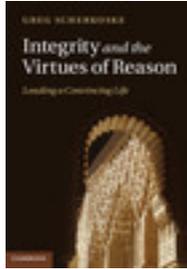


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Integrity and the Virtues of Reason

Leading a Convincing Life

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CHAPTER ONE

Two cheers for integrity?

I.1 INTRODUCTION

If sticking to one's convictions in the face of disagreement and challenge – or holding one's line in the face of varied temptations to capitulate, “sell-out” or backslide – is a virtue, then it is both intuitive and common to call this virtue *integrity*. If we grant that integrity involves adherence to things one regards as worth believing and doing, then integrity seems to be a trait that is at once good to have and lamentable to lack.

Integrity is one of the most frequently invoked virtue concepts in private and public life today. We respect and admire persons of integrity, even when we disagree strongly, even bitterly, with the convictions for which they stand. Conversely, we find it troubling when others too readily abandon their convictions when challenged – often, no less so when their revised view better aligns with ours.

Despite the fact that integrity inspires debate and most of us claim to value it, integrity remains an elusive virtue to understand. A considerable literature has left troubling disagreement on fundamental issues. Is integrity in fact a virtue? If it is, of what is it a virtue? Why exactly should we value integrity? What is the appropriate way to have concern for one's own integrity? Is having integrity compatible with having significant moral flaws? Finally, how is

integrity distinct from other desirable properties of persons – for example, autonomy or strength of will?

There exists little decisive argument for why we are right to value integrity, if in fact we are. There is also reason to question whether integrity is a virtue at all. Bernard Williams has persuasively argued that integrity lacks both a characteristic thought and a characteristic motivation that are necessary to secure integrity's status as a plausible moral virtue. Since integrity lacks both, he concludes, integrity is not a moral virtue at all. Furthermore, the air of partiality that clings to integrity leaves a bad odor. Integrity can seem to be a matter of sticking to one's commitments and projects simply because they are one's own; this smacks of self-indulgence. As we will see, these concerns are not easily stilled: there are considerable grounds for skepticism about integrity.

1.2 FROM OBSOLESCENCE TO THE CONFLUENCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS?

Past usage of the word *integrity* does not betray the same divergence of views about integrity that we will soon notice in philosophical treatments. As the *Oxford English Dictionary*¹ makes plain, integrity has traditionally been used to describe the state of wholeness and completeness; the condition of being unbroken. In this sense, we often hear integrity ascribed to buildings or their underlying structure, to data and databases, as well as to bodies and bodily organs. In contemporary contexts, *integrity* in the moral sense is frequently

¹ Second edition, 1989. "1.a. The condition of having no part or element taken away or wanting; undivided or unbroken state . . . 2. The condition of not being marred or violated; unimpaired or uncorrupted condition; original perfect state; soundness. 3. In a moral sense. a. Unimpaired moral state; freedom from moral corruption; innocence, sinlessness. *Obs.* b. Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty, sincerity."

ascribed to people who are honest, trustworthy or prone to conscientiousness in keeping their promises and oaths. When politicians and businesspersons are suspected of wrongdoing, they are often accused of lacking integrity. And perhaps unsurprisingly, integrity committees or investigators are charged with enforcing standards of honesty, fair dealing and probity, in addition to investigating alleged violations.

But as is also clear, past usage suggests that when applied to persons rather than things, integrity was a rather rare and difficult virtue to achieve. In its now obsolete usage, integrity was often invoked as a property of people's souls (J. Bale: "In these and other lyke factes, was faythes integritie broken, which is the true maidenhead of y soule") and bodies (J. Bulwer: "Natures constant provision to preserve virginal integrity") as well as character (Proverbs 19: "Better is the poore that walketh in his integrity, then he that is peruerse in his lippes and is a foole").² A natural explanation for this difficulty of achieving integrity was its daunting success condition: integrity required a state of unimpeached and unimpeachable freedom from sin and corruption. To the extent integrity is linked to a sort of virginal innocence or cleanliness, life would see to it that for most, integrity is (to echo Blake) often lost on the journey from innocence to experience.

Recent philosophical work on integrity has discarded most of these obsolete moral connotations and suggested a conflict between integrity and morality. For example, a person of integrity might betray a political cause for the sake of a friend, or an artist of integrity might reject aspects of what she considers to be bourgeois morality. Most prominently, Bernard Williams has argued at length that the demands of impartial morality may be so onerous as to constitute an attack on people's integrity. Other philosophers have in different ways accepted (often with qualification) that persons of

² *ibid.*

integrity may be less than completely moral – even if morality and integrity are not at odds in a fundamental way.³

Nevertheless, there is also a recent and unmistakable trend against the view that morality and integrity may part company. Elizabeth Ashford has argued that for integrity to actually have the sort of value people typically ascribe to it, we must conceive of it as having an essential orientation to our moral demands: “in order for us to have . . . integrity, our moral self-conception must be grounded in our actually leading a decent life. This requires that we abide by our moral commitments and that these commitments stem from the moral obligations we actually have.”⁴ The trend toward arguing for an underlying nexus between integrity and morality has not been limited to consequentialist or Kantian moral theories. In the most recent book-length treatment, Cox, La Caze and Levine have argued for a very inclusive setting for integrity – situated as a virtuous mean among numerous vices:

[Integrity] stands as a mean to various excesses: on the one side, conformity, arrogance, dogmatism, fanaticism, monomania, preciousness, sanctimoniousness, rigidity; on the other side, capriciousness, wantonness, triviality, disintegration, weakness of will, self-deception, self-ignorance, mendacity,

³ cf. Gabriele Taylor: “On my account it does not follow that he who has integrity is necessarily virtuous . . . we expect him to have strength of will and be honest in various ways; we do not demand that he be generous or charitable” (Taylor 1981, 157). Lynne McFall: “Integrity is a complex concept with alliances to conventional standards of morality . . . as well as to personal ideals that may conflict with such standards . . . Integrity in the sense of being true to oneself may require being false to others” (McFall 1987, 5). Susan Mendus has recently argued: “the possibility of tension between integrity and impartial morality arises because part of the function of morality is to constrain our ability to act on our own commitments, whereas integrity is defined precisely as a matter of acting on those commitments. Conflict between integrity and morality is therefore a permanent possibility” (Mendus 2009, 37).

⁴ Ashford 2000, 425. See also Graham 2001. Graham answers the titular question of her paper with an emphatic *yes*: “The person of integrity must be not only epistemically trustworthy but morally trustworthy . . . 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” (246–48).

hypocrisy, indifference . . . The person of integrity lives in a fragile balance between every one of these all-too-human traits.⁵

I will have more to say about this and other proposals soon. I now merely want to point out that, beyond a brief gesture at the diversity of opinion, such inclusiveness is an understandable response to concerns that the value of integrity stands in potential conflict with some of our most cherished moral values. In an effort to secure a clear view of integrity's value, it is tempting to make it the confluence of all – or nearly all – good things.

1.3 SOME DATA POINTS

Given the different senses of integrity in common usage, and given numerous divergent conceptions of integrity in the literature, it will be useful to set out some data points. These will orient my discussion of integrity in this introductory chapter and will help fix terms for my subsequent arguments. I will lean on an oft used distinction from John Rawls. I will not endeavor to determine and defend an analysis of the concept of “integrity,” but rather articulate and defend a plausible and attractive *conception* of integrity.⁶ This conception will capture not just the central uses of the term *integrity*, but will also explain many of the intuitions people have about plausible “core” features of the virtue. I will also try to show that this conception yields an understanding of integrity that better explains why people are right to value it. I adopt this approach because, as with thinking about justice or happiness,⁷ there is good reason to despair of finding (and defending) a univocal and well-defined concept. *Integrity* may, like *happiness*, *consciousness* and *justice*, be a “mongrel concept” – a

⁵ Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003, 41. ⁶ Rawls 1999, 9.

⁷ cf. Haybron 2007, chapter 3 for similar worries about the concept of *happiness*.

concept that, as Daniel Haybron nicely puts it, is “a confused mess that is neither clearly univocal nor sharply ambiguous.”⁸

My approach will be to offer a conception of integrity that attempts to reconcile, in an ecumenical spirit, as many aspects as possible of various “folk” understandings of integrity. The conception of integrity I offer not only resists the despair of the “mongrel concept” possibility, but also resists two other temptations that attend work on integrity. The first attempts conceptual parsimony, borne perhaps of despair of finding a persuasive reconstruction of integrity that does justice to common-sense intuitions about its value. The second yields to a sort of conceptual largesse, one that purchases its attentiveness to linguistic practice and the variety of ways people seem to value integrity at the cost of losing a grasp on the idea of integrity as a distinctive trait of its own.⁹

When applied to individuals, integrity is often used to describe part of someone’s character. We speak of people having or lacking integrity, and this relates to traits and behavioral dispositions. The term *integrity* can also be applied to aspects of a person’s life, perhaps even the entirety of that life. A person’s life – or at least stretches of it – can be said to exhibit integrity no less than the person herself.¹⁰ There are at least eight important “data points” or “platitudes” that talk of integrity picks out; not all are uncontroversial or uncontested:

- (1) Integrity involves sticking to one’s convictions, especially in the face of disagreement, challenge or temptation. Integrity is most obviously exhibited in a person’s resistance to sacrificing or compromising his convictions. For want of a better term, call this property *stickiness*.

⁸ *ibid.*, 44.

⁹ For the first, see Bigelow and Pargetter 2007; for the second, see Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003.

¹⁰ A point nicely stressed by Cox, La Caze and Levine 2008.

- (2) However the person of integrity displays the relevant coherence and “stickiness,” the tendency of a person to stand by her convictions must be responsive to reasons. Integrity cannot plausibly sanction a stance of “my convictions right or wrong, no matter how culpably stupid and ill-formed.” Call the incompatibility of integrity with fanaticism, dogmatism or a lazy unwillingness for self-scrutiny the property of *integrity within reason*.¹¹
- (3) The possible content of the convictions in which people exhibit this “stickiness” includes not just moral or (more widely) ethical convictions; integrity is also exhibited in intellectual and aesthetic convictions, as well as those relating to one’s role or profession. Call this integrity’s *range*.¹²
- (4) Integrity appears to have a noncontingent connection to traits of truthfulness such as honesty, sincerity and fair-dealing. Whereas one may be a person of integrity without being particularly kind, generous or imaginative, traits such as dishonesty, hypocrisy and shiftiness appear to undermine integrity (and do so directly). Call this connection *truthfulness*.
- (5) Integrity involves a certain sort of coherence or integration amongst a person’s convictions and conduct. As Susan Mendus succinctly puts this (data) point: “people of integrity know who they are . . . [t]heir lives form a coherent whole and their lives are led for their own reasons.”¹³ Call this elusive property, of a person’s convictions and conduct “hanging together,” *coherence*.

¹¹ I adopt this term to avoid having to distinguish, out of the gate, this named though undefined property and the properties of reasonableness and rationality. In the conjunction of *coherence* and *integrity within reason*, one can hear long-standing connotations of *soundness* of principle or character.

¹² I leave aside for the moment several important issues: whether this range requires positing different *kinds* of integrity – moral, personal, intellectual, aesthetic, professional, etc. – and in what ways (if any, apart from content) these differ, and in virtue of what it is that these different species constitute types of the genus “integrity.”

¹³ Mendus 2009, 16.

- (6) Integrity is manifest in behavior; persons of integrity have a characteristic kind of resolve. The sort of virtuous “stickiness” exhibited by the person of integrity is expressed in her resolution to conduct herself in accordance with her convictions. To borrow Cheshire Calhoun’s expression, persons of integrity “stand for” their convictions, both individually (they do not cave in or backslide from inner weakness) and socially (they are willing to affirm their convictions before others). Call this resolve in the face of threats and enticements *resoluteness*.
- (7) Having integrity is incompatible with gross turpitude. No matter how principled a stance Himmler, Hitler or Stalin might attempt to strike, they cannot be said to have integrity, for all their resoluteness and coherence. Call this requirement on ascriptions of integrity the *moral sanity* condition.
- (8) In matters of importance when we seek advice, guidance or mentoring, we are especially keen that the people whose cooperation, advice and guidance we seek are persons of integrity. That is, we not only seek persons who are in a position to help – with expertise, influence and discretion – we seek persons of integrity. This tendency suggests not merely that we seek and expect probity from such persons; the tendency also suggests persons of integrity are valued in part for their understanding and judgment as both interlocutors and leaders. Call this desirable property *judgment*. The absence of this property helps explain why we rue the absence of integrity in those we trust.

I have deliberately left these data points vague so as to capture as many of our intuitions as possible at this point. Clearly, not all of them will figure in everyone’s intuitions about integrity and some may not feature at all. Some of these data points may be interpreted more or less widely (as in the case of integrity’s range – some people

lack the intuition that integrity can be properly ascribed to a person on the basis of her aesthetic convictions). Other data points admit of more or less stringent interpretations (for example, some people clearly think mere moral sanity is too permissive a condition on integrity).¹⁴ Finally, some might interpret the integrity-within-reason view to merely require that people have *some* (though not very good) reason for their convictions; while others take sensitivity to a particular sort of consideration or reason – moral reasons or so-called “reasons of integrity” – to be the relevant and important marker.¹⁵

I.4 SIX ANALYTICALLY DISTINCT CONCEPTIONS OF INTEGRITY

Integrity has not wanted for philosophical attention. There are six discernible and analytically distinct conceptions of integrity.¹⁶ While these are distinct conceptions, some defend a particular view of integrity that combines aspects of two or more distinct conceptions.

With some notable exceptions, a dominant trend in philosophical accounts of integrity has been to focus on some aspect(s) of integrity (e.g., those linking integrity to wholeness, completeness or being uncorrupted) to the neglect of other intuitively relevant aspects

¹⁴ cf. Graham 2001; Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003, 2008.

¹⁵ McLeod 2005, 116 defends the first; Halfon 1989 defends a more robust constraint of rationality condition. Graham 2001 appears to make attentiveness to moral reasons a condition on possessing integrity. As I will discuss in Chapter 6, some have invoked the idea of a distinctive sort of reason, relating to one’s integrity; it might be thought that sensitivity to this category of reasons is central to the link between integrity and reasons.

¹⁶ Cheshire Calhoun, in her seminal work of 1995, distinguishes three conceptions – the integrated self, coherence and clean hands – en route to defending a fourth (proper regard for one’s judgment) (235–60). Cox, La Caze and Levine 2008 distinguish a fifth conception of integrity as moral purpose.

(e.g., soundness of moral principle, truthfulness and sincerity). This approach suggests that we model our understanding of integrity of persons on our understanding of the integrity of things. Given this, writers have naturally wondered which aspect(s) of persons could possibly underwrite this extension in usage. The likely candidates have seemed to be either a person's self or identity (or some subset of commitments thought to constitute the self or identity). Framed this way, the task has been to articulate and defend conceptions of integrity that show the virtue is fundamentally a property of a person's identity or self. Thus we have the first three analytically distinct conceptions – they are the *integrated self*, *identity* and *clean hands* views.

Integrity as integrated self

Leaning on the etymological links between integrity, integer and wholeness, the first conception sees a straightforward connection between the wholeness of numbers, things and persons. To have integrity is to have decided who one is, what one desires or values and, additionally, to stand by that, even if it proves unpopular.¹⁷ On the integrated self view, to have integrity is first and foremost to have settled the question of what one wants; it is to have rid oneself of ambivalence in one's preferences or values. As Calhoun nicely puts the core idea: "people of integrity decide what they stand for and have their own settled reasons for taking the stands they do. They are

¹⁷ Defenders of this view include Taylor 1981; McFall 1987; Blustein 1991; McLeod 2004; Cottingham 2010. As McFall rightly points out, there are likely several different kinds of coherence – consistency among one's commitments, values or principles; coherence between principle and action of a sort that rules out weakness of will; as well as coherence between one's principles and conduct that requires doing what one thinks is right because it is believed to be right. (1987, 7–8). Shelly Kagan writes: a person "who acts in keeping with her moral views can be at one with herself. Such unity, I think, is part of what we mean when we say that an individual's life has integrity" (1989, 390).

not ... crowd followers ... nor are they so weak-willed or self-deceived that they cannot act on what they stand for.”¹⁸ On this conception, integrity finds expression in a person’s conduct precisely because such conduct is the expression of a unified evaluative outlook. This explains our intuitive sense that people of integrity are not crowd followers, weak-willed or self-deceived: such pandering, backsliding or self-ignorance would reflect the failure to achieve such a unified and wholehearted outlook. To have integrity on this view is just to have achieved a stable and coherent sense of who one is and why one is.¹⁹ This view nicely captures the intuition that integrity involves being – and remaining – “one’s own person.”

Integrity as identity

On this second distinct conception, integrity is a relation of fidelity to – or remaining true to – one’s identity or self. Bernard Williams gave early, and decisive, voice to this view. Persons have “a set of desires, concerns ... call them projects, which help to constitute a *character*.”²⁰ The most important of these concerns are what he terms “ground projects,” which provide the person with “the motive force which propels him into the future, and gives him a reason for living.”²¹ Integrity involves fidelity to these ground projects as things with which a person identifies; it involves “sticking to what one finds ethically necessary and worthwhile.”²² Whereas the integrated self picture takes integrity to consist in the unity or coherence of everything an agent cares about (perhaps including cares she may have that are trivial, whimsical or

¹⁸ Calhoun 1995, 237; see also Mendus 2009, 16–18.

¹⁹ Mendus expresses this idea in the coin of reasons: persons of integrity “have settled reasons for taking the stand they do, and those reasons are their own reasons” (2009, 16).

²⁰ “Persons, Character and Morality,” in Williams 1981, 5. ²¹ *ibid.*, 13.

²² Bernard Williams, “Replies,” in Altham and Harrison 1995, 210–16.

mundane), the identity view takes integrity to be concerned with only those things that are important to a person's sense of self or identity. When a person compromises her integrity, she suffers a kind of loss of her identity: she is no longer the same person, since she has given up part of what defines her character, in Williams' sense. Since this view does not, unlike the integrated self picture, see one's integrity as implicated in everything one cares about but only in the concerns that define one's character, it helps make sense of the idea that a loss of integrity is a considerable harm.

Integrity as clean hands

Perhaps you think that there are certain things that you simply would not do; there are certain principles, values or relationships you could not break, violate or betray. The third "clean hands" conception of integrity takes this to be the defining feature of integrity. A person's integrity requires that she have some "bottom line" principles or convictions, and that she never betray or violate these.²³ As Lynne McFall puts this: "Unless corrupted by philosophy, we all have things we think we would never do, under any imaginable circumstances, whatever we may give to survival or pleasure . . . [there is] some part of ourselves beyond which we will not retreat . . . And if we do that thing, betray that weakness . . . there is nothing left that we may even in spite refer to as *I*."²⁴ This view, even more clearly than the identity conception, states that there are some personal and fundamental principles or values that one endorses as inviolable. This view comports well with

²³ Williams 1973 sets out this distinct aspect of his view in the discussion of Jim and the Indians; McFall 1987 also endorses this distinct conception of integrity (in tandem with the integrated self view).

²⁴ McFall 1987, 12.

paradigmatic cases of integrity: people who refuse to cooperate with corrupt or evil regimes; people who speak truth to power and suffer for it; as well as people who undertake smaller acts of resistance rather than be complicit.

More recently, the perceived inability of these first three conceptions of integrity to account for all (or a sufficient number of) the intuitively attractive and pretheoretically central features of integrity has motivated several other conceptions of integrity.

Integrity as strength of will

In previous conceptions we noted the intuition that being weak-willed – very roughly, being more or less unable to act on one’s judgment about what is best to do – is something that undermines integrity. John Bigelow and Robert Pargetter have argued that nothing compromises integrity more clearly than weakness of will. Contrary to considerable linguistic evidence and intuitions that integrity is something more complex, on this conception, integrity is simply the capacity to exercise what they call “strength of will.” Invoking the distinction between higher-order and lower-order desires from Harry Frankfurt, Gary Watson and others,²⁵ Bigelow and Pargetter understand strength of will to be that desirable property of higher-order desires that consists in their being motivationally decisive over conflicting lower-order desires:

it is possible to formulate a theory of integrity that is simpler than other theories on the market. Integrity is a character trait. It comes in degrees. A person with integrity is one who can display strength of will not only when the temptations are slight but also when they are acute, not only on freak

²⁵ Frankfurt 1971; Watson 1975 and 1987.

occasions but over a wide range of likely situations, and not only over short-term but long-term projects.²⁶

While the costs of this simpler theory are significant – on this conception integrity can be exhibited in the service of morally dubious or trivial ends – the benefits are clear. This conception can boast an account of one important data point, namely, resoluteness, an account that is both independently plausible and explanatorily powerful. The focal property of this conception, strength of will, they claim, is “well suited to the task of carving out a *natural kind* in moral psychology, rather than just an intrinsically arbitrary collection [of intuitions]” (44).

Integrity as proper regard for one’s own judgment

Cheshire Calhoun has persuasively argued that the first three conceptions of integrity effectively reduce the virtue to something else: “to the conditions of unified agency, to the conditions for continuing as the same self . . . [or] the conditions for having a reason to refuse cooperating with some evils.”²⁷ While she does not deny that people do in fact display integrity in the ways these three conceptions describe, not all intuitively plausible or important cases are captured.²⁸ What seems important to integrity is, in a certain sense, social; it is not merely about having and maintaining a certain relation to oneself. Integrity’s nature and value can only be fully captured by a conception that sees the virtue as partly social.

²⁶ Bigelow and Pargetter 2007, 39–49. ²⁷ Calhoun 1995, 252.

²⁸ “Although persons with integrity will sometimes stand for what they wholeheartedly endorse, or for what is central to their identity, or for deontological principles, integrity is not equivalent to doing these things. Continuing to be of two minds, conscientiousness about small matters and dirtying one’s hands can also be matters of integrity.” Central aspects of this picture are also endorsed by McLeod 2004; McLeod 2005, 107–34; and Mendus 2009.

Integrity requires “standing for” what one judges to be worth doing *before* others. “To lack integrity . . . is to underrate both formulating and exemplifying one’s own views. People without integrity trade action upon their views too cheaply for gain, status, reward, approval or for escape from penalties, loss of status, disapproval . . . or they trade their own views too readily for the views of others who are more authoritative . . . less demanding of themselves, and so on” (Calhoun 1995, 250).

The central fault of those who lack integrity is a failure to have a proper regard for one’s own best judgment on the fundamental matters of how to live justly and well. To have integrity is, at bottom, to resist the temptations, incentives and sanctions that would have us defer to or act on someone else’s judgment. Inseparable from this proper regard for one’s own judgment is the willingness to stand for one’s convictions among and before others. That is, in persons of integrity there is an elision of the reflexive regard for one’s own judgment and the willingness to offer it to others. This is the full measure of integrity’s status as a social virtue.

Integrity as moral purpose

The final, distinct conception of integrity takes seriously the sense of integrity as soundness of moral principle and uprightness common in ordinary use. Where the earlier views of integrity allowed at most a contingent connection between exhibiting integrity and standing for moral principles, this conception of integrity takes standing for moral values – perhaps even correct moral principles – to be a necessary condition for possessing integrity. There are several different variants. As we saw above (in section 1.2), Elizabeth Ashford defends the view that what she terms “objective integrity” requires a commitment to correct moral principles that

would rule out the possibility that a person of integrity would find herself a moral failure. Less demanding variants require that persons of integrity occupy a moral point of view that others find intelligible and that clear and rational thought has informed one's moral obligations – even if one's moral outlook is itself limited or in some respects faulty.²⁹ Others who arguably fall within this camp defend a virtue-theoretic approach to integrity, seeing the virtue not perhaps as the expression of a single moral capacity or end – nor necessarily as a single mean – but rather a complex set of traits that are central to the effort to live a reflective, morally serious life.³⁰ This conception has the advantage of explaining common and long-standing associations between integrity and morality. It further explains why integrity is so prized (since it is inseparable from the moral worth of persons) and why its absence or loss is so serious (since it is intimately bound up with moral failure and blameworthiness).

1.5 DESCRIPTIVE AND NORMATIVE ADEQUACY

Given the considerable range of views about integrity, it is natural to worry that there is nothing determinate or univocal regarding these conceptions of integrity and therefore nothing to perspicuously and usefully track. Perhaps, as stated earlier, our talk of integrity is just a “confused mess,” and this fact finds expression in philosophical accounts of it. In light of the book you are now holding, it will come as little surprise that I find this pessimism overstated. Such pessimism does, however, underscore both the

²⁹ See Halfon 1989. McFall 1987 represents a hybrid of moral purpose and integrated self-conceptions.

³⁰ Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003 and 2008 might resist the characterization of their view as a moral purpose conception of integrity.

importance and difficulty of adjudicating rival conceptions of integrity. What exactly should a good conception of the virtue do? Or, putting the point slightly differently, how would we know a better from a worse candidate?

I will proceed on the assumption that a genuinely persuasive account of integrity will be one that exhibits both *descriptive* and *normative adequacy*.³¹ An account or conception (I will use these interchangeably) is descriptively adequate just in case, and to the extent that, it fits with our more or less agreed upon experience, linguistic practice and judgments of integrity. Thus, a good account must accommodate most if not all of the central data points I have set out. Descriptive adequacy is a mark of an account accurately capturing the ordinary features of what one might be tempted to call our “folk” concept(s) of integrity. Descriptive adequacy is clearly a scalar property, in the loose sense that it admits of more and less. One account is more descriptively adequate than another to the extent that the first accommodates more of the data points, or does so more plausibly, than the second. Descriptive adequacy is a mark that we really do have an account of the thing that most people take themselves and others to be talking about.

By contrast, a conception of integrity is normatively adequate to the extent that it coheres with our intuitions about its value and who does (or does not) have it. It is important to have an account accommodate – to the greatest extent possible and plausible – our sense that integrity is in fact an important trait for people to have and display. We want an account of integrity that makes it clear why people value integrity so highly in themselves and others, and why we rue its absence in people who have influence and power over us,

³¹ This and the next two paragraphs are heavily indebted to the first chapter of L. W. Sumner’s *Welfare, Happiness & Ethics* (1996).

either individually or collectively. Integrity is something sufficiently important, we think, to warrant sacrifice of approval, status and other things near and dear to us. The considerable literature spawned by Williams' "integrity objection" against impartial moral theories such as consequentialism and Kantian ethics is premised on integrity having considerable value.³² Normative adequacy also admits of more or less: an account of integrity as moral purpose explains the value of integrity by reference to its essential links with moral worth and value. Of course, it is possible that people are wrong to esteem integrity so highly; it is certainly open to debate precisely *how* valuable it is. Nevertheless, it is plausible to burden the deflationary view with providing a persuasive theory of error, so as to explain why so many people are mistaken.

We now confront a further worry; namely, that it is unclear that these two dimensions of adequacy are in fact wholly distinct. As with reflection on the nature and value of welfare, and unlike reflection on the nature of causality or modality, it is far from obvious that the descriptive adequacy of an account of integrity can be severed from evaluative considerations of its normative adequacy. Any account of integrity that does not persuasively explain why so many people judge integrity to be valuable, no matter what descriptive power the account may have to capture some of the data points, has a considerable strike against it. Conversely, it would be a serious flaw of an account of integrity if, while it could account for why many people are keen to esteem integrity so highly, it left out why people speak of, and invoke, integrity in numerous other ways.

Fortunately, this worry need not derail the ecumenical approach I adopt in this book. I will assume for the purposes of my arguments

³² See Williams 1973 and Chapters 6 and 7 for further discussions.

that we are after an account that, all things considered, manages to be both normatively and descriptively adequate. What is more, I proceed on the assumption that one account would be preferable to another precisely because it did better on an amalgam of both standards. That is, we should prefer one rather than another view in part because it can better and more persuasively capture both descriptive and normative dimensions of adequacy. For this approach to be fruitful – or so I aim to show – we need not assume *either* that there is a basic threshold of adequacy that one or more accounts must meet, or that we must assume particular background normative or metaethical theories. This is in large measure the cash value of my earlier methodological claim to be working in an ecumenical spirit. While I will offer numerous criticisms of rival conceptions of integrity en route to defending my view, I do not feel it necessary to show that other accounts fail some independently specifiable threshold of adequacy. Nor do I defend a wider normative or metaethical framework within which my preferred account succeeds in ways that others cannot. That is, I take myself to be defending an account of integrity that is largely neutral with respect to the other commitments to consequentialist, deontological, contractualist virtue ethics or other moral theories.³³ Further, I take it as a shared assumption among both the reader and the views with which I engage that talk of truth, knowledge, warranted judgment and so forth is compatible with numerous forms of moral realism, as well as forms of antirealism that include theories of truth for evaluative and moral beliefs. Thus, what I argue here is compatible with sophisticated forms of subjectivism, quasirealism as well as both cognitivist and noncognitivist forms of fictionalism. The

³³ See Chapter 7 and the Postscript for an exploration of this claim. The account I offer should be acceptable to sophisticated forms of ethical relativism, too. See Scanlon 1995, 219–46.

account of integrity offered here is offered in an ecumenical spirit, and will prescind from these metaethical debates.

Put simply, the goal of this inquiry to give an account, as mildly revisionist as possible, that betters rival views at accounting for the data points, and is not merely descriptively and normatively adequate, but positively compelling. Indeed, I will argue that, on the conception of integrity on offer, we are right to value it very highly. An account that explains and systematizes the varied intuitions about what integrity is, and why it is of value, is preferable to an account that leaves our intuitions and judgments about integrity unexplained. Such an account is preferable to the extent that, and because, it gives a persuasive explanation of how and why the disparate aspects of integrity hang together. The judgment that “integrity” is a mongrel concept whose components don’t hang together for any discernible or systematic reason is one of last resort.

1.6 SOME LIMITATIONS OF THE SIX PICTURES

Each of the six conceptions surveyed in section 1.4 has enjoyed insightful and ingenious work. Each of these basic views – or, sometimes, combinations of these views – can persuasively claim to capture *some* of the data points. However, I will quickly suggest reasons why we are right to desire an alternative. More detailed engagement and criticism with rival accounts will follow, especially in Chapters 2 and 3.

Many extant views tend to cluster around the first three positions. Integrity is thought to be fundamentally about the integration of one’s self or personality, or the protective maintenance of one’s identity, or the preservation of one’s fundamental, nonnegotiable values or commitments. To reiterate, these three accounts are the *integration*, the *identity* and the *clean hands* views.

These views face significant worries. First, common to nearly all of the views that take one or more of these basic positions is the thought that integrity involves an essentially partial attitude toward the self, one's identity or fundamental values. While the particular form this stance takes is variously understood (e.g., as *adherence*, *sticking to*, *allegiance*, *remaining true to*), the basic thought is the same. Integrity is thought to essentially involve a kind of loyalty or partiality to one's self. It is this essential partiality to self that explains, as I noted earlier, the bad odor some have attributed to integrity. And this worry about partiality prompts concerns as to the normative adequacy of these accounts, since it appears to trouble our sense that integrity is a considerable value. Bernard Williams acknowledged just this worry. Integrity could easily attract the charge of *self-indulgence* – an unattractive, suspect and morally deformed concern with one's own character and commitments. More generally, if a conception of integrity essentially involves such a partial attitude toward the self, it is unsurprising that some have detected an unpleasant smell. Integrity appears as the “virtue” of selfishness or overweening self-concern.³⁴

It seems that *if* integrity is to qualify as a genuine excellence of character, a normatively adequate account must qualify this partiality, since it faces not just Williams' worry about self-indulgence, but a further, more serious difficulty that relates to the moral sanity data point. There is nothing obviously virtuous about a single-minded willingness to engage in heinous pursuits such as torture, genocide and thrill-killing. The fact that such aims might be part of a person's dearly held identity as a Nazi, a loyal Bolshevik or a

³⁴ This upshot was noticed by Daniel Putman, who ties this sort of integrity – as “principled selfishness” – to an early stage in Kohlberg's account of moral development. See Putman 1996, 237–38. I address this charge at length in Chapter 6. For a less conciliatory response to this problem, see Harris 1974, 265–73.

self-styled amoralist seems to neither matter nor help. Nor is there anything obviously desirable or virtuous about a person's blinkered or even blind allegiance to some value or cause. Unwavering consistency and single-minded adherence to a cause is, of course, the defining mark of zealotry and ideological blindness. For this reason, several accounts plausibly claim that integrity is incompatible with fidelity to morally obnoxious commitments, just as it is with fanatic, dogmatic or unimaginatively uncritical adherence to one's convictions.³⁵ (There is, as we will see in Chapter 3, little agreement and persuasive argument as to why this is so.)

What is more, as Cheshire Calhoun (1995) persuasively showed, each of these views faces another set of worries. First, each is objectionably reductive. Each problematically reduces the nature or value of integrity to something else – whether psychic harmony, integration or something else – and this threatens to make them *normatively inadequate* in further, distinct ways. All three fail to capture the distinctive importance of integrity, an importance separate from whatever importance attaches to being, for example, a psychically well-integrated person.³⁶ And this distinctive importance is manifest in the considerable and distinctive sort of esteem in which we hold persons of integrity. What is more, each of the basic positions views integrity as a distinctively personal virtue, that is, as a desirable relation a person bears to herself. But this ignores obvious social dimensions to integrity. That is, these views look *descriptively inadequate*. It is precisely in the face of challenge, threat

³⁵ Among them, Calhoun 1995; Halfon 1989; Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003, 2008; McFall 1987; Ashford 2000; Graham 2001; McLeod 2004, 2005.

³⁶ Schaubert 1996, 119–26, raises similar worries on different grounds. “Because we can reasonably abandon serious commitments, we can also reasonably abandon, or oversee the demise . . . of our selves. Although we are not infinitely malleable, persons can undergo quite a lot of change while remaining the same moral agent. Integrity is [thus] built into our concept of a person or self. This being so, there is no need to cultivate integrity to keep the real self intact” (124).

and enticements from others that one stands for one's convictions in the ways most think as paradigmatic of integrity; and yet standing up to challenges, and resisting threats and enticements, does not seem to be a relation a person bears to herself, but rather is a matter of the ways in which she relates to others.

If we think (and some do not) that it is part of a normatively adequate account of integrity that it is an unconditionally desirable trait to possess, we will be reluctant to allow that integrity is compatible with fidelity to morally obnoxious convictions. The problem of the "Nazi with integrity" has led some to embrace a conception of integrity as moral purpose. While leaving intact the underlying assumption that integrity involves an essentially partial or protective attitude toward the self and its projects, the distinctive thought to conceptions of integrity as moral purpose is that possessing integrity requires not merely a commitment to one's own projects, but also a commitment to morally acceptable ends or moral principles. Moralizing integrity in this way (e.g., by arguing that persons of integrity must be constitutively committed to correct moral principles) avoids the problem of obnoxious content. While these views differ in, among other things, the degree of moral success a person must show in order to have integrity, they face familiar problems with descriptive adequacy. Most notably, viewing integrity as a kind of moral purpose fails to square with many cases in which we ascribe integrity to people on the basis of their steadfast adherence to *nonmoral* commitments, such as scientific discovery or aesthetic innovation. Indeed, as Cox, La Caze and Levine rightly point out, ascribing integrity to a person is one means of ameliorating our moral criticism. We disagree vehemently with their moral stance, but see that their convictions are held with integrity.

Calhoun was the first to argue for a view of integrity that makes a link to an appropriate regard for one's own judgment, rather than

fidelity to self, identity or cherished commitments. According to Calhoun, *integrity consists in the proper regard* for one's best judgment, but that proper regard is not created in isolation. Rather, it is created among many people who work out what is the best way to live, and they do this in a way that is essentially social. This view has many advantages and looks initially promising in its ability to represent people standing for many worthwhile convictions other than those concerning "what would be just or what lives are acceptable forms of the good" (Calhoun 1995, 254). But it may face two important worries. One concern is descriptive *inadequacy*: Calhoun's view of integrity seems, in fact, not to capture the sense in which a person's integrity can be expressed in the regard for judgments *other* than those concerning good ways to live. Further, some might complain that this view is normatively inadequate, insofar as it fails to capture what they think is integrity's value as a distinctly personal virtue. In the effort to emphasize the social aspects of integrity, we might worry about whether a person's ability to defend his judgment and conduct to himself is at least as important as his willingness to stand behind these judgments before others.³⁷

Finally, some have argued for a view of *integrity as strength of will* – what we might call a sort of "super-continenence." In this view, integrity is to be understood as the reliable and strong disposition to act on one's evaluative commitments.³⁸ As proponents note, this

³⁷ Mendus 2009: "If integrity were, as Calhoun insists, a matter of standing for something before others, then integrity would be preserved just insofar as I can justify my behavior to others, but, from the agent's own point of view, the ability to defend his actions is distinct from the ability to justify his actions to himself. It is, I think, this latter that is central to integrity" (27). In Chapters 4 and 5 I argue that these are, in fact, two equally important and inseparable faces of the conception of integrity. Chapter 7 addresses this worry in the context of a discussion of integrity and the importance to a person of being able, reflectively, to endorse her commitments.

³⁸ Bigelow and Pargetter 2007. See Frederick Kroon, "Fear and Integrity," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 38 (2008), 31–50.

places integrity very close to accounts of individual autonomy that stress aspects of self-determination. On this view, integrity is seen in the motivationally robust dispositions to execute one's judgments about what to do. Proponents of this view admit that it may look inadequate, both normatively and descriptively speaking, as it is difficult to see much difference between integrity and autonomy. Further, such a conception faces concerns with normative adequacy, inasmuch as it is extremely permissive as to what a person of integrity can be committed to, permitting even monstrous commitments. This leaves it unclear why people typically esteem integrity so highly (and fails to give a theory of error as to why people are mistaken to prize it).

1.7 THE ALTERNATIVE: INTEGRITY AS LEADING A CONVINCING LIFE

The alternative conception of integrity I defend can be organized around the thought that persons of integrity lead characteristically *convincing* lives. Persons of integrity lead lives that see their beliefs and conduct structured by, and oriented around, a set of convictions that are truly their own. It is essential to this conception of integrity that what distinguishes a person's convictions from other less well-founded and less central beliefs and opinions is in part that these convictions enjoy the backing of good reasons. Indeed, that a person's convictions are supported by her reasons is what makes these convictions *hers*, in a robust sense. The integrity of a person's character, indeed, of the life that she leads, is the (often) hard-won artifact of having convictions that are justifiable and likely correct. Let me briefly sketch the key claims of this account.

On this conception, integrity is understood as an excellence of reason – both interpersonal and intrapersonal. For reasons that will

become apparent, this conception locates integrity among an ecumenically understood table of epistemic virtues.

The core account is thus. Having integrity requires being a certain kind of person. Specifically, having integrity requires:

- (i) being the sort of person who seeks to have justifiable and correct convictions;
- (ii) being the sort of person who has the appropriate regard for her own capacity to identify justifiable and correct convictions;
- (iii) being reliably disposed to act on one's convictions on the basis of the reasons that ground one's convictions (this requires the disposition to be practically rational);
- (iv) being the sort of person who is reliably disposed to take challenges to one's convictions seriously;
- (v) being the sort of person who takes seriously the discursive responsibilities that one undertakes in the course of giving others reasons to believe or act on the basis of what one asserts to another.

While not separable from being a certain sort of person, integrity is characteristically expressed in:

- (a) an unswerving fidelity to the aim of having only defensible convictions that are worthy of acting on and affirming to others; call the convictions formed under guidance by this aim "trustworthy";
- (b) sticking to one's (trustworthy) convictions;
- (c) being a trustworthy source of reasons to oneself and therefore to others: in being a trustworthy source of reasons for oneself, one constitutes oneself as a trustworthy source of reasons for others;
- (d) a willingness to undertake discursive responsibility to others in the expression of one's convictions.

Because integrity requires being the sort of person who seeks to have epistemically responsible and thus defensible and subjectively justified convictions (points i–iii above), the person of integrity leads a convincing life in the sense that her convictions are apt to be found convincing. Not only will people be inclined to take her views seriously because she is a person of integrity, but her integrity is expressed in, and perhaps even partly constituted by, the persuasiveness of her views. A person of integrity leads a convincing life in the further, active sense that she is “disposed to move others by argument and evidence to belief”; that is, she is constitutively willing and competent to offer her judgment to others as worthy of acceptance. Because of the deep connections between the domains of the cognitive and the moral, there are many respects in which integrity is nevertheless important for moral flourishing.

In order to motivate this account of integrity as leading a convincing life, a brief overview of how this conception aims to account for the data points (see section 1.3) will be helpful. (This is presented with an obvious caveat: the details of this view of integrity and how it captures these points, is the central task of the book.)

Since the person of integrity is the sort of person who seeks to have justifiable and correct convictions, has the appropriate regard for her capacity to identify what convictions would have these properties,³⁹ and is reliably disposed to act on the convictions precisely on the basis of the reasons that ground her convictions, she will exhibit an unswerving fidelity to the aim of having only defensible convictions that are worthy of acting on and affirming to

³⁹ As I understand the matter, to seek justification for one’s judgments and convictions is just to seek evidence and reasons for their being true; to seek to have true judgments and convictions requires one to determine which judgments and convictions one is justified in taking to be true.

others.⁴⁰ This account of integrity targets the *integrity-within-reason*, the *coherence* and the “*stickiness*” data points. It is precisely because the person of integrity characteristically has well-grounded and defensible reasons for her convictions – indeed, having reasons for one’s convictions is central to this account – that, as we saw, the person of integrity knows who she is and, further, that her life is led for her own reasons. Because her integrity is manifest in the aim of having only defensible and justifiable convictions, those convictions hang together in a desirably coherent way.⁴¹ And since having this aim is partly constitutive of being a person of integrity, it is unsurprising that such a person characteristically shows the nonfanatical, nonlazy sort of reason-responsive “stickiness” to her convictions. What she stands for has the backing of her best judgment. But equally, when the person of integrity lacks what she takes to be good reasons to stand for what she previously took to be her conviction, then integrity can be manifest in her willingness to “stand down,” that is, to suspend or hedge her judgment, either as a basis for her own action, or as a basis for another’s.

To be sure, what I am calling a person’s *convictions* will likely include judgments whose content is moral and ethical; that is, judgments concerning matters of justice, moral obligations, as well as

⁴⁰ This is not to claim, implausibly, that persons of integrity are concerned to have every belief upon which they act, and find worthy of acting on, a belief that amounts to a conviction. Talk of *convictions* is meant to signal that these beliefs or judgments concern matters of some importance, as well as being such as to merit holding for good reasons. As I will argue in Chapters 4 and 5, this point is not only compatible with the person of integrity having a comparatively modest set of convictions for which, as we say, she would “go to the wall”; this point suggests that persons of integrity are reliably disposed to appreciate the difference (even if not self-consciously) between those beliefs that are worthy of affirming to others and those beliefs which are not so well supported.

⁴¹ Crucially, as we will see, this sort of coherence is not merely compatible with, but can positively underwrite, the kind of reasoned ambivalence that Calhoun stressed as a marker of integrity. This sort of coherence is not a kind of aesthetic “neatness” about a person’s commitments.

personal ideals and conceptions of excellence. But a person's life can be convincing for her standing for other, nonmoral convictions, too. The conception of integrity I defend in the following pages can accommodate our sense that persons of integrity are often concerned to stand for convictions related to what they believe (e.g., as a matter of professional or academic expertise, or convictions they have related to aesthetic matters, such as what is beautiful, artistically valuable or worthy of expression). Furthermore, there is an important sense in which persons of integrity will discharge their professional or role-related commitments with competence and probity. In this way, the convincingness of a person's life will be manifest not merely in a willingness to stand for matters of great moral importance, but also in conscientiousness about small matters, to borrow Calhoun's phrase. Thus, the account of integrity accommodates the range of things for which persons of integrity can stand – and through which their integrity can be expressed.

Furthermore, the account of integrity on offer sees the virtue expressed partly in what we might call performative or testimonial virtues, that is, roughly, ways in which people can virtuously stand for their convictions. That is, integrity is expressed not just in the seriousness with which a person takes her discursive responsibilities to others (as a person who offers her judgment to others in the form of assertion, advice or information, with the aim of giving others reasons to believe or act). The virtue is characteristically expressed in the trustworthiness – that is, in the very worthiness as a basis for belief and action – of the reasons a person offers others. For this reason, the person of integrity offers her judgment to others in ways that are apt to be convincing; and they will be convincing to others precisely because the judgment she offers to others (whether in the form of assertion, advice or with the aim to inform) is itself based on the same reasons she herself takes to bear on the matter at hand. As a

result, the view I defend captures the important points that persons of integrity are, in the relevant contexts, known by their truthfulness. Thus, this view accounts for the strong intuition that dishonesty, shiftiness and hypocrisy are incompatible with having integrity. The link between integrity and truthfulness, not to mention the aim of having convictions that are justifiable and correct, explains the fact that persons of integrity are sought out as interlocutors, advisors and leaders.

There is no essential link on this account between having integrity and a commitment to particular moral principles. That is, this account does not “build in” substantive moral ends or commitments into the conditions for possessing integrity; there is no definitional link between integrity and moral purpose that would rule out the familiar “Nazi with integrity.” However, the fact that integrity requires having the aim of having only defensible convictions, coupled with the fact that genocide-promoting Nazi convictions are manifestly indefensible (despite being persuasive to others with similarly blinkered convictions) rules out the specter of this. As with other virtues, both moral and epistemic, there are success conditions that must be met for a person to truly be said to possess the excellence. Furthermore, the account of integrity that I will go on to offer gives an account of why, over and above their immorality, such examples are cases in which gross moral failure is paired with a failure of integrity. Very briefly (and roughly), such morally repugnant convictions are deeply flawed *qua* judgments: these are convictions that are premised on an indefensible (and epistemically culpable) failure to appreciate relevant moral reasons. Thus, this conception of integrity as leading a convincing life captures the important point about moral sanity.⁴²

⁴² This point is developed in Chapter 2 and the Postscript.

Finally, there is an obvious but important worry to do with motivation on this epistemic account: how can it hope to accommodate the data point of resoluteness? To the extent that integrity is an excellence of interpersonal reason, as I argue, the virtue is fundamentally an epistemic excellence.⁴³ If integrity is fundamentally a matter of the extent to which a person has a defensible and justified set of convictions, sticks to such convictions, and is well placed and well disposed to offer reasons for her convictions to others as part of standing for those convictions, it might seem that this conception of integrity cannot accommodate a vital data point. It may seem mysterious on this conception that persons of integrity are characteristically *resolute*: persons of integrity do not suffer from weakness of will, they do not cave in or backslide; nor do persons of integrity lose resolve in the face of pressure to change their mind.

Fortunately, this is neither mysterious nor problematic for the account of integrity I offer here. Recall that part of what it is to be a person of integrity, on this account, is being reliably disposed to act on one's convictions on the basis of the reasons that ground those convictions. To the extent that one finds resoluteness mysterious, on such an account, it is perhaps because of a view of weakness of will that is understood, roughly, as one's better judgment being literally overpowered by contrary inclinations. On this view, the resoluteness that characterizes the person of integrity is in some way to be seen as a resistance to being overruled by desires that run contrary to one's judgment. Thus it might seem that to be a person of integrity requires the possession of moral virtue – say temperance, or at least self-control. But there are grounds to resist such a view. As Gary Watson, among others, has argued, many of the

⁴³ Though, as we will see, this does not preclude integrity having considerable moral importance, as I show in Chapter 7 and the Postscript.

central cases of what looks to be weakness of will (or as I shall call it, *irresoluteness* or a lack of resolve) are not usefully understood along these lines.⁴⁴ In many cases of irresoluteness, Watson observes, we “are not so much overpowered by brute force as seduced” (2004, 71). As I will argue, a central feature of such irresoluteness, of a sort that appears to manifest a lack of (or threat to) integrity is that a person’s best judgment or her intentions are unstable. The sort of rational resoluteness that I take to be central to integrity means that one would not fall prey to the sort of instability borne of temptation and pressure to change one’s mind – something importantly different from being unable to act in accord with one’s views. As I argue in Chapters 3 and 4, the characteristic resoluteness that persons of integrity show is the sort of stability in their judgment and intentions. One central expression of leading a convincing life is that one’s convictions are resistant to change through enticement, pressure and threat of sanction.

1.8 PLAN OF THE BOOK

In Chapter 2, I argue that the implicit claims to normative adequacy of integrity on most views of what integrity is merit closer scrutiny. Extant views of integrity share a clear, if seldom acknowledged, commitment to the thought that integrity is a loyalty-exhibiting virtue. That is, integrity is thought to require or express an allegiance of partiality to one’s commitments or identity. Because of this commitment, many extant views of integrity have the unwelcome consequence that the virtue itself is a source of moral danger: integrity constitutes a standing source of risk of moral error. I consider several strategies for addressing this problem and find

⁴⁴ Watson 2004, 59–87; Wiggins 1987, 239–67; Bratman 1999, 58–90; Holton 2004, 507–35, and 1999, 241–62.

them instructive but nevertheless wanting. I conclude with the suggestion that a view of integrity that links it to having proper regard for one's own judgment is a promising alternative. Unlike an influential antecedent of this approach (Calhoun 1995), I suggest that integrity requires fidelity not to oneself and one's projects, *per se*, but rather to the aim of having only defensible convictions. If this is plausible, we then have a promising way to secure integrity's normative credentials. What is good about having integrity is not that its possession guarantees that one has correct moral views and so is a good person; rather, what is good about having integrity is that it requires one to have convictions sustained by good judgment. Such judgment is therefore apt to survive reasoned challenges, something that will often result in one's having the views characteristic of a good person, but it is nevertheless possible that it fails to have this result, while still leaving it true that one has integrity. This possibility does not diminish the value of integrity.

In Chapter 3, I make a preliminary case for one of the central and admittedly counterintuitive claims of my account. The motivation for posing the question that is the chapter's title ("Could integrity be an epistemic virtue?") begins with Bernard Williams' seldom-faced argument that integrity cannot be a moral virtue because it lacks two key ingredients of moral virtues, namely a characteristic thought and motivation. Whereas, for example, generosity involves the thought that another could use assistance, and the motivation to actually give assistance, integrity lacks these two things essential to morally excellent responses. I show that several maneuvers aimed at avoiding Williams' challenge fail and that others are likely to remain unpersuasive. Rather than attempting to supply integrity with a characteristic thought or motivation, Williams' important insight is best explained by the supposition that integrity is an epistemic virtue.

Chapter 4 commences the detailed work of offering and defending an epistemic conception of integrity. It begins with a deceptively simple question: how would our view of integrity change if it included a lively appreciation of the fact that most of the convictions we stand for – and many of the supporting reasons we have for our convictions – are (so to speak) testimonially sourced? The fact that our integrity-relevant convictions are a more or less thoroughgoing product of our epistemic dependence must influence our view of a virtue that constitutively involves sticking to one's convictions in the face of disagreement and challenge. Our view of integrity ought also to consider the epistemic importance of disagreement. In cases where we lack any discernible epistemic advantage over those with whom we disagree, the rational response might not be to continue to stick to one's convictions, but rather to lessen our confidence in those convictions.

I argue that we should understand integrity to be partly expressed in the *well-placed self-trust* a person has in the competence of her judgment and in the correctness of the convictions it sustains. Persons of integrity seek to have defensible and justifiable convictions. Persons of integrity have the appropriate regard for their capacities to identify justifiable and (likely) correct convictions, and as such, keep those trustworthy capacities operative in holding those convictions. Thus, persons of integrity are such as to (defeasibly) enjoy well-placed self-trust. More precisely: *integrity is an epistemic virtue consisting in (a) the domain-sensitive disposition to accurately appreciate and rely on one's own epistemic capacities, expertise and skill, where this is grounded in (b), a standing motivation to be epistemically responsible, and thus to be epistemically trustworthy.*

Chapter 5 isolates a plausible and intuitively important performative aspect to integrity. The fullest expression of integrity involves a kind of *standing for* one's convictions before others. Drawing on

recent “assurance” views of assertion, testimony, advising and promising, I argue that the characteristic sort of “standing for” that integrity expresses involves giving assurance. In standing for her convictions, a person gives assurance to her interlocutors that her convictions are belief-worthy and action-worthy. That is, in giving others assurance, the person of integrity gives others credible reasons for belief, deliberation and action. In doing this, the person of integrity undertakes certain kinds of discursive responsibility for the reasons she would give others. This more fully captures the sense in which integrity is practical, and does so by showing that integrity demonstrates an excellence of interpersonal reason.

In Chapter 6 I consider the consequences of my epistemic conception of integrity for a long-standing debate in moral theory. Williams’ complaint about the hostility of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics to people’s integrity has generated considerable literature. Most of this has been premised on the thought that integrity is a loyalty-exhibiting and thus partial virtue or value. From this questionable assumption, it has seemed that the way forward was to accommodate the partial “reasons of integrity” within a more or less impartial version of utilitarian or Kantian morality. Clearly, the view of integrity I defend rejects a key assumption in this debate. On the view of integrity I defend, there are no reasons of integrity in the sense assumed in the debate. On the other hand, I argue that the demands of impartial morality need to be reconciled with the particular values and attachments held by persons of integrity. So, contrary to what one might suppose, an epistemic conception of integrity hasn’t really “changed the subject” of the debate. Rather, the epistemic conception recognizes that arriving at an integrity-preserving judgment will require negotiating the conflicting reasons as being, normatively speaking, on all fours. The epistemic and practical authority of the conflicting demands at issue confronts the person of integrity without prejudice.

Chapter 7 develops and defends the tentative suggestion from Chapter 6, specifically that the relationship between integrity and impartial morality is at once both more subtle and less antagonistic than Williams' objection supposes. I review a persuasive argument that consequentialism cannot provide an *adequate* account of integrity's importance. Specifically, Stephen Darwall alleges that consequentialists cannot persuasively show how an agent might come to properly value her own integrity. These arguments prompt the suggestion that there may be an outstanding integrity objection that retains force against some impartial moral theories. I then critically examine Darwall's arguments, showing that they are not decisive against a sophisticated consequentialist theory. Nevertheless, they have considerable value: his arguments provide several important dimensions along which a moral theory might prove objectionably hostile to a person's integrity. I conclude the chapter by demonstrating how the epistemic conception of integrity I have defended helps to make sense of the proper concern a person might have with her integrity. I also show how this conception of integrity helps improve our understanding of the kinds of conflicts that might arise between impartial morality and a person's integrity. We are right to be concerned with our integrity, but we are mistaken to think that a proper concern with our own integrity provides either general immunity from impartial moral demands or general powers to impartial moral theories to constrain, without compelling rationale, the shape of an agent's deliberation about how she is to lead her life.

The Postscript draws the volume to a close by addressing a remaining pressing question: if integrity is an epistemic virtue of interpersonal reason, why, then, do most people take integrity to be a central *ethical* phenomenon? Here I provide a theory of error. I suggest three reasons that are confirmatory of the account of integrity just defended. Integrity is so clearly at stake in ethical

contexts because we value knowing and understanding the reasons for the convictions people express in action; it provides us with an ethical assessment. Morality is often taken to require acting from an understanding of the reasons that support one's moral convictions. Having drawn out the implications of this for the relationship between integrity and sophisticated forms of consequentialism in Chapters 6 and 7, I briefly sketch the moral importance integrity likely holds for other moral theories. Thus, on the account I defend, it would matter very much to us that a person's moral convictions were held with integrity, since integrity requires holding one's convictions on the basis of reasons that they could, in principle, offer to others. These reasons vindicate the picture of integrity as leading a convincing life. At the same time, these considerations make clear why integrity is not, for all that, a moral virtue. The importance of integrity to our shared moral life is a function of its importance to interpersonal reason and well-placed self-trust that integrity embeds. It is not a function of an illusory moral essence to integrity.