

GREG SCHERKOSKE

Integrity *and the* Virtues of Reason

Leading a Convincing Life



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INTEGRITY AND THE VIRTUES OF REASON

Many people have claimed that integrity requires sticking to one's convictions come what may. Greg Scherkoske challenges this claim, arguing that it creates problems in distinguishing integrity from fanaticism, close-mindedness or mere inertia. Rather, integrity requires sticking to one's convictions to the extent that they are justifiable and likely to be correct. In contrast to traditional views of integrity, Scherkoske contends that it is an epistemic virtue intimately connected to what we know and have reason to believe, rather than an essentially moral virtue connected to our values. He situates integrity in the context of shared cognitive and practical agency, and shows that the relationship between integrity and impartial morality is not as antagonistic as many have thought – which has important implications for the “integrity objection” to impartial moral theories. This original and provocative study will be of great interest to advanced students and scholars of ethics.

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For Margaret

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Acknowledgments

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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

1.4 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.