relationships and same-sex as well as opposite-sex platonic friendships. It does not include tender feelings of nurturance and caring as experienced in parent/child relationships.... In order to score for LF, the experience must be centrally about the development of love or friendship in a particular relationship.

6. Dialogue (DG)
   The subject experiences a reciprocal and noninstrumental form of communication or dialogue with another person or a group of others. DG usually takes the form of an emotionally positive conversation between two people. The conversation is viewed as an end in itself (justified for its own sake) rather than a means to another end.... Furthermore, contentious or unpleasant conversations—such as hostile arguments or exchanges in which people do not seem tuned in to each other—do not qualify as DG. In order to score for DG, a conversation need not be about especially intimate topics.

7. Caring/Help (CH)
   The subject provides care, assistance, nurturance, help, aid, support, or therapy for another, providing for the physical, material, social, or emotional welfare or wellbeing of another person. Unlike LF, the CH theme captures emotionally positive experiences between relative unequals, in that the nuturer is more or less stronger than the object of nurturance (the person requiring assistance or care), at least as far as the particular experience is concerned.

8. Unity/Togetherness (UT)
   The theme of Unity/Togetherness captures the communal idea of being part of a larger community. In the UT, the subject experiences a sense of oneness, unity, harmony, synchrony, togetherness, allegiance, or solidarity with a group of people, a community, or even all of humankind together.
Appendix I

Ego Processes

Coping Cognitive Processes

Objectivity: Subjects separate their ideas and feelings from each other so that they achieve objective evaluations when situations require this sort of behavior.

Intellectuality: Subjects are capable of detachment in an affect-laden situation which requires impartial analysis and awareness and is so detached from restrictions of the environment and self that they are able to give their thoughts free rein.

Logical Analysis: Subjects are interested in analyzing thoughtfully, carefully, and cogently the causal aspects of situations, personal or otherwise.

Defending Cognitive Processes

Isolation: Subjects' affect seems not to be related to their ideas, and/or they seem not to be able to put their ideas together.

Intellectualization: Subjects with high ratings retreat from affect to formulations of words and abstractions. Subjects think and talk on a level of abstraction not quite appropriate to the situation, use jargon, and do not specify how these ideas relate to context.

Rationalization: Subjects offer superficially plausible reasons to explain their behavior and/or intentions, which allows their sub rosa self-gratification to escape attention, but they omit crucial aspects of situations, or are otherwise inexact.

Coping Intraceptive Processes

Tolerance of ambiguity: Subjects are able to cope with cognitive and affective complexity or dissonance. Subjects are capable of qualified judgment; they are able to think in terms of grays rather than blacks and whites.... They tolerate inevitably complex negative and positive feelings toward others.

Empathy: Subjects sensitively put themselves in the other person's boots; they take the other's role; they are able to imagine how the other person feels and thinks. In their interpersonal relationships they take account of others' feelings and ideas.

Regression in the service of the ego: Subjects utilize feelings and ideas that are not directly ordered or required by the practical immediate elements of the situation to add to their understanding of problems, their handling of situations, and their enjoyment of life.

Note. Adapted from Haan (1977).
Defending Intrceptive Processes

Doubt: Subjects are unable to resolve ambiguity. They doubt the validity of their own perceptions or judgments, are unable to make up their mind, and are unable to commit themselves to a course of action or presentation of incidents.

Projection: Subjects attribute an objectionable tendency to another person, or persons, instead of recognizing it as part of themselves.

Regression: Subjects resort to evasive, wistful, demanding, dependent, ingratiating, non-age appropriate behavior to avoid responsibility, aggression, and unpleasant demands from others and self.

Coping Attention-focusing Process

Concentration: Subjects are able to set aside disturbing or attractive feelings or thoughts in order to concentrate on the task at hand.

Defending Attention-focusing Process

Denial: Subjects deny present or past facts and feelings that would be painful to acknowledge and focus instead on the benign or pleasant.

Coping Affective Processes

Sublimation: Subjects find alternate channels and means, which are self-satisfying, socially accepted, and tempered for the expression of affect which can sometimes be basically "primitive."

Substitution: Subjects express tempered, domesticated feelings.

Suppression: Subjects' infeasible and inappropriate feelings and affective responses are held in abeyance and controlled until the proper time and place and with the proper object. At the same time, affect can be expressed when it is appropriate.

Defending Affective Processes

Displacement: Subjects temporarily and unsuccessfully attempt to control unacceptable affects or impulses in relation to their original objects or situations, and then expresses them in a situation of greater internal or external tolerance.

Reaction formation: Subjects appear to have transformed their impulses and affects into their opposites, with resulting alteration of behavior which may, nevertheless, occasionally break down so that the original impulse is in evidence.
Regression: Subjects unconsciously and purposefully forget. They have gaps in recall of the past and just can't remember or elaborate. Their constriction in thinking are due to a naive, oblivious, unthinking attitude.
Appendix J

NEO-PI-R Facet Scales

Neuroticism Facets

N1: Anxiety. Anxious individuals are apprehensive, fearful, prone to worry, nervous, tense, and jittery. The scale does not measure specific fears or phobias, but high scorers are more likely to have such fears, as well as free-floating anxiety. Low scorers are calm and relaxed. They do not dwell on things that might go wrong.

N2: Angry Hostility. Angry hostility represents the tendency to experience anger and related states such as frustration and bitterness. This scale measures the individual’s readiness to experience anger; whether the anger is expressed depends upon the individual’s level of Agreeableness. Note, however, that disagreeable people often score high on this scale. Low scorers are easygoing and slow to anger.

N3: Depression. This scale measures normal individual differences in the tendency to experience depressive affect. High scorers are prone to feelings of guilt, sadness, hopelessness, and loneliness. They are easily discouraged and often dejected. Low scorers rarely experience such emotions, but they are not necessarily cheerful and lighthearted – characteristics associated instead with Extraversion.

N4: Self-Consciousness. The emotions of shame and embarrassment form the core of this facet of N. Self-conscious individuals are uncomfortable around others, sensitive to ridicule, and prone to feelings of inferiority. Self-consciousness is akin to shyness and social anxiety.... Low scorers do not necessarily have poise or good social skills; they are simply less disturbed by awkward social situations.

N5: Impulsiveness. In the NEO-PI-R, impulsiveness refers to the inability to control cravings and urges. Desires (e.g., for food, cigarettes, possessions) are perceived as being so strong that the individual cannot resist them, although he or she may later regret the behavior. Low scorers find it easier to resist such temptations, having a high tolerance for frustration. The term impulsive is used by many theorists to refer to many different and unrelated traits. NEO-PI-R impulsiveness should not be confused with spontaneity, risk-taking, or rapid decision time.

N6: Vulnerability. The final facet of N is vulnerability to stress. Individuals who score high on this scale feel unable to cope with stress, becoming dependent, hopeless, or panicked when facing emergency situations. Low scorers perceive themselves as capable of handling themselves in difficult situations.

Extraversion Facets

E1: Warmth. Warmth is the facet of Extraversion most relevant to issues of interpersonal intimacy. Warm people are affectionate and friendly. They genuinely like people and easily form close attachments to others. Low scorers are neither hostile nor necessarily lacking in compassion, but they are more formal, reserved, and distant in manner than high scorers. Warmth is the facet of E that is closest to Agreeableness in

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10 From Costa and McCrae's (1992) Revised NEO Personality Inventory and the NEO Five Factor Inventory Professional Manual.
interpersonal space, but it is distinguishable by a cordiality and heartiness that is not part of A.

**E2: Gregariousness.** A second aspect of E is gregariousness – the preference for other people's company. Gregarious people enjoy the company of others, and the more the merrier. Low scorers on this scale tend to be loners who do not seek – or who even actively avoid – social stimulation.

**E3: Assertiveness.** High scorers on this scale are dominant, forceful, and socially ascendant. They speak without hesitation and often become group leaders. Low scorers prefer to keep in the background and let others do the talking.

**E4: Activity.** A high Activity score is seen in rapid tempo and vigorous movement, in a sense of energy, and in a need to keep busy. Active people lead fast-paced lives. Low scorers are more leisurely and relaxed in tempo, although they are not necessarily sluggish or lazy.

**E5: Excitement-Seeking.** High scorers on this scale crave excitement and stimulation. They like bright colors and noisy environments. Excitement-Seeking is akin to some aspects of sensation seeking. Low scorers feel little need for thrills and prefer a life that high scorers might find boring.

**E6: Positive Emotions.** The last facet of E assesses the tendency to experience positive emotions such as joy, happiness, love, and excitement. High scorers on the Positive Emotions scale laugh easily and often. They are cheerful and optimistic. Low scorers are not necessarily unhappy; they are merely less exuberant and high-spirited.

**Openness Facets**

**O1: Fantasy.** Individuals who are open to fantasy have a vivid imagination and an active fantasy life. They daydream no simply as an escape but as a way of creating for themselves an interesting inner world. They elaborate and develop their fantasies and believe that imagination contributes to a rich and creative life. Low scorers are more prosaic and prefer to keep their minds on the task at hand.

**O2: Aesthetics.** High scorers on this scale have a deep appreciation for art and beauty. They are moved by poetry, absorbed in music, and intrigued by art. They need not have artistic talent, nor even necessarily what most people would consider good taste; but for many of them, their interest in the arts will lead them to develop a wider knowledge and appreciation than that of the average individual. Low scorers are relatively insensitive to and uninterested in art and beauty.

**O3: Feelings.** Openness to feelings implies receptivity to one's own inner feelings and emotions and the evaluation of emotion as an important part of life. High scorers experience deeper and more differentiated emotional states and feel both happiness and unhappiness more intensely than others. Low scores have somewhat blunted affects and do not believe that feeling states are of much importance.

**O4: Actions.** Openness is seen behaviorally in the willingness to try different activities, go new places, or eat unusual foods. High scorers on this scale prefer novelty and variety to familiarity and routine. Over time, they may engage in a series of different hobbies. Low scorers find change different and prefer to stick with the tried-and-true.

**O5: Ideas.** This trait is seen not only in an active pursuit of intellectual interests for their own sake, but also in open-mindedness and a willingness to consider new, perhaps unconventional ideas. High scorers enjoy both philosophical arguments and
brain-teasers. Openness to ideas does not necessarily imply high intelligence, although it can contribute to the development of intellectual potential. Low scorers on the scale have limited curiosity and, if highly intelligent, narrowly focus their resources on limited topics.

**O6: Values.** Openness to Values means the readiness to reexamine social, political, and religious values. Closed individuals tend to accept authority and honor tradition and as a consequence are generally conservative, regardless of political party affiliation. Openness to Values may be considered the opposite of dogmatism.

Agreeableness Facets

**A1: Trust.** The first facet of Agreeableness is Trust. High scorers have a disposition to believe that others are honest and well-intentioned. Low scorers on this scale tend to be cynical and skeptical and to assume that others may be dishonest or dangerous.

**A2: Straightforwardness.** Straightforward individuals, that is, those individuals with high scores on this scale are frank, sincere, and ingenuous. Low scorers on this scale are more willing to manipulate others through flattery, craftiness, or deception. They view these tactics as necessary social skills and may regard more straightforward people as naïve. When interpreting this scale (as well as A and C scales), it is particularly important to recall that scores reflect standing relative to other individuals. A low scorer on this scale is more likely to stretch the truth or to be guarded in expressing his or her true feelings, but this should not be interpreted to mean that he or she is a dishonest or manipulative person.

**A3: Altruism.** High scorers on the Altruism scale have an active concern for others' welfare as shown in generosity, consideration of others, and a willingness to assist others in need of help. Low scorers on this scale are somewhat more self-centered and are reluctant to get involved in the problems of others.

**A4: Compliance.** This facet of A concerns characteristic reactions to interpersonal conflict. The high scorers tends to defer to others, to inhibit aggression, and to forgive and forget. Compliant people are meek and mild. The low scorer is aggressive, prefers to compete rather than cooperate, and has no reluctance to express anger when necessary.

**A5: Modesty.** High scorers on this scale are humble and self-effacing although they are not necessarily lacking in self-confidence or self-esteem. Low scorers believe they are superior people and may be considering conceited or arrogant by others.

**A6: Tender-Mindedness.** This facet scale measures attitudes of sympathy and concern for others. High scorers are moved by others’ needs and emphasize the human side of social policies. Low scorers are more hardheaded and less moved by appeals to pity. They would consider themselves realists who make rational decisions based on cold logic.

Conscientiousness Facets

**C1: Competence.** Competence refers to the sense that one is capable, sensible, prudent, and effective. High scorers on this scale feel well-prepared to deal with life. Low scorers have a lower opinion of their abilities and admit that they are often unprepared and inept.
C2: Order. High scorers on this scale are neat, tidy, and well-organized. They keep things in their proper places. Low scorers are unable to get organized and describe themselves as unmethodical.

C3: Dutifulness. In one sense, conscientious means “governed by conscience,” and that aspect of C is assessed as Dutifulness. High scorers on this scale adhere strictly to their ethical principles and scrupulously fulfill their moral obligations. Low scorers are more casual about such matters and may be somewhat undependable or unreliable.

C4: Achievement Striving. Individuals who score high on this facet have high aspiration levels and work hard to achieve their goals. They are diligent and purposeful and have a sense of direction in life. Very high scorers, however, may invest too much in their careers and become workaholics. Low scorers are lackadaisical and perhaps even lazy. They are not driven to succeed. They lack ambition and may seem aimless, but they are often perfectly content with their low levels of achievement.

C5: Self-Discipline. By this term we mean the ability to begin tasks and carry them through to completion despite boredom and other distractions. High scorers have the ability to motivate themselves to get the job done. Low scorers procrastinate in beginning chores and are easily discouraged and eager to quit. Low self-discipline is easily confused with impulsiveness – both are evidence of poor self-control – but empirically they are distinct. People high in impulsiveness cannot resist doing what they do not want themselves to do; people low in self-discipline cannot force themselves to do what they want themselves do to. The former requires an emotional stability; the latter, a degree of motivation that they do not possess.

C6: Deliberation. The final facet C is deliberation – the tendency to think carefully before acting. High scorers on this facet are cautious and deliberate. Low scorers are hasty and often speak or act without considering the consequences. At best, low scorers are spontaneous and able to make snap decisions when necessary.