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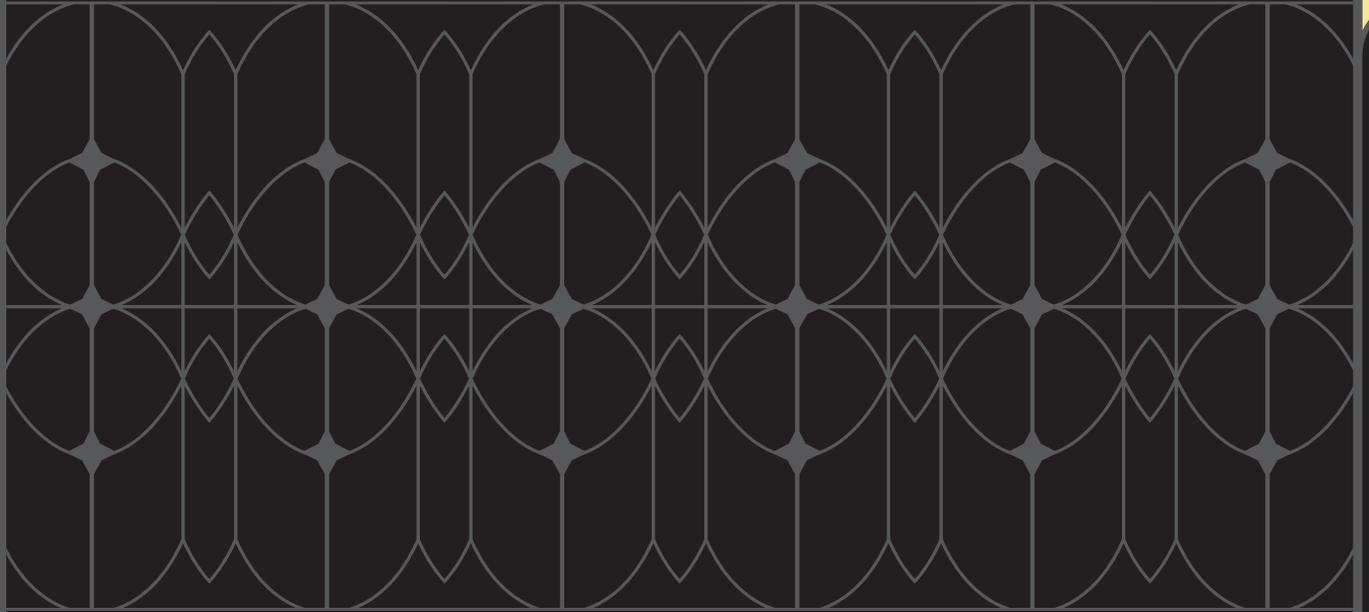
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The Virtue of Integrity

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Abstract

Is integrity a virtue? There is a powerful argument that it is not because it would be a redundant virtue -call this the "redundancy objection." I will, however, argue that there is a plausible conception of integrity as a virtue that meets the redundancy objection. In Section I, start by providing a plausible conception of moral integrity. I then provide, in Section II, a sketch of the virtues and the virtuous person, and explain the redundancy objection. In Section III, I offer a plausible conception of integrity as a virtue: integrity is the virtue that reviews and maintains the coherence between the virtuous person's life and moral values. In Section IV I briefly discuss the relationship between integrity and continent agents. I conclude in Section V with brief remarks about the importance of the virtue of integrity.

Keywords: Virtue - Integrity - Redundancy Objection- Virtuous Person - Continent Agent.

I. A Plausible Conception of Moral Integrity

We often speak of people as being of, or having, integrity: “Youssef is a man of integrity”; “Luma will simply not accept the bribe; she has too much integrity for that”; or, “I trust my husband to not deceive me, because I know that he is a man of integrity.” Such locutions refer to *moral* integrity, as opposed to, say, aesthetic or religious.⁽¹⁾

Moral integrity has at least four components, two formal ones and two substantive ones.⁽²⁾ The first formal component is that the actions of the person of integrity cohere with her values or principles. If, for example, Natasha believes that eating the flesh of animals is wrong, she would not eat meat. Her actions cohere with her values. However, coherence between actions and values is not the only component to integrity. This can be seen by making someone’s values morally problematic. For example, if Ramzi values money above all else, then he would not be a person of integrity even if all his actions cohere with his principle that making money is what matters the most. As Lynne McFall states, we cannot say with a “straight face” certain statements about integrity, such as the following: “Sally is a person of principle: pleasure”; “Harold demonstrates great integrity in his single-minded pursuit of approval”; and “John was a man of uncommon integrity. He let nothing –not friendship, not justice, not truth– stand in the way of his amassment of wealth” (McFall 1987, 9).⁽³⁾

This indicates that in addition to the formal component of coherence between actions and values, there needs to be a substantive component, namely, that the values themselves have to be of a certain nature: they cannot be things –wealth, pleasure, approval of others– that often take one away from moral goodness or rightness. One’s values must be recognizably moral, such as courage, justice, kindness, and compassion.⁽⁴⁾ Or they must be constrained by what is moral. If, for example, pursuit of aesthetic pleasure is someone’s value, it must be constrained by moral values if the agent is to have integrity. This is not to say that wealth, pleasure, and others’ approval have no value (clearly they do), only that in situations where they conflict with what is morally proper, people of integrity refuse to succumb to them, and they do what is morally right.⁽⁵⁾

(1) For a discussion of the various senses of “integrity” and a review of the literature, see Greg Scherkoske (2013a; 2013b) and Damian Cox, Marguerite La Caze, and Michael Levine (2017). See also footnote 8.

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(3) Scherkoske argues against McFall’s view, claiming that we can imagine someone who is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure while also having integrity. His point is that our intuitions about integrity are not so clear as to rule out such cases (2010, 348). However, the general way we talk about integrity supports McFall’s point, in that to have integrity someone must have moral limits that he is not willing to cross.

(4) As Robert Audi and Patrick Murphy put it, “loyalty to one’s values by itself ... seems quite insufficient to make such loyalty a moral virtue” (2006, 6).

(5) I thus agree with Jody Graham that “Integrity requires

The third component is, like the first, a formal one having to do with coherence, but the coherence is among one’s actions, motives, and values. That is, a person of integrity not only acts in accordance with what she values, but she also acts *from* her values. If Natasha values animals but does not eat meat because she wants to look “cool” in front of others, her motives are not from her values. The fourth component is substantive, requiring agents with moral integrity to be motivated by their moral values. As McFall puts it, “If one values not just honesty but honesty for its own sake, then honesty motivated by self-interest is not enough for integrity” (1987, 8). The idea is that moral integrity derives its point from the fact that one’s moral values are what maintain one’s uprightness. If the values are not what motivate one to act, integrity loses its point.

In brief, a person of integrity is someone whose values are moral and whose actions, motives, and goals are motivated or constrained by moral values: when she acts morally, her actions are motivated by moral values, and when she acts non-morally, her actions and motives are constrained by moral values. A person of integrity is committed to these values: she takes them seriously (even as overriding) and refuses to act in ways that contravene them. Commitment to moral values, however, is not necessarily conscious or explicit. That is, people of integrity (though not people with the virtue of integrity, as will be clear below) need not explicitly avow to uphold moral values; their adherence to living a morally good life is sufficient for integrity. Relatedly, people who do not commit to moral values are not thereby innocent of the charge of lacking integrity. That is, if someone decides to not be bound by moral values, she cannot simply claim, “You may not accuse me of lacking integrity because I have never committed to morality to begin with.” Her very failure to commit to moral values implies her lack of integrity.⁽⁶⁾ Such failure is sufficient for the claim that the person lacks integrity.

Integrity is usually tested when the agent is under pressure or temptation to act against his values. The idea is that there are certain things –pleasure, power, wealth, approval, money, status, and personal gain– that people with integrity resist if having them comes at a moral price. The pressure or temptation can be of various forms, such as financial gain, social belonging, political power, and cultural conformity. For example, a journal editor might succumb to social pressure and retract an already-published and properly-reviewed article because of backlash. Or a judge might accept a bribe and let a criminal off the legal hook. Or a vegan visitor to a foreign country whose cuisine is mostly meat- and dairy-based might abandon her veganism and eat the local cuisine so as to not be an outsider. In these cases, there is a rupture between what one does and what one avows. A person of integrity would not succumb to such pressures.

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” (2001, 235). I also agree with Elizabeth Ashford that the agent’s conception “as being morally decent must be grounded in her leading a genuinely morally decent life” (2000, 424). This will be evident in the discussion of virtue below.

(6) See Mark Halfon (1989, ch. 1) for discussion of these points.

Note five things. First, people can have integrity even if their integrity is not tested. Just because Youssef does not face occasions in which he needs to resist pressure or temptation does not mean that he is not a person of integrity. Second, not all pressures test someone's integrity. People sometimes face difficult choices that involve a tug of war between their moral values, and "succumbing" to one or the other does not imply that they have no integrity. Third, people can display degrees of integrity: some people can "slip" every now and then and succumb to pressure. Such slip ups are not likely sufficient to withhold an ascription of integrity to them. We might want to speak of people having high and low integrity, though the line is fuzzy between having low integrity and having none. Fourth, just because one has integrity does not shield one from sometimes (maybe even frequently) making the wrong decisions; having integrity does not imply infallibility.

Fifth, there are difficult issues regarding what we should consider to be moral commitments for attributions integrity. Imagine, for example, two people, one religious (who believes that morality is what God commands) and one atheist (who believes that moral values are secular), and both of whom stick to their moral commitments. Do both have integrity? Or is it only the one with the correct moral beliefs? Similarly, consider a utilitarian and a Kantian, both of whom adhere in their actions to their moral principles. Do both have integrity? Or does the answer hinge on which moral theory is correct?

Answers to these questions are difficult, partly because neither the common nor the philosophical discourse about integrity goes that deep. But there is a way to sidestep this issue that is coherent and preserves our general beliefs about both morality and integrity. Religious and secular people, Kantians and utilitarians, generally uphold the same moral values even though they disagree about their ultimate justification. For example, all four agree that courage, justice, fairness, compassion, kindness, generosity, and so on are true moral values, even though they offer different justifications for why (e.g., the principle of utility, human autonomy, God's commands). We need not decide which of Kantian ethics or utilitarianism is the true moral theory in order to agree that people who adhere to recognizable moral values are people of integrity.⁽¹⁾ This is especially true for this paper's focus on the virtuous and the continent, since both types of agents are supposed to have the right values and the knowledge of what is to be done on any particular occasion.

To summarize, a person of moral integrity (a) is committed to moral values, such that any other commitments he has are constrained by moral values; (b) his moral actions, including when his integrity is put to the test, are motivated by these moral values; and (c) his non-moral actions are constrained by moral values.

This conception of integrity is plausible in cleaving to common discourses about integrity, capturing the core of

what we talk about when we talk about integrity. A person of integrity is one who is moral ([a] above) and would not succumb to pressure when there are moral stakes ([b] above), and we trust that when he acts in the normal course of affairs his actions are vetted by moral values ([c] above). I will use (in Section III) this conception of integrity as the basis for the virtue of integrity. Of course, there can be conceptions of integrity that are non-moral, but their truth is compatible with moral conceptions of morality, including mine.⁽²⁾

(2) For some of these conceptions, see Scherkoske (2013a; 2013b) and Cox, Le Caze, and Levine (2017). I do have serious doubts about the viability of non-moral conceptions of integrity (the reader can skip this note without loss of content). For instance, people might adhere to all sorts of personal projects, commitments, and goals, but we are hard pressed to call them people of integrity simply because of their dedication to these projects. Someone who dedicates her life to writing a novel is not the kind of person that first comes to mind when we think of people with integrity. She is committed, persistent, and devoted, but she is not a person of integrity simply for writing the novel. (I adjust this example from Cox, La Caze, and Levine [2017]; their example is of someone who wants to write a novel but fails to. They write, "We would think this person's integrity diminished by their failure to make a serious attempt to see their project through." Yet it is more accurate to speak of the person's commitment to their project being diminished or violated. It is unclear what integrity has to do with it.)

What about professional, religious, artistic, and other forms of integrity? Our discourse surrounding integrity indicates that moral integrity pervades all these forms and that we would not ascribe integrity to someone who is otherwise immoral. Consider the professional integrity of, say, an athlete who refuses to take drugs to gain a competitive advantage; he surely has integrity. But note that his integrity is pervaded by moral values: the refusal to take performance-enhancing drugs is the refusal to cheat and be unfair to his fellow competitors, to deceive the public by giving them a fake victory (should he win). Contrast this athlete with another who is willing to do immoral things to win, including taking drug-enhancing drugs. We have no reason to ascribe to him professional integrity. After all, what are we to say about him? "He is a moral scumbag but his professional integrity is impeccable"? That sounds like a joke. The same reasoning applies to, say, business people and doctors: the commitment among doctors to do no harm is not a professional commitment devoid of morality; it is commitment to a moral value. Even religious commitments would be undermined if they were morally compromised: to attribute religious integrity to a religious person who, say, pretends to be nice to people of other religions but curses them in his mind, or who throws stones at them if they violate a holy day, and so on, lacks integrity, religious or otherwise. At most, we can say of him that "he is being consistent," a phrase often used sarcastically or in bitter jest. If this is correct, it again shows that commitment is not enough. In this regard, Halfon agrees that all forms of integrity have a moral element, but he locates this element in the "consistent commitment to do what is best under conditions of adversity" (1989, 56). However, commitment cannot be the moral element, for it is morally neutral. For another argument as to why such forms of integrity cannot be separated from moral integrity, see Graham (2001, 238–241).

(1) This is not sufficient for integrity, however, because people can adhere to these moral values in wrong ways, as fanatics and blind ideologues do. On this, see Halfon (1989, Part 2) though his discussion begs the question at various points.

II. The Redundancy Objection Against Integrity Being a Virtue

One powerful objection against integrity's being a virtue is that if it were a virtue, it would be redundant. This argument was hinted at by Bernard Williams (1981) and elaborated by Greg Scherkoske (2012). In order to appreciate the argument, a few words about virtue and the virtuous person are in order (here, I follow Aristotle's views and recent developments of his views⁽¹⁾).

Virtues are character traits that dispose their agent to judge, act, and feel in the appropriate ways given the situation. Some examples of Aristotelian virtues (that is, those listed by Aristotle) are justice, courage, temperance, generosity, patience (or mildness), truthfulness, and friendliness. Some non-Aristotelian virtues are honesty, benevolence, care, and kindness. Aristotle defines a virtue as a "state that decides, consisting in a mean, the mean relative to us, which is defined by reference to reason, that is to say, to the reason by reference to which the prudent person would define it" (1999, 1107a). Two crucial aspects of this definition stand out: a virtue's being a mean, and reason as defining the mean. The mean is often thought to be a state between two extremes, but Aristotle clearly meant to include more than two.⁽²⁾ The idea is that the virtuous person would get things right in any particular situation. Consider the example of generosity—specifically, of giving someone a gift. A virtuous

Consider also the issue of how holistic integrity is. Halfon gives the example of a doctor who consistently maintains the Hippocratic Oath but who "may be an insensitive husband or abusive parent." Halfon claims that the doctor does not have integrity in the "general or all-encompassing sense, but there is no reason to deny that he has some measure of integrity, that is, he has professional integrity" (1989, 52). Halfon is right that we *can* ascribe to the doctor professional integrity, but such an ascription might ring hollow or be laced with sarcasm: "Sure he beats up his children, but at least his professional integrity is intact." For such compartmentalized judgments of integrity to ring true, they must assume that other compartments in the doctor's life are similarly upright. Otherwise, the doctor's conduct invites charges of hypocrisy, for it would be unclear how in one area the doctor shows care (to his patients) but in another area (to his children) he is cruel. On my conception, integrity is commitment to moral values and being motivated by these moral values, so people of integrity are expected to do this consistently, both diachronically and synchronically, across the various areas of their lives. Ascriptions of integrity, then, tend to be holistic, applying to the person in general. Partial ascriptions of integrity can, of course, be made and they can elicit admiration, but on the assumption that all is well in the other areas of the person's life.

(1) Without, however, committing myself to particular ideas regarding naturalism. For instance, I am neutral on whether virtues are traits that make individual human beings excellent specimens of their species, or whether the virtues are needed for flourishing. See Hursthouse (1999) and Foot (2001).
(2) He does this in his descriptions of the individual virtues and vices, and in various places. For example, "Having these feelings at the times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the intermediate and best condition, and this is proper to virtue" (1999, 1106b20). On this, see Hursthouse (1980-1981).

person would know to whom to gift, what kind of gift to give, when to give it, how lavish it should be, and why giving a gift is apt. Note the number of ways in which someone bereft of generosity as a virtue can go wrong, which is at least five: to whom, what, when, how, and why.

In all the above, practical wisdom is a crucial virtue insofar as it suffuses all the other virtues, enabling the virtuous person to know how to judge a situation and thereby how to act.⁽³⁾ We see this virtue in the above definition when Aristotle states that the mean is defined by reason. Moreover, wisdom plays not only the role of enabling the virtuous person to know what to think and do in a specific situation, but also in ordering the virtuous person's values: wisdom is a guide to what is important in life. A wise person, for example, values aesthetic matters, but would not think that a botched haircut is important enough to miss an important event.

Although absent from Aristotle's definition is any explicit reference to emotions or desires, Aristotle includes emotions in his descriptions of the virtues because being virtuous is not only a matter of judgment and action but also of emotional attunement—indeed, this is what virtues of character are, which are dispositions to desire and feel correctly. The virtue of bravery, for example, is one that deals with the emotions of fear and confidence: a brave person, once judging a situation to be worthy of a confrontation, has just the right mixture of fear and confidence: he feels fear but not to the point of shying away, and he feels confidence but not to the point of being cocky. The definition by Rosalind Hursthouse and Glen Pettigrove (2018) captures these nuances: "A virtue is an excellent trait of character. It is a disposition, well entrenched in its possessor—something that, as we say, goes all the way down, unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker—to notice, expect, value, feel, desire, choose, act, and react in certain characteristic ways. To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset." What is nice about this definition is its listing of the items that explain the complexity of the virtuous person's mindset: noticing, valuing, and so on. Moreover, the idea of a virtue as a state of character that goes "all the way" is crucial: it is, as Hursthouse and Pettigrove claim, not only a habit or a superficial trait, but one that is deep-seated in the agent. This is why Aristotle, in discussing what a fully virtuous action is, claims that it comes from a "firm and unchanging state" (1999, 1105a35).

One more point is important to mention before explaining the redundancy objection, which is that virtues are, unlike other deep-seated traits such as skills and personality traits, moral traits: they are character traits that tell us about their possessor's moral goodness. A person who is skillful at playing chess (a skill) can be a scoundrel, and so can someone who has an outgoing personality (a personality trait). But someone who is virtuous, obviously, cannot be a scoundrel.⁽⁴⁾

(3) On practical wisdom, see Sarah Broadie (1991, ch. 4) and Daniel Russell (2009, ch. 1 especially).

(4) On these points, see Julia Annas (2011, ch. 2) and Sean McAleer (2015).

A virtuous person, then, is someone who has the virtues, including that of wisdom. Ideally speaking, a virtuous person has all the virtues and is able to act properly whenever the situation calls for it. This contrasts with a non-ideal virtuous person, someone who has some, but not all the virtues, and who is someone whose virtue often fails him in some cases (e.g., does not do the right thing because of weakness of will). Henceforth, I will be concerned only with the virtuous person ideally construed. However, note that a virtuous person is not immune from the vicissitudes of life. A virtuous person might, for example, offer to help someone in need, but only to be rebuffed, or to be delayed on the train, or to be averted by something more important that comes up. A virtuous person might also have to deal with unexpected tragedies that could put undue pressure on his life, thereby leading to stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological states that require the virtuous person to be vigilant in not allowing these states to undermine his virtue. I return to this point in the next section in regards to integrity.

Given the above set up, the redundancy objection against the virtue of integrity is that it does no additional work that other virtues do not already do. It would thus be redundant. As I mentioned, Williams was the first philosopher to point in the direction of this argument: “integrity is not a *virtue* at all... while it is an admirable human property, it is not related to motivation as the virtues are... It is rather that one who displays integrity acts from those dispositions and motives which are deeply his, and has also the virtues that enable him to do that” (1981, 49). Similarly, and inspired by Williams, Scherkoske discusses whether integrity could be a higher-order virtue or a “capstone” virtue, but concludes that such ways of thinking of integrity make it redundant: “there seems to be no distinctive work for it to do, no discernible field or domain on which it is to operate, and no distinctive value for it to contribute” (2012, 195).

Before I say more about how, according to Scherkoske, integrity as a virtue would be redundant, consider an example to illustrate the objection. Tess is a virtuous agent who is a college professor. The semester is almost over, and she has to fail six students. As a courtesy, she emails them individually to let them know. A few hours after emailing them, Tess receives two phone calls, one from a parent who offers her money in return for not failing his daughter, and one from the powerful head coach of the hockey team, who threatens Tess with bad things if she does not pass one of his male athletes. Tess easily declines the money offer (even chuckling to herself). She also rejects the coach’s threats, though she does so with some trepidation, given the coach’s power and his notorious bullying.

Let’s be clear about a few things regarding these examples. First, in each, the failure to do what is supposed to be done would be a violation of Tess’s integrity. If Tess passes the students, she would be not only violating her commitments to fairness, but also doing it for the sake of something that people of integrity stand up against: money and safety. Second, although Tess declines the money, thus doing right thing without much of an internal struggle, her rejection of the threats is internally difficult, because she experiences fear before and during the rejection. We can

say, following the distinction made by Nick Schuster (2020), that Tess undergoes an evaluational conflict, but not a motivational one. That is, she sees the value of the course of action that she does not take (the value of her safety), but the value does not motivate her to act on it: to her, it is clear what needs to be done and she does it. Moreover, and as Schuster (2020) nicely argues, such evaluational conflicts do not detract from her virtue, for often doing the virtuous thing is not internally harmonious.⁽¹⁾ Finally, Tess’s integrity in rejecting the threats is *more evident* than her integrity in declining the money precisely because of the internal struggle. For although she sees the importance of her personal safety, she nonetheless stands by her moral values and does the right thing.

The crucial point, however, is this. The example indicates that although we can speak of Tess as a person of integrity, she does not seem to have or need the *virtue* of integrity -she does not have or need a character trait that is distinguished from her other virtues and that is adequately captured by the concept of integrity. This is not because she has the vice of whichever trait is opposed to integrity, or because she has never acquired the virtue of integrity (she is, by hypothesis, a fully virtuous person). It is, instead, because attributing to her the virtue of integrity is superfluous.

To elaborate, given what we know about the virtuous, virtuous people do what is right in a fully virtuous way. Because of their virtue and wisdom, they perceive the situation correctly and act as they are supposed to. In some cases, this involves an internal conflict, as in Tess’s rejection of the threats, but the virtuous, by definition, are not motivated at all to act on the temptation or pressure, let alone succumb to them. So it is difficult to see what role the virtue of integrity would play in their psyche. Put differently, for any situation that confronts the virtuous person, one or more virtues -courage, justice, honesty, kindness, generosity, temperance, and so on- will dispose the agent to judge, act and feel correctly, and the virtue of integrity seems to add nothing. Hence the redundancy objection. If the objection is plausible, virtuous people would be people of integrity, not because they have the virtue of integrity, but because they have the virtues.⁽²⁾

One might suggest, by way of reply, that if someone is a person of integrity, then she has the virtue of integrity, much like if someone is courageous, then she has the virtue of courage. Such implications, however, are not always true. For instance, there is no virtue of goodness (or decency) that is

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(2) Halfon claims that what distinguishes having integrity from virtues such as sincerity, honesty, and fidelity is that people with integrity are willing to abide by their commitments in the face of adversity: “in the absence of a willingness to face adversity a person can exhibit these virtues but not integrity” (1989, 39). But then Halfon must be working with an unorthodox understanding of virtue, because what he says better characterizes incontinent agents. After all, what would it mean to say that someone is honest if she is willing to abandon her honesty in the face of adversity?

implied by the claim that virtuous people are good (or decent). That is, just as we do not go on to say that good or decent people have the virtue of goodness or decency (on the grounds that they are good or decent people), it does not follow that virtuous people have the virtue of integrity on the grounds that they are people of integrity. Not every correct description about virtuous people implies a corresponding virtue.

Another reply to the objection- that integrity is a higher-order virtue to exhibit and marshal the needed virtues on any occasion- seems also unconvincing, because the reply also succumbs to the redundancy objection. As Scherkoske argues, on this view integrity becomes whatever virtue or virtues are at play in any given situation; integrity would be descriptively redundant by becoming the “all-encompassing virtue of doing the right thing at the right time” (2012, 192). It also won’t do, according to Scherkoske, to think of integrity as a capstone virtue—“that integrity in effect involves, requires or somehow contains, the whole of virtue. Integrity is the confluence of all good things” (2012, 193)—because this suggestion makes integrity normatively redundant: “integrity is just the virtue of being honest when honesty is called for, courageous when courage is required, and so on” (Scherkoske 2012, 194).

Ironically, Scherkoske’s own suggestion that integrity is an epistemic, instead of a moral, virtue also succumbs to the redundancy objection. He argues that an epistemic conception of integrity allows us to explain the belief that integrity is responsible and intelligent (not blind) adherence to one’s commitments and convictions. Thus, the “virtue of integrity involves a constitutive commitment to the enterprise of excellent judging” (2012, 199). He also argues that integrity as an epistemic virtue avoids the problems that plague integrity as a moral virtue, specifically, the redundancy objection, because epistemic virtues need not have specific motives and thoughts (2012, 201–202).

Scherkoske tries to explain how integrity, as an epistemic virtue, is distinctive, and so can avoid the redundancy objection. He states, “integrity is an excellence of epistemic agency in the broadest sense: it is an excellence of persons concerned to hold and act upon their epistemically responsible convictions.” Scherkoske adds, “integrity finds fullest expression in the willingness and competence to stand behind one’s considered judgment” (2012, 202). The vagueness of such claims, however, invites the same redundancy objection that Scherkoske has raised against integrity as a moral virtue. If epistemic integrity is distinctive because it is the “willingness and competence to stand behind one’s considered judgment,” then other widely-discussed epistemic virtues -wisdom, intellectual courage, intellectual autonomy- seem the obvious candidates for this. If epistemic integrity is distinctive because it is the willingness to adequately revise one’s convictions when necessary, then, again, other widely-discussed epistemic virtues -open-mindedness, insightfulness, and intellectual fairness- can do this. This can be further seen in Scherkoske’s list of epistemic vices that are supposed to be opposed to epistemic integrity -arrogance, dogmatism, obstinacy, diffidence, and flakiness (2012, 201)- all of which have opposed epistemic virtues that do not need to include integrity, intellectual humility, open-mindedness,

intellectual autonomy, and intellectual diligence. Scherkoske’s conception of integrity as an epistemic virtue, then, does not avoid the redundancy problem.⁽¹⁾

It thus seems that neither moral nor epistemic integrity is a distinct virtue given its seeming redundancy.⁽²⁾ In the next section, I will offer a way to conceive of integrity as a virtue that does not succumb to the redundancy objection. If plausible, we would have a presumptive case for integrity’s status as a virtue.

III. The Virtue of Integrity

Despite Rosalind Hursthouse’s warning that “the introduction -or discovery- of a new virtue is a formidable task” (2007, 160), I shall sketch a conception of integrity as a vir-

(1) There are three additional problems with his views. First, we can agree that a person of integrity is willing to revise her commitments and that in order for her to do so she must be equipped with some epistemic virtues or resources, but this need not mean that integrity is to be identified with these resources. Second, some epistemic virtues do have their own thoughts and motives. For instance, intellectual charity is motivated by the thought of putting the arguments of one’s intellectual opponent in the best possible light. Third, some philosophers also argue against fast and hard distinctions between moral and epistemic virtues; see Zagzebski (1996, Pt II) and Baehr (2011, appendix). In his book, and despite his elaboration of the conception of integrity as an epistemic virtue, what Scherkoske writes does not escape the redundancy objection: it might be that integrity is a form of proper self-trust (2013c, 134–138) and that people with integrity are “good on their word” (2013c, 150), but these descriptions fit the usual epistemic and moral virtues.

(2) A few other philosophers seem to accept the claim that integrity is not a virtue. For example, Cheshire Calhoun (1995), despite entire essay arguing that integrity is a social virtue, does an about-face in the conclusion, declaring, based on a suggestion by Owen Flanagan, that integrity “is less a virtue of its own right than a pressing into service of a host of other virtues” (1995, 260). Incidentally, Calhoun’s conception of integrity as a virtue does not survive the redundancy objection. Audi and Murphy (2006) also distinguish between integrity as an adjunctive virtue (which is morally neutral) and integrity as an aretaic virtue. Regarding the latter, they write, “integrity is identified either with specific virtues such as honesty or, significantly if less commonly, with virtue in general” (2006, 12). In the aretaic sense, then, integrity is used as a substitute for more specific virtues (2006, 16).

Cox, La Caze, and Levine recognize the redundancy objection, stating, “[I]t seems that a perfectly virtuous agent does not possess, or need to possess, integrity. For instance, Aristotle’s model of a virtuous agent contrasts with merely enkratic agents who must struggle to act virtuously. The fully virtuous Aristotelian agent would have no need for integrity if integrity were about the struggle between pleasure and principle.” However, they go on to assert that “the idea that a fully virtuous agent lacks integrity does not seem plausible” and they suggest a way of understanding integrity as taking one’s life seriously. I discuss their suggestion in the next section.

tue. If this conception is plausible, then we would be able to meet the redundancy objection. In doing so, I follow Martha Nussbaum's plausible interpretation of how Aristotle carves out the virtues, which is "to isolate a sphere of human experience that figures more or less in any human life, and in which more or less any human being will have to make *some* choices rather than others, and act in *some* way rather than some other" (1988, 35). For example, the sphere of courage is fear of important damages, the sphere of temperance is bodily pleasures, and the sphere of generosity is "management of one's own personal property, where others are concerned" (1988, 35). A virtue is the disposition to act, decide, and feel *well* in regards to each sphere.

If integrity is a virtue, what would be its sphere? Going by the conception of integrity from Section I, I suggest that the sphere of integrity is the coherence of the agent's actions, motives, and goals ("goals" broadly refers to the agent's projects, career, relationships, and other commitments, both moral and non-moral), on the one hand, with her basic values, on the other. That is, the sphere of integrity is the question of how the agent wishes to live her life and by what values. If, as Nussbaum contends, the spheres of the virtues are areas of human life about which we have to make some choices, then how our actions, goals, and motives comport with our values is one such sphere. Indeed, most people seem to form conceptions of themselves as having certain values by which they desire their lives to abide.

What would it be to be disposed *well* in this sphere? It would be to have integrity. Integrity -the virtue in this sphere- would be the disposition to have one's life (actions, motives, and goals) cohere specifically with *moral* values. Integrity would be a higher-order virtue that monitors the various important aspects of the agent's life to ensure their coherence with moral values. Integrity allows virtuous agents to ask themselves, "Am I living a moral life, or am I failing in some respect? Are my actions stemming from the right motives?" When necessary, integrity disposes them to re-set their moral compasses should they need to (I will return to this point shortly).

Integrity, then, oversees not just any coherence between the agent's actions, motives, and goals, on the one hand, and the agent's values, on the other, but specifically the former's coherence with moral values. Why moral values? There are two reasons. First, insofar as the dominant conception of integrity is a moral one (per Section I), coherence with morality accords with this conception of integrity, making it especially suited to be the basis of a conception of integrity as a virtue. Second, if integrity is to be a virtue, its place will need to be among other virtues, which are usually moral. In the Aristotelian tradition, and except perhaps for wit, all the virtues are moral, even those added to Aristotle's list by later philosophers (honesty, kindness, and care, e.g.).⁽¹⁾

Nietz- a .g.e) virtues moral-non include that Theories (1) can (virtues aesthetic for room makes that theory schean the of coherence the seeing-over as integrity of conceive the- the of virtues the that values whatever with life agent's see ,virtue moral a is wit whether On .reflect or embody ory .(2015) McAleer and (2014) Layda and Halwani

An agent with integrity will be disposed to choose actions, motives, and goals that are either moral themselves (e.g., actions of helping the poor) or, more commonly, that are constrained or vetted by morality (e.g., careers that are not inherently immoral, such as being an assassin for hire or a drug mule). The distinctive role, however, for integrity as a *virtue* is that it disposes the virtuous person to every so often review how her life is going and whether any adjustments are needed to certain courses of actions, habits of motives, or goals. She might realize that a purported course of action needs to be revised or that she needs to undertake it from a different motive. Such periodic revisions would be necessary especially when forces outside the virtuous agent's control intrude on her life, thereby exerting undue stress that tests her virtue.⁽²⁾ Moreover, in cases when a virtuous person has a career that poses interesting moral challenges, such as being a politician or a CEO of a major company, given that such careers might clash with moral values, the virtue of integrity disposes the agent to continuously review her actions to ensure that they are not morally compromised by the trajectory of her work.⁽³⁾

Let us adjust the example of Tess so as to illustrate the virtue of integrity. Let us suppose that Tess's sister, Susan, who lives by herself, has been taken ill. Tess now has to check on her on a weekly basis to help her with grocery shopping, sort out her appointments and bills, and comfort and assist her. This additional work causes Tess (expected) distress, and it gives her fewer hours per week to properly do the things that she needs to do, given her usual schedule and commitments. Specifically, she finds herself devoting less time to preparing for her classes, and she finds herself less and less motivated to meet individually with those few students of hers who need extra attention and help.

At some point, Tess will need to step back and redirect her efforts and motives. Specifically, if she is preparing less for her classes, Tess will need to get back on track and spend the needed time on her class work. Her virtues of fairness and care will motivate her to do so, but so will her virtue of integrity, which re-directs Tess to pay attention to fairness to and caring for her students, given Tess's values of being a good teacher (specifically in this regard, a fair and caring one). Note that whereas fairness and care are concerned with Tess's relationship to her students, integrity is concerned with the relationship between Tess's course of action of preparing for her classes and her moral values (fairness and caring) as they apply to teaching. Her integrity as a professional teacher, which includes fairness to and caring for her students, disposes her to get back on track.

Consider motives next. If Tess finds herself less and less wanting to meet with those few students who need

(2) Agents who, for example, prefer to not have one life goal—who prefer to experience the various things that life has to offer—need not lack integrity as long as they ensure that whatever and whenever goals and experiences they pursue, they do so within the constraints of moral values. I mention this point as a way to accommodate Cheshire Calhoun's (2009) important insights about not overvaluing commitment for a coherent life.

(3) On being virtuous under oppression, see Tessman (2005).

the additional help, she will need to re-instill in herself the proper motives to do so, specifically, her motive of caring for those students who tend to fall behind and who need the additional attention. Again, her integrity disposes her to step back and take stock of what is happening, and to dispose her to re-instill in herself the motive of caring for those students.

Finally, consider the role of integrity in regards to goals. Suppose that Susan's illness gets worse, requiring Tess to spend more and more time with her. Tess finds herself mentally, and physically torn between her work and her sister, so that each side receives less from Tess than what it should receive (or would receive under normal circumstances). The virtue of integrity disposes Tess to step back and reconsider her priorities. Integrity would not dispose her to decide *which* is her priority (that is a role for practical wisdom, which I address below), but it does dispose her to take stock of her life in order to ensure that her commitments align with her moral values. Tess will need to figure out a way in which each party is given its due.

Note five things. First, integrity is concerned with the agent's being well disposed in regards to how her actions, motives, and goals align with moral values. In this regard, integrity is a higher-order virtue. It allows the agent to step back and take a bird's eye view of her life from the perspective of moral values. Another way to put this is that whereas first-order virtues do not have other virtues as their objects or focus, integrity's focus is the agent's virtues: "Am I being generous or courageous by continuing in this way?" (though the agent does not have to specifically use these concepts).

Second, although integrity is a higher-order virtue, it is also an "executive" one in that it disposes the agent to action, not merely reflection.⁽¹⁾ Tess needs to take steps to re-instill in herself the right actions and the right motives so as to maintain herself as a good teacher, all under the direction of integrity. However, integrity differs from first-order executive virtues in that its sphere is not typically individual actions or motives, but *courses* of action, *habits* of motivation, and *general* life goals, and how they align with moral values. So while integrity is an executive virtue, it is one whose concern is usually with *patterns* of action and motivation than with individual ones.

Third, and connected to the above, insofar as we are inclined to think of moral virtues as those directly connected with action and motivation, integrity is a *moral* virtue in that it directly counsels the agent on which motives to instill and on which courses of actions to undertake. Thus, integrity is a moral virtue not only because of its concern with the coherence of the agent's actions, motives, and goals with moral values, but also because it is an executive virtue directly affecting actions and motives.⁽²⁾

Fourth, I have chosen the above examples in such a way

(1) This goes against Christine McKinnon's claim that integrity is not an executive virtue (1999, 199).

(2) It is also an epistemic virtue, that can cause the agent to revise her beliefs when necessary. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to develop this thought. Scherkoske (2010; 2012) are very valuable here.

that the changes to Tess's life are due to circumstances external to her and outside her control. This is important so as to deflect the potential objection that virtuous people, being of impeccable moral characters, would not need a virtue such as integrity to help them realign their actions, motives, and goals with moral values. Thus, although Tess is a virtuous person, she is also human in that in facing those unexpected things that life throws at her, she might be subject to various psychological and emotional reactions—for example, stress, anxiety, depression, and feeling overwhelmed—that can affect the way she acts and feels. Integrity keeps the virtuous person on the moral track by disposing her to make adjustments to her life as needed.⁽³⁾ This is also true of when life throws *good* things at the agent, such as falling in love, winning the lottery, and finding a job in a country to which the agent always wanted to relocate. Such events cause tremendous joy and happiness that in turn can be distracting to the agent, and integrity keeps the moral joints of the agent in proper alignment. Integrity is the moral chiropractor of the virtuous.

Fifth, the adjustments about which integrity counsels are not to the agent's moral values themselves. Indeed, I have deliberately refrained from mentioning adjustments to them because I assume that they are not in need of such adjustments. They are fixed, and integrity's sphere is to ensure compliance *with them*. They are fixed because I assume, first, an objective view of moral values. Second, I assume that these values are basic, so they themselves do not need revision (how does one revise the value of justice?), though how they apply to or cohere with various actions, motives, and goals are things that can be revised, which, as we have seen, is a crucial aspect of the virtue of integrity. Third, moral values are fixed because they underline what it means to be a virtuous agent: the virtuous agent knows that courage, justice, and care, for example, are good things to adhere to. In these respects, moral values objectively ground integrity in its sphere, much like, say, the well-being of others grounds benevolence in its sphere.

In order to sharpen the sketch of the virtue of integrity, let us consider Aristotle's remark that a virtue disposes the agent to act and feel "at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way" (1999, 1106b20). Given the conception of integrity in Section I and my remarks so far in this section, the right times for integrity are when the agent realizes or suspects that his actions, motives, or goals have gotten off the rails in some way or are in danger of doing so. Unlike first-order virtues, however, which tend to specify a right time, there is no specific time (month, day, or hour, e.g.) for the revision. The right time for integrity is when the agent realizes that something is amiss and needs fixing, or when he thinks that a review is in order, that is, an occasional self-check-in when the agent simply wants to review his life to ensure that all is still well.

Right things, people, end, and way are easy to state: the things are which of the agent's actions, motives, and goals

(3) Because Tess is a virtuous agent, not a continent one, she would not need integrity to overcome base desires. Hence, the examples draw on difficulties not due to Tess's own character.

in a specific area in or aspect of the agent's life in possible need of revising (e.g., Tess's preparation for her classes). The people is the agent herself, given that integrity disposes the agent to ensure that *her* life is lived by moral values (integrity is in this way a self-regarding virtue). The end is the proper alignment of the agent's actions, motives, and goals with moral values. The right way is unspecified, of course, because it depends on the specific issue in question. Going back to Tess, one right way for her to re-instill the motive of care for her students is to ensure that she meets with them on days of the week that are less hectic for her, and to keep in mind their educational well-being as the reason for these meetings. Such mechanisms might help invigorate Tess's moral motives in the midst of her difficult life.

Finally, and crucially, given that virtues of character are the mean between feelings and desires (even though not every virtue needs to be a mean between feelings or desires—justice, for example, is a virtue in regards to judgment, not feelings and emotions, though they can be involved on occasion), integrity does involve the agent's *desire* to live a morally wholesome life: it involves the desire to ensure that the life she wishes to lead, and is leading, is coherent with moral values.⁽¹⁾

Consider next a few crucial vices opposed to integrity. Two such vices are the vice of moral self-indulgence and the vice of moral neglect. Both these vices are, like their virtuous counter-part, higher-order vices. The first is the disposition to go overboard in revising one's actions, motives, and goals when they do not require change. This can happen when the agent revises at the wrong times, or when the agent revises the wrong courses of action, just because the agent believes that his life is not going morally well as it should be. When the agent does this frequently, it is a vice, not an occasional mistake.⁽²⁾

The other vice is neglect of one's moral self, a vice likely much more common than that of over-revising. The person with this vice does not step back enough or at all from his life to adjust it as necessary. The agent does not care (or care enough) whether his actions, motives, and goals cohere with moral values. This *could* mean that the agent has no moral values, but it could also mean that he does not care (or care enough) about how his actions, motives, and goals cohere with these moral values.

There are other vices. Much like the intemperate person thinks that certain pleasures are okay when they are actually base, these vices of integrity dispose the agent to believe that some values are moral when they are not or that some non-moral values are overriding when they are not. Someone

who believes that the only human lives of worth are those who belong to specific groups (races, religions, etc.) and who ensures the coherence of his actions, motives, and goals with this value has a vice, not the virtue of integrity. Or a person who believes that aesthetic values are overriding, so that all her actions, motives, and goals cohere with it, would have a different vice.

Other vices are about what it means for the agent's actions, motives, and goals to cohere with the moral values—the vicious agent has the wrong conception of that (thinking, e.g., that acting well need not be motivated by moral values, only in accordance with them). Like any other virtue, then, integrity admits of various vices depending on where the agent goes wrong (I have considered the agent going wrong with respect to his desires to align his life with moral values, the values themselves, and the coherence of his life with moral values).

To sharpen even further my conception of integrity as a virtue, I will contrast it with a similar conception by Damian Cox, Marguerite La Caze, and Michael Levine, who attempt to argue that integrity is a master virtue, whose concern is taking one's life seriously by ensuring the coherence of life's various parts. Cox, La Caze, and Levine suggest that integrity is a cluster concept and a "thick" virtue term.⁽³⁾ They list some extremes that can undermine integrity. On the one hand, we have "arrogance, dogmatism, fanaticism, monomania, preciousness, sanctimoniousness, and rigidity." The authors claim that "these are all traits that can defeat integrity in so far as they undermine and suppress attempts by an individual to critically assess and balance their desires, commitments, wishes, changing goals, and other factors." On the other hand, according to Cox, La Caze, and Levine, we have vices that "make it impossible to discern stable features in one's life, and in one's relations to others, that are necessary if one is to act with integrity." The list includes "capriciousness, wantonness, triviality, disintegration, weakness of will, self-deception, self-ignorance, mendacity, hypocrisy, and indifference."

Cox, La Caze, and Levine clarify that they do not consider integrity to be a mean between the above vices, but that "the person with integrity will find a mean between the excesses of each one of these vices, or traits or practices that can undermine—that do undermine—integrity." Moreover, and by way of response to the potential objection that the above list of vices seems to be large, with no unifying elements, they suggest that integrity is the mean between them in regards to taking one's life seriously. Integrity is thus a "master virtue [that] coordinates all those character traits that are constitutive of what it is to succeed in taking one's life fully seriously" (2014, 208).

There are two difficulties with their account, however. The first is the redundancy objection: it is difficult to see why the standard virtues, moral or intellectual, cannot do

(1) Although I rely on Nussbaum's idea of spheres of virtues, other accounts can be used as well. On a view such as Christine Swanton's (2003, esp. ch. 1), the *field* of integrity would be the coherence of the agent's life with her values; the *modes* of responsiveness of integrity can be various: maintaining the coherence, revising it, and even creating it; and the *target* would be ensuring that the agent's actions, choices, and goals cohere with moral values.

(2) On the dangers of integrity as self-indulgence, see Scherkoske (2010).

(3) Cox, La Caze, and Levine (2017). See also their (2014) essay on integrity, where they make similar claims. In their earlier treatment of the issue (2003, ch. 2), they discuss integrity as a virtue though not in any specific terms (as, e.g., the virtue of taking one's life seriously) and what they write does not escape the redundancy objection.

the work that they want integrity to do. Their lists of vices have their proper virtues: arrogance has proper pride, while dogmatism, fanaticism, and monomania have virtues such as open-mindedness and truth-seeking. A virtuous person is not mendacious, self-deceptive, and so on, and she is none of these things because she has (the usual list of) virtues. So it remains unclear whether integrity's sphere is different than those of the other virtues. Hence their account does not address the redundancy objection.

The second problem with their account is that it is too broad. On their account, integrity's sphere is taking one's life seriously in general. But this opens the door to being a deeply immoral person as long as one takes one's life seriously. Consider their claim that "Central to the idea of integrity as the virtue of taking one's life seriously would be the idea that a pursuit of integrity involves somehow taking account of one's changing values, convictions, commitments, desires, knowledge, beliefs and so on over time. Integrity would thus require a robustly successful kind of self-examination (an examined life)" (2017). There are no moral restrictions on how this self-examination ought to be conducted, which implausibly implies that deeply unethical people can have the *virtue* of integrity. That is, if integrity is about taking one's life seriously in general, it is a trait that a vicious person can have, which implies that it is not a moral virtue (it would at best be an adjunctive virtue, to borrow the term from Audi and Murphy [2006]). Although Cox, La Caze, and Levine claim that "profound moral failure may be an independent defeater of integrity" (2017), it is unclear how it can be given their conception of integrity. Even if moral constraints can be built into the conception, it remains unclear why integrity is a virtue, if virtues are moral traits. It would be, at best, a disposition to take one's life seriously within moral bounds; but this would not make it a virtue.

My conception of integrity is similar to theirs in that integrity is about coherence and about the agent taking his life seriously. But my conception differs from theirs in being narrower: integrity is about the agent taking his *moral* life seriously; it is the virtue whose domain is how the agent's actions, motives, and goals cohere with *moral* values. Integrity is that virtue that disposes us to take life seriously by specifically binding our actions, motives, and goals to moral values.

It remains for me to address one obvious question: How is integrity connected to practical wisdom? How do they differ from each other?

There are three crucial functions of practical wisdom.⁽¹⁾ The first can be seen in Aristotle's claim that the virtuous person acts and feels at the right time, for the right end, toward the right person, and so on. That is, practical wisdom enables the agent to decide on the minutiae of action in any particular situation: for whom, for what purpose, for what reasons, when, and how. In her rejection of the coach's threats, it is practical wisdom that allows Tess to decide whether and how to respond to Nick's intimidation.

Second, practical wisdom allows the virtuous person to see or decide which goal is worthy of pursuit at a specific

time. This includes which virtue should dispose the agent to act in a particular situation. For example, Tess understands that the coach's threats are real and serious, and that they pose some danger to her safety and reputation. But she also understands that there is something more worthwhile at stake, which is being fair to her students and standing up to intimidation. It is this understanding that guides and motivates her decision and action to reject the threats.

Third, practical wisdom informs the virtuous agent of what is good and worthwhile to pursue in life. As Aristotle puts it, "It seems proper to a prudent person to be able to deliberate finely about ... what sorts of things promote living well in general... Hence where [living well] as a whole is concerned, the deliberative person will also be prudent" (1999, 1140a25-30). Goods such as moral values, artistic values, and knowledge are worthy of having and pursuing in their own right. Wisdom informs us of this, but it also tells us that some might have more priority than others -specifically, that moral values constrain other values.⁽²⁾

None of the above three functions says anything as such about virtuous agents monitoring his actions, motives, and goals to ensure that they are aligned with moral values. This monitoring, as I have argued, is necessitated by external events that can happen to the agent, forcing him to make difficult choices or operate under duress. The virtue of integrity allows him to maintain his overall virtue amidst these events. Thus, one way to think of the difference between wisdom and integrity is as follows: wisdom supplies knowledge, most relevantly knowledge about moral values and their place in a virtuous life, while integrity ensures that the agent adheres to them, especially in the face of difficulties beyond his control and character.

If the conception of integrity as a virtue offered in this section is plausible, then integrity as a virtue has a clear sphere and role not compensated for by other virtues, thus meeting the redundancy objection.

IV. Continnence: Integrity Without Virtue

I have argued that there is a virtue of integrity, whose sphere is the cohesion between an agent's actions, motives, and goals, on the one hand, and moral values, on the other; that people who are virtuous have and need this virtue; that it is a higher-order yet executive virtue; and that it is a moral virtue.

However, it seems that people can have integrity even if they are not virtuous; otherwise, every time we ascribe integrity to someone its truth will be contingent on that person being virtuous. So can someone be a person of integrity yet not have the virtue of integrity? Addressing this question

(2) It could be that theoretical wisdom is another source of this knowledge. Also, it might be controversial to claim that in virtue ethics moral values constrain other values, but the fact that all the virtues revolve around moral values and not, say, aesthetic ones strongly indicates that they have priority in an excellent life.

(1) See footnote 11 for references.

through a discussion of continence is illuminating, given that continent agents are not virtuous yet they seem to have integrity.

A continent person does the right thing for the right reasons, but experiences inner conflict in doing so. Discussing continence and temperance, Aristotle states, “For the continent and the temperate person are both the sort to do nothing against reason because of bodily pleasures, but the continent person has base appetites, whereas the temperate person lacks them. The temperate person is the sort to find nothing pleasant against reason, but the continent is the sort to find such things pleasant but not be led by them” (1999, 1151b35). Aristotle is claiming that although both the temperate and the continent act according to what reason tells them, the latter is pulled in the other direction because he finds the pleasure in question pleasant.

For example, if over-eating is indulgent and base, neither the temperate nor the continent would over-eat, but the continent would find pleasant the prospect of eating more and more food, whereas the temperate would not find the idea pleasant (they might even find it abhorrent). Or, to give a non-bodily pleasure example, consider Bess, whose case is a variation on Tess’s example: Bess is offered the money to not fail the student, and she is somewhat motivated to accept it, though she declines the offer and fails the student. In brief, continent agents are pulled by unwholesome desires in a direction away from what reason tells them even though they eventually act rightly.⁽¹⁾

Does Bess have integrity? There are considerations for and against a positive answer to this question. Although people of integrity act morally correctly in the face of temptation or pressure, our discourse about integrity is unclear on how resolute a person must be in order for a true attribution of integrity. Given that Bess was somewhat motivated to take the money, is this temptation compatible with integrity? Or must we think of people of integrity as being internally “solid” and steadfast in the face of pressure and temptation? The answers to these questions are unclear because our discourse about integrity is indeterminate in this regard.

One suggestion in favor of ascribing integrity to continent people is that this would be consistent with the conception of integrity and its three components adumbrated in Section I: commitment to moral values, consistently acting in such a way as to uphold them, and being motivated to act from them. Continent people not only consistently act so as to abide by their moral values, but they are also motivated by these values. Claiming that they have no integrity requires the additional condition that a person of integrity not be motivated at all to act on the pressure or temptation.

This requirement, however, is too strict to be convincing. People can have integrity even if they sometimes struggle

to maintain it. Also, if having integrity is compatible with some people slipping up every now and then, then it should also be compatible with people who never slip up but who internally struggle (continent agents). It thus seems that people can have integrity without being morally impeccable, and continent agents would be clear examples.

Attributing integrity to continent agents, then, sounds plausible. They would be paradigmatic examples of people of integrity who nonetheless do not have the virtue integrity. What sets them apart from virtuous agents who have the virtue of integrity is the same as what sets them apart from not having the other virtues, namely, that base desires and emotions pull them in the other direction. If a generous person gladly buys his colleagues dinner when appropriate, a continent agent buys the dinner but not gladly, perhaps even begrudgingly. Similarly, whereas a virtuous agent with integrity would desire to evaluate his life when appropriate, the continent agent evaluates her life when appropriate but her desire is lacking: she might be tempted to succumb to her anxieties, stress, or whatever is psychically preoccupying her to want to review her life, knowing the effort she would have to put in to fix it. The good thing is that she ends up doing what is needed.

Thus, there can be people with integrity who do not have the virtue of integrity. While virtuous agents are people of integrity and have the virtue, continent agents are the former only. Both satisfy the components of the conception of integrity outlined in Section I, but only the virtuous have the unimpeded and wholehearted desire to periodically review and adjust their lives as needed to maintain their virtue and a life coherent with it.

V. Concluding Remark

Much more needs to be said on integrity as a virtue, and I have only offered a conception of it that avoids the redundancy objection. On this conception, integrity is not only a virtue, but an important one as well. It is a higher-order virtue concerning itself with the moral lives of agents. It is a moral virtue both because it is an executive one, prodding the agent to act, and because it is anchored in moral values.⁽²⁾ Most crucially, integrity is an important virtue because virtuous agents *need* this virtue. Given that we live in a world vitiated with injustices, suffering, and inequalities, much of it due to human wrong-doing, but much of it also due to the sheer accidents and tragedies that life usually dishes out, virtuous agents will likely have to deal with these turbulences, which in turn exert pressure on the goodness of virtuous agents. Whether due to wrongful oppressive practices or to the natural course of human life, a virtuous person is thus likely to find himself in a position of having to make difficult choices under tough psychological strain. And for that, he needs the virtue of integrity.

(1) There is more to the story, because continent agents divide into those who are motivated to do something that is not base but should not be done in the circumstances at hand, and those who value what is base (even if they are not motivated to act on it). See Schuster (2020).

used be to need will conception such some that believe I (2) likely is it ,Otherwise .virtue distinct a be to is integrity if super- that property a only ,virtue a not is integrity that the and virtuous the especially ,characters some on venes .continent

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