

DOES INTEGRITY REQUIRE MORAL GOODNESS?

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Abstract

Most accounts of integrity agree that the person of integrity must have a relatively stable sense of who he is, what is important to him, and the ability to stand by what is most important to him in the face of pressure to do otherwise. But does integrity place any constraints on the kind of principles that the person of integrity stands for? In response to several recent accounts of integrity, I argue that it is not enough that a person stand for what he believes in, nor even that he is committed to and stands for what, in his best judgement, is morally right. In our web of moral concepts integrity is internally related to a host of virtues which exclude weakness of will and dogmatism, and presuppose trustworthiness. Integrity requires that the principles stood for must be those that a morally good, morally trustworthy agent would stand for, and that the agent himself is morally trustworthy.¹

Most accounts of integrity agree that the person of integrity must have a relatively stable sense of who he is, what is important to him, and the ability to stand by what is most important to him in the face of personal or social pressure to do otherwise.² Accounts diverge once we begin to ask what counts as a relatively stable sense of self, what standing by one's principles comes to and whether integrity places some constraint on the nature of what is stood for. In this paper I focus on this last question, namely the appropriate constraints on the kind of principle that persons of

¹ I am grateful to Michael Watkins, Duncan MacIntosh, Kelly Jolley, Carolyn McLeod, Sue Campbell, and Sue Sherwin for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I have also benefited from questions from members of the Dalhousie Colloquia Series, and the Alabama Philosophical Society. Research for this project was supported by an Auburn University Humanities Development Grant.

² See Bernard Williams, 'Persons, Character and Morality' and 'Moral Luck' in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1–19 and pp. 20–39; Gabriel Taylor, *Pride, Shame and Guilt: Emotions of Self-assessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 108–141; Lynn McFall, 'Integrity' in *Ethics and Personality: Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. John Deigh (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 79–94; Cheshire Calhoun, 'Standing for Something' *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XCII, No. 5, May 1995, pp. 235–261; Mark S. Halfon, *Integrity: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

integrity should stand for. Contrary to several recent accounts of the nature of integrity, I argue that it is not enough that a person stand for what he believes in, nor even that he is committed to and stands for what he thinks is morally right. Integrity requires that the principles stood for must be those that a morally good, morally trustworthy agent would stand for, that the agent himself is morally trustworthy. My aim is not to give a complete account of the nature of moral trustworthiness but rather to discuss integrity's relation to it. Integrity requires more than good intentions, sincerity and conviction about holding fast to principles one believes in. It requires judgement that, while not infallible, is epistemically trustworthy and is grounded in the moral know-how of the agent.

My argument rests on two related strategies. First, we must begin with intuitions, and test our account of integrity against those intuitions. Second, where intuitions divide (and they do almost immediately) we must examine the relation that discourse about integrity bears to our other moral concepts and practices. I will suggest that in our web of moral concepts integrity is internally related to a host of virtues which exclude weakness of will and dogmatism, and presuppose trustworthiness. This point, to borrow from Austin, is neither 'difficult nor contentious' but true, nonetheless.³ Unfortunately it is often forgotten when we are distracted by the question of how to identify the morally trustworthy person, or when we ignore the difference between manifestations of integrity and manifestations of the skills required for it. This is the flaw in the accounts I examine below.

Competing Accounts of Integrity

Identity-conferring accounts of integrity focus on the 'integrated' or 'coherent' nature of the person. Integrity first and foremost requires that the actions and reasons of the person be her own.⁴ This requires a certain coherence between the person's beliefs, desires, commitments, and actions that are essential to that individual's sense of self. Integrity involves subscribing to (or accepting) these identity-conferring commitments and standing by those 'in the face of temptation or challenge, and upholding

³ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p 1.

⁴ See Williams, 'Person, Character and Morality' *op. cit.*, Taylor, *op. cit.* chapter 5, and McFall, 'Integrity' *op. cit.*

these for what the agent takes to be the right reasons.⁵ Coherence between first order and second order desires is not sufficient for integrity nor is making the commitments one's own simply a matter of personal preference. Consistency requires an appropriate awareness of one's second order desires and any change must be reflective and free from distortion. A person who acts solely on the strongest first order desire or takes as his second order desire to simply follow his strongest first order desire, is too shallow, too artificial to have integrity. Integrity requires that one see one's identity-conferring desires as promoting one's good.⁶

Aside from excluding commitment to artificiality, expedience and shallowness, the only additional, justifiable constraint on the kind of commitment one stands for is that some principles or commitments be unconditional.⁷ To be a person of integrity, there must be something that matters to the agent such that losing it would be to lose oneself. Taylor concedes that in order to further one's goals one would have to recognize that one is not an isolated being, and thus one's recognition of others cannot be 'a wholly superficial one' – some degree of others' rights and interests would have to be recognized. But in principle, ascriptions of integrity do not allow us to infer anything about the content of the commitments; while ascriptions of integrity are often based on or associated with moral excellence, leading a morally good life is not essential for integrity. As Taylor writes:

But the nature of what the person concerned thinks so important is also not relevant to whether or not he has acted with integrity. It could be said of Don Giovanni that he acts with integrity at that moment when the imminent prospect of the fires of hell does not make him disown his way of life. But there is nothing to admire in the Don's way of life.⁸

This seemingly awkward result is not unique to identity-conferring accounts. More recent accounts of human integrity, what I shall refer to as 'social virtue accounts', downplay and often criticize the

⁵ McFall, *op. cit.* p. 83.

⁶ Of course, one's good may include benefiting others. Taylor is also sensitive to the fact that the reason may manifest itself in patterned behavior of valuing rather than be explicitly articulated and that 'acknowledging' one's desires and 'deciding' which to act on is not entirely in our control. We inherit certain aspects of ourselves where the decision is not so much choosing but accepting. Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 124.

⁷ McFall, *op. cit.* p. 85.

⁸ Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 127.

importance placed on personal coherence and emphasize the inherently social value of integrity. Integrity, on the identity-conferring accounts, has value from an individualistic point of view; valuing integrity, first and foremost, protects the character or identity of the individual and has social benefit only derivatively. But, as Cheshire Calhoun argues, accounts of integrity that reduce integrity to a unified agent or a set of integrated projects and commitments, fail to adequately account for the intrinsically social (other-regarding) aspect of integrity.⁹ While integrity is important to the person, it also fits us for membership in a community and is in this sense a social virtue. According to Calhoun, an important aspect of integrity involves ‘standing for’ principles and values that ‘in one’s own best judgment, are worthy of defense because they concern how we, as beings interested in living justly and well, can do so.’¹⁰ The principles that one stands for are principles for how members of a moral community ought to live – the principles that tell us what kind of a life is worth living and what actions are worth doing. Calhoun’s view also requires that the person of integrity have the proper epistemic attitude toward the principles she stands for: she must see herself as part of a community of deliberators determining what is good. As a member of this community, her judgement is one among many and, consequently, gains some weight in the deliberative process. The person of integrity not only holds worthy her own best judgement about what is worth doing, but the person of integrity also recognizes the worthiness of standing for her best judgement before others in the community. So, a person who adheres to principles valuing temperance, courage, civility, and beneficence, for example, might still lack integrity if that person does not recognize these principles as worthy of others’ endorsement or fails to appreciate the importance of standing for those principles.

Although Calhoun’s account demands an appreciation of the nature and importance of what is stood for and a willingness to accept criticism from the community of deliberators, it allows for a morally questionable character to have integrity. Consider *Star Wars*’ lead villain, Darth Vader. Tracing Darth Vader’s rise to power might plausibly reveal an individual who sincerely believed in the principles he stood for, and most likely recognized the

⁹ Calhoun, *op. cit.* p. 253.

¹⁰ Calhoun, *op. cit.* p. 254.

importance of standing for those beliefs – especially for the community of deliberators that he thought ought to count. One can imagine such a character submitting his beliefs for examination by the community that his beliefs deemed appropriate. Indeed, it is often the sincerity, drive, and use of critical reasoning that lead many to trust such individuals. This type of person is neither shallow, artificial, nor concerned with mere expedience. He has a reasonably coherent sense of self and a consistent set of principles with which to work when he makes decisions. Further, we can imagine this type of character who has the courage to live, and die, by these principles. Does this person have integrity? At this point intuitions divide. On identity-conferring accounts and Calhoun's social virtue account, we should say of such an individual that he has integrity.¹¹ My intuitions differ; however integrated, committed, and consistent in his commitments, however willing he is to see himself as a member in a community of deliberators, this agent cannot be a person of integrity. For the person of integrity must not only stand for personal commitments, but the person of integrity must be a good judge of what principles are morally right. To address Calhoun, the person of integrity must be a good judge of what community of deliberators he ought to be a member of and accountable to. So far, both types of account fail to accommodate this intuition. Setting intuitions aside for the moment, the arguments motivating my opponents' intuitions deserve attention.

Distinguishing Moral and Personal Integrity

One might argue that I have failed to recognize that there are different kinds of integrity and that this result, discussed above, is awkward only if one is giving an account of moral integrity. 'Integrity' is a relational term and our use reflects this. In addition to moral integrity we speak of *personal* integrity, religious integrity, professional, intellectual, and artistic integrity. Failing to make these distinctions leads one to think that a person like Darth Vader poses a genuine problem. But, one might argue, however morally questionable he may be, he still has *personal* integrity. This view of integrity is bolstered by the following consideration: while our ascriptions of integrity are often infested with our own conceptions of the good, on occasion we ascribe

¹¹ McFall seems to endorse this. *Op. cit.* p. 83. See also Halfon, *op. cit.* p. 56.

integrity to someone of whose lifestyle we disapprove. By distinguishing these senses of integrity we can explain the fact that we sometimes admire these evil characters in full recognition of their evil. Such admiration is directed at personal rather than moral integrity. Further, in more typical cases illustrating personal integrity, the contrast between moral principles and the individual's struggle to preserve his identity is less stark. Often the person is not so obviously immoral, but instead struggles between fulfilling obligations to others and fulfilling his own desires or projects. James Baldwin, for example, struggled with his commitment to his craft and his commitment to his community during the civil rights movement. The former drove him to seek solitude, but commitment to the latter forced him into a public life, and he recognized that one compromised his ability to do the other effectively. On the view under consideration, Baldwin's was a struggle between personal integrity, artistic integrity, and moral integrity. Further, if integrity can demand that some obviously moral principles be compromised for the sake of identity-conferring commitments like one's family, one's artistic pursuits etc., then integrity should allow for cases where morality loses all of the time, for *some* persons.

This view has its appeal, and any adequate account of integrity will have to explain these practices of ascribing integrity to aspects of an individual's life. Moreover, in accepting this view one need not accept the seriously questionable assumption that the integrity of the parts is wholly separate and insulated from the integrity of the whole. For example, a well-functioning car requires well-functioning parts, but it need not have all parts functioning well, and which parts are most important will depend on the kind of car you are speaking of. Presumably a good racing car doesn't and perhaps shouldn't have an air-bag or anti-lock brakes, whereas a good family car should. Attributions of integrity, one might think, work in a similar way. To say that someone is a person of integrity means either they have professional integrity, or artistic integrity or some combination of these, but not necessarily all of these. So even if one grants the claim that personal integrity cannot be understood separately from artistic, intellectual, moral or some other sense of integrity, one can still deny that personal integrity requires moral integrity.

As appealing as this view is, it faces the following problem. The view that personal integrity or artistic integrity can exist without moral integrity assumes that the meaning of 'integrity' is

anchored, not in the wholeness or integratedness of a person, but in the kind of principle or activity to which the person is most devoted. Moreover, it assumes that there is a special category of 'personal principles' that can be in conflict with 'moral' and 'artistic' principles and that each category is insulated from the other. But both assumptions are misguided. To see this, consider Baldwin's case once again. This view would have us say that his struggle was a struggle between moral integrity (commitment to the cause) versus artistic integrity (adherence to his writing). Presumably, Baldwin can manifest integrity qua artist without manifesting integrity qua moral agent. But is this how we should characterize Baldwin's struggle? Baldwin's struggle is a moral struggle. And this becomes more evident with a closer examination of how we characterize this type of struggle.

Perhaps the most familiar contexts that test the individual's integrity involve temptations to abandon former commitments. A political candidate struggles against political pressure to change her political platform either to win votes or to avoid party criticism. The artist or intellectual might struggle with his commitment to public concerns and his private life. My opponent would have us accept the view that moral integrity is something different than artistic integrity, something separable from it, something competitive with it. But our description of Baldwin's struggle does not suggest that artistic integrity competes with moral integrity. At best we contrast preserving artistic integrity to heeding *other* (competing) commitments; similarly we contrast preserving professional integrity to heeding *other* commitments. For instance, we think artistic integrity can be threatened either by social standards or 'conventional' morality, or perhaps from other obligations that one has as a moral agent, to help satisfy family or community needs. This does not show that 'artistic integrity' and 'moral integrity' come into conflict, nor does it show how personal integrity is preserved by the person's commitment to one or the other. Rather, it suggests a conflict or dilemma *within* morality, namely a choice to adhere to artistic principles or to abandon them for the sake of some *other obligation*. Baldwin's struggle is a conflict between desires to fulfill his aesthetic commitments and desires to satisfy his obligations to his community. Baldwin's question, however, is not 'should I opt for moral integrity or personal/aesthetic integrity?' but rather 'what should I do?' Morality is concerned with responsibilities to the community and to oneself and surely it is conceivable that obligations to

artistic demands might, in appropriate circumstances, override commitments to the community. In those cases where we think we can make sense of a contrast between personal integrity and moral integrity, I would argue that this will often turn out to be a conflict between obligations to self and obligations to others. That is not a tension between moral integrity and personal integrity. Rather it is one of the essential tests of a person's integrity: knowing when to help oneself rather than helping others. So, while my opponent and I agree that it makes no sense to say that one's moral integrity is threatened but not one's personal integrity (because moral integrity implies personal integrity), I claim that it makes no sense to say that one's personal integrity was threatened but not one's moral integrity. Moral integrity is as intimately tied to personal integrity as personal integrity is to moral integrity. This is not enough to show that a person with a morally questionable character cannot possess integrity, but it does show why we should avoid defending the view that he can by drawing a distinction between 'personal integrity' and 'moral integrity.'

There is another way to defend the view that having integrity is compatible with having a morally questionable character, even granting that moral goodness figures into the possession of integrity. Mark Halfon, in his analysis of integrity, defends a character-based notion of integrity that recognizes different senses of integrity, each of which contains a moral component.¹² However, admitting that there is a moral component to integrity does not entail that persons of integrity have morally good characters or subscribe to morally correct principles:

What then determines whether uses of the term 'integrity' have a moral component? We can begin to answer this by examining an apparent moral tautology, namely, a person of moral integrity exhibits some morally desirable trait. People who have moral integrity, though, may embrace radically different principles or ideals and some may even pursue unethical principles or undesirable ideals. As stated earlier, the range of persons who can qualify as persons of integrity are without limit. . . . If this is true, then the moral component associated with ascriptions of integrity will not be found in the actions, ideals, or principles of these persons, but rather in what it means to be a

¹² Taylor's view, like Halfon's, is not undermined by the preceding arguments but it, like Halfon's, should be rejected for the reasons I offer later in the paper.

person of moral integrity irrespective of the object or 'content' of the commitment one makes.¹³

According to Halfon there is an element of positive moral evaluation in our ascriptions of integrity and this either rests with the content of the person's commitment or with the person's willingness to stand by the commitment. But since we ascribe integrity to a range of persons some of whom may pursue unethical principles or undesirable ideals, the source of moral praise is not the principles that he endorses but his commitment to them. In light of this, Halfon urges, we should understand the nature of integrity as the 'consistent commitment to doing what is best, especially under adverse conditions' where 'adverse conditions' refers to any condition that serves to threaten the person's commitment to doing what she thinks best.¹⁴

Halfon's argument rests on the claim that our ascriptions of integrity to persons who hold morally questionable principles ought to be taken at face value, as genuine and true attributions of the quality to the person. I will take issue with this at the end of this paper. For now I will take such attributions at face value and instead argue that Halfon's account of integrity, as genuine commitment to what one thinks is best, ignores an important feature of integrity. To see this, consider the difference between the man who dogmatically stands for a cause and the man of integrity. Both, I assume, have commitment to particular principles, but having commitment is not sufficient to distinguish these two characters. Many political activists or war heroes might be driven to pursue and defend a cause at almost any cost. But to be driven, even if one is driven by one's best judgement that one is right, is not to have integrity. The most common attempt to distinguish integrity from dogmatic commitment appeals to epistemic responsibility; more specifically the strategy appeals to a criterion of reasonableness, practical deliberation or some related epistemic virtue involved in the formation of the right kind of commitment. According to Halfon, to be 'genuinely committed minimally involves that one strive to be conceptually clear, logically consistent, apprised of all relevant factual and moral considerations and perhaps free from self-deception.'¹⁵ More recently, Calhoun, agreeing with the importance of epistemic constraints

¹³ Halfon, *op. cit.* p. 56.

¹⁴ See also McFall, *op. cit.* p. 83 and Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 128.

¹⁵ Halfon, *op. cit.* p. 133.

for integrity but resisting the more individualistic criteria of an account like Halfon's, appeals to the individual's recognition of her place in the epistemic community:

As one among many deliberators who may themselves go astray, the individual's judgment acquires gravity. It is, after all, not *just* her judgment about what it would be wrong or not worthwhile to do. It is also her *best* judgment. Something now hangs for all of us, as co-deliberators trying to answer correctly the 'What is worth doing?' question, on her sticking by her best judgment. Her standing for something is not just something she does for herself. She takes a stand for, and before all deliberators who share the goal of determining what is worth doing.¹⁶

On Calhoun's account, the person of integrity must have an attitude with a unique content, namely, understanding that she is a part of a community of deliberators trying to determine what is worth doing. And as a member of this community, the person of integrity appreciates that her best judgement ought to count in trying to determine what is worth doing. In addition to this epistemic responsibility, Calhoun recognizes the importance of an appropriate epistemic humility:

if integrity is the virtue of having a proper regard for one's own judgment as a deliberator among deliberators, it would seem that integrity is not just a matter of sticking to one's guns. Arrogance, pomposity, bullying, haranguing, defensiveness, incivility, close-mindedness, deafness to criticism (traits particularly connected with fanaticism) all seem incompatible with integrity. All reflect a basic unwillingness or inability to acknowledge the singularity of one's own best judgment and to accept the burden of standing for it in the face of conflict.¹⁷

The person of integrity must be willing to stand for her own best judgement but also recognize that she is one among many deliberators, that she must take their criticisms seriously and that her judgement might be wrong. The personal and social dimensions of integrity are embodied in these complex attitudes that the person of integrity bears toward her judgements.¹⁸

¹⁶ Calhoun, *op. cit.* p. 257.

¹⁷ Calhoun, *op. cit.* p. 259.

¹⁸ Halfon also recognizes the importance of this epistemic humility. Halfon, *op. cit.* pp. 33–37.

There is much to be said for distinguishing by means of epistemic humility and responsibility the dogmatic or narrow-minded from the person with integrity. Someone who is simply unwilling to expose his views to criticism is vulnerable to serious self-deception or can rightly be accused of a narrow-mindedness, stubbornness or fanaticism. However, as all authors admit, the willingness to expose one's view to criticism and the willingness to reassess and revise one's principles must also be accompanied by a willingness to stand by those principles in the face of public criticism. The person of integrity must be able to navigate in moral waters, knowing when to reassess and when to refuse. That is, while willingness to reevaluate is an important disposition for the person of integrity to have, there are circumstances in which the person of integrity will refuse to reassess her principles in the face of criticism. Indeed, standing for those principles will require that the person of integrity refuse to reevaluate the principles and, instead, act on those principles and expect others to follow. But once we acknowledge this, two problems surface. First, simply believing this is the time to dig one's heels in and doing so because one believes that this is one's *best* judgement, is not sufficient to distinguish the person of integrity from the merely sincere, intellectually honest person. Some 'best judgements' must count more than others. The person of integrity must have a track-record where these skills have proven successful. The unskilled, unpolished or simply inept member of the community may be genuinely open-minded and committed to doing what is best in a situation, but not possess integrity because she lacks the experience and moral know-how concerning when to dig one's heels in, and when to engage in reassessment and revision of such principles. Furthermore, simply striving for open-mindedness, conceptual clarity and logical consistency, while definitive of the person who is committed to making the best decision, is not definitive of the epistemically trustworthy agent. The person of integrity must be good at these things. For this reason, Calhoun's account will also fail to capture epistemic trustworthiness. The person of integrity must be able to distinguish communities, knowing which communities to listen to when she is criticized and which communities to ignore. The Tuskegee Study provides a nice example of how social constraints fail to guarantee integrity.¹⁹

¹⁹ Allan Brandt, 'Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study' *Hastings Center Report*, December 1978, pp. 21–29.

In this study several hundred African American men from Macon county Alabama, diagnosed with syphilis, were unknowing participants in a study of the effects of the disease. The object of the study was simply to observe the disease as it took its course in the subjects. The men received neither symptomatic treatment (neosalvarsan in the 1930's) nor therapeutic treatment (penicillin in the 1940's). On several occasions, the study was reviewed (as late as 1962) and deemed worthy enough to continue. One can imagine the physicians participating in this study claiming that they had made their best judgements and put these judgements to the test to a diverse community. Moreover, one of the many remarkable features of this study is that it was not clandestine, and the decision making was a collective effort, at both the federal and the local levels. The results from the study were published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, as were the racist views that blacks were sexually promiscuous, ignorant, and prone to syphilis; no doubt both had a hand in convincing the medical professionals that beginning and continuing the experiment was acceptable. While it is reasonable to assume that some of the members were close-minded, arrogant, and deaf to criticism, many of them were not. Unfortunately, this collective decision-making failed morally, and my intuition is that none of the participants were persons of integrity; they were not persons of integrity for the very reason that they were unable to see the disrespect paid to the Tuskegee men participating in the study.²⁰ All, individually and most certainly collectively, failed to take the lives of the subjects seriously, and without this moral compass, no one can be said to be deserving of the admiration that is signaled by justified attributions of integrity.

This case reveals the feature that is lacking in both Calhoun's and Halfon's attempt to capture integrity by means of epistemic trustworthiness. For even if their accounts could avoid attributing

²⁰ One might think that the Tuskegee study does not show that the physicians lacked integrity but only a sense of justice since there was no issue of corruption or intimidation leading to an abandonment of principle. I would argue that while contexts in which agents either resist or succumb to temptation are paradigm instances of gathering evidence of integrity, other more subtle forms of corruption, like the overzealous pursuit of truth at the cost of justice, reveal a lack of integrity. While a struggle within the individual draws our attention to and serves to highlight an individual's success (or failure), that there is no struggle cannot detract from the success. So while the person of integrity may have to struggle in some instances, it seems that integrity (or lack of it) might prevent such a struggle from taking place. I am thankful to David Braybrooke for pushing me to defend this point.

epistemic trustworthiness to the physicians, epistemic trustworthiness and genuine commitment to what one takes to be good do not exhaust the source of moral worth that draws our admiration. The person of integrity must be not only epistemically trustworthy but morally trustworthy.²¹ This is one reason why the dogmatic, the morally careless and the morally questionable person cannot possess integrity. This is why the Tuskegee physicians, however epistemically responsible they might be, failed to manifest integrity. While they may gain our trust, they are not morally trustworthy. This is also why the morally questionable character cannot have integrity: a person whose character is morally questionable cannot be morally trustworthy.

It is tempting to think that we might capture the trait of trustworthiness by means of the epistemic constraints. After all, we are less trusting of dogmatic, close-minded individuals, and more trusting of those who will listen to what we say, be open-minded, and accept our point of view even if we disagree. Considered in isolation, these are importantly related to trustworthiness, but, I would urge, only because such qualities indicate a good character with good will and concern for our own well-being. Open-mindedness (rather than mere capriciousness) involves a proper regard for the views of others. But open-mindedness, conceptual clarity and logical consistency, or any other internal individual-based constraints, while often indicative of good character are not guarantors of it. Considering Calhoun's objection to identity-conferring accounts helps to see this point: open-mindedness, conceptual clarity and logical consistency are not *essentially* other-regarding. They put one in proper relation to oneself for they affect one's judgement and ability to find the truth. In this way they also put one in proper relation to the facts. But they do not put one in proper relation to *others*, at least not essentially so. While open-mindedness is primarily directed at a regard for others' beliefs and practices, trustworthiness is directed at another person's worth and is in this sense an essentially 'other-regarding' attitude. For what justifies my placing trust in someone is that he has my interests at stake and cares about what happens

²¹ I am grateful to Carolyn McLeod for getting me to think carefully about the relationship between trust and integrity. McLeod and I agree about the importance that trust plays in an account of integrity, but disagree about the role it plays. Very roughly: I appeal to the trustworthiness of the individual where she appeals to our willingness to trust him. See Carolyn McLeod, 'Prototypical Features of Trust Relations: What we Trust in Others', in *Self-Trust* (unpublished manuscript).

to me.²² Consider, once again, the Tuskegee Study. It is easy to imagine that the physicians involved were intellectually open-minded, respectful of the market of ideas and the appropriate conditions for acceptance and rejection. The Tuskegee physicians were researchers, after all, and one can easily imagine them genuinely concerned with alternative hypotheses, cures, clinical studies and the word of the experts – relative to the scientific practices of the day. But all this is compatible with their having a morally skewed regard for the worth of their patients. So while epistemic trustworthiness includes a genuine regard for the worth of another's belief or opinion, and open-mindedness might reliably indicate this trait, moral trustworthiness requires a genuine regard for the worth of the person.²³ Consequently, integrity requires not only a regard for moral principles but, to borrow from Kant, a genuine regard for the moral principle in each of us. While the person of integrity must be concerned with the question of how one ought to live, she must also be genuinely concerned for the well-being of each individual.²⁴

I began this paper acknowledging that a debate about the nature of integrity would rest on two strategies: appealing to examples as test cases for the account and appealing to the web of moral concepts within which our concept of integrity is situated. Intuitions diverge when we consider the extent to which integrity can be possessed by someone with a morally questionable character. I then turned to the task of exploring where integrity was situated in our web of moral concepts and practices.

²² To appreciate this further consider the difference between reliability and trustworthiness. For instance, people can be reliable in a respect, with respect to a specific task, but trustworthiness applies to one's character across contexts. Trustworthiness is more difficult to achieve and brings with it an evaluation of character that reliability need not. The trustworthy person, like the reliable person, takes responsibility seriously. However, the trustworthy person is not narrow-mindedly reliable. While the reliable person may be fiercely loyal, and in this sense share with the trustworthy person a caring attitude toward a particular person, the trustworthy person needs to have an insight into why he ought to be loyal to someone in general, and to this person in particular. He ought to have a sense of what being loyal to this person calls for in other contexts, and the limits of this loyalty. The trustworthy person has a regard for equal treatment, not simply loyal treatment. There is a flexibility and moral know-how – a depth of character – that need not be present in the reliable person.

²³ It is not enough to have regard for particular persons or particular relationships. Moral trustworthiness requires a regard and allegiance to the general in this sense: one respects, first and foremost, the humanity in each individual regardless of the individual's relation to oneself. One must see individuals as having worth because of an equal standing, not to be lessened by sacrificing one individual for the good of others.

²⁴ See Annette Baier's 'Trust and Antitrust' in *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 95–129.

I argued that attributions of integrity presuppose the possession of other moral virtues, including trustworthiness. If this is correct then some of our intuitions must yield; we cannot coherently attribute integrity to someone we believe to be morally untrustworthy and any account that does not recognize this is seriously flawed. In this last part of the paper I want to return to the argument for the claim that the content of principles or actions is not essential to integrity. More specifically, I want to address the motivating reasons that draw my opponents to hold on to these original intuitions and to argue that these reasons are less compelling than one might have originally thought.

Possessing Integrity

Why think integrity tolerates a morally questionable character? One answer is that our linguistic practices seem to bear this out. As Halfon argues, our ascriptions of integrity allow for the fact that people who have integrity may embrace radically different principles or ideals:

Kantians, utilitarians, or egoists could all possess or lack moral integrity. Conservatives, liberals, and radicals could also become persons who maintain or lose their integrity . . . If this is true, then the moral component associated with ascriptions of integrity will not be found in the actions, ideals or principles of these persons²⁵

The argument rests on the reliability of a small group of our attributions. It would be mistaken to take issue with the fact that such ascriptions occur. They do. But what such speech acts come to and what they tell us about the nature of integrity is not clear. Presumably such ascriptions involve attributing moral value to the person by means of integrity while expressing disapproval of the behavior. In this way the concept seems to tolerate morally questionable behavior, contrary to my account. But it is this move that I wish to resist. First, disapproving of a piece of behavior is compatible with acknowledging its moral permissibility. To see this we can consider different acts of protest involving various degrees of violence. In response to the antics of demonstrators for Greenpeace, one's disapproval might contain a mixture of admiration and reservation. One could admire the integrity of

²⁵ Halfon, *op. cit.* p. 56; Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 128.

taking such an unpopular view and disrupting one's life to do so, while thinking the particular means of protest foolish, excessively dramatic or unproductive. Such disapproval may express a wish that the behavior be stopped. But all of this is compatible with saying that the act itself is not wrong. And all of this (even foolishness, on occasion) is compatible with integrity. Then again, one's disapproval might be directed at the kind of act rather than the individual's performance of it. This too, I would urge, is compatible with the account I am offering. I can imagine someone expressing disgust at more extreme acts of violence (civil rights activists' bombings of warehouses), while maintaining admiration for the activists' integrity; he would be condemning the kind of act as otherwise dangerous, disrespectful and foolish but necessary to bring America to action. The disapprobation is not directed at the person nor the performance of the act, but at the kind of act performed.

Suppose, however, that our disapproval involves moral condemnation of the individual's particular performance and his judgement governing this and past performances. My opponents think that we can plausibly and coherently disapprove of the individual's performance and still coherently ascribe integrity to the person performing the act. With only a few exceptions (and details matter here), I do not. Consider once again Taylor's description of Don Giovanni. According to Taylor he acts with integrity when he refuses to disown his way of life despite the imminent prospect of the fires of hell. If we are to reject Taylor's view, we must account for our temptation to ascribe integrity despite such disapproval. My suggestion is this: if we are tempted to ascribe integrity to Don Giovanni we are so tempted because we fail to mind the distinction between actions done in accordance with virtue and actions that result from the possession of it. Don Giovanni's commitment to his way of life is morally admirable because it is behavior that we expect to see from the person with integrity. To bestow praise and admiration on Don Giovanni's steadfastness to his way of life is to acknowledge that he has the makings of a person of integrity because he is (on this occasion, in this manner) acting as a person of integrity would act. But this does not mean that he has integrity. Once we mind this distinction, then we can make sense of our ascriptions of integrity based solely on a particular performance or one aspect of character, rather than on whole character assessments. We can in turn make sense of our ascriptions of integrity to persons with

morally questionable characters. Such characters manifest behavior of the virtuous person without being virtuous themselves.²⁶ When we say that a person acts with integrity, we need not be admitting that the person has integrity but only that he manifests an important trait necessary for it.²⁷ Being a person of integrity requires more than steadfastness to one's principles of conduct; being a person of integrity requires more than being sincere, open-minded, conceptually clear and logically consistent. It requires moral as well as epistemic trustworthiness and trustworthiness is incompatible with defective character.

In closing I want to address a common misperception of the position I am forwarding. It might be argued that in rejecting the view that persons of integrity may endorse bad moral principles or have a morally defective character I have set the bar too high. Ordinary people have integrity but my account only allows for moral heroes. I agree that ordinary people have integrity but I also think that integrity is rarer than many would have us believe. One point of introducing the difference between acting according to rather than with integrity is to remind us that most of us have integrity *in the making*. It is also important to keep in mind that being trustworthy and making good moral judgements does not imply infallibility. As humans we are fallible and we are discussing human integrity. Wisdom doesn't require perfection, but it requires that one's judgements get made in the right way, that one makes good judgements and the possibility of such a judgement being mistaken is compatible with it being the right one to make. It is also a mistake to think that the person of integrity is the sole judge and that there is no place for a community of moral authorities. The wise person must be willing to defer

²⁶ Margaret Urban Walker, in her insightful defense of an ethics of responsibility, argues that integrity doesn't require reference to the character of one's life but is about 'cleaning up messes', 'local accountability', and 'resilient dependability'. While she is right that integrity is about accountability, it also depends on the character of one's life for it is only by referring to the character of one's life that one can account for the difference between someone who acts with integrity and someone who acts in the way that those with integrity normally act. See *Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1998), chapter 5.

²⁷ One might think that the phrase 'acting with integrity' entails that the person has integrity. But a quick survey of other concepts reveals otherwise. Someone can act courageously on occasion even if he usually is a coward. Phrases such as 'I was protecting my integrity' may be similarly analyzed. We speak of 'protecting our future' or 'protecting our career' even when the career is not yet in hand, and our future does not yet exist. In these cases, the end of our action is not to protect something existing. Rather, the activity is required to bring the end into being, or at least lay the ground for its coming into being.

to others under the appropriate circumstances. For the wise person recognizes that she is not always in the best position to see the moral truths, others might be best suited (although less reliable in their judgements in other contexts). So while this model brings with it the notion of authority, and a better and worse community of deliberators, it still leaves room for concessions to other context specific authorities in making moral judgements. A character like Don Giovanni doesn't have integrity. He is committed to a pattern of behavior and predictably so and for that reason may be reliable in a certain respect without being trustworthy. Such traits are important for gaining integrity but they are not enough to possess it. Becoming a person of integrity is a matter of developing integrity as we practice it. Just as a person can become wiser without being wise, we develop integrity without possessing it. Most of us have integrity in the making but very few of us are persons of integrity.

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