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# Integrity and the Value of an Integrated Self

Alfred Archer<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract** What is integrity and why is it valuable? One account of the nature of integrity, proposed by John Cottingham amongst others, is The Integrated Self View. On this account integrity is a formal relation of coherence between various aspects of a person. One problem that has been raised against this account is that it isn't obvious that it can account for the value of integrity. In this paper I will respond to this problem by providing an account of the value of an integrated self. I will do so by first looking closely at two examples from literature: John Sassal in John Berger's *A Fortunate Man* and Tetrus Lydgate in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Based on my comparison of these two case studies I will argue that an integrated self is valuable as it makes people more likely to act in line with their moral judgements.

## 1 Introduction

What is integrity and why is it valuable? One account of the nature of integrity, proposed by John Cottingham (2010) amongst others, is The Integrated Self View. On this account integrity is a formal relation of coherence between various aspects of a person. One problem that has been raised against this account is that it isn't obvious that it can account for the value of integrity. In this paper I will provide an account of the value of an integrated self. I will do so by first looking closely at two examples from literature: John Sassal in John Berger's *A Fortunate Man* and Tetrus Lydgate in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Based on my comparison of these two cases I will argue that an integrated self is valuable as it makes people more likely to

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act in line with their moral views than they would be if they lacked an integrated self.

I will start by introducing the philosophical debate about the nature of integrity. I will explain the advantages that supporters of The Integrated Self View have claimed for their position and the important problem it faces in explaining why possessing an integrated self is valuable. I will then introduce my two case studies. After this I will use these studies to give an account of the value of an integrated self. I will argue that for morally decent people, developing an integrated self will reduce the risk of the all too common conflict between morality and self-interest. As a result, they will be more likely to act in line with their moral views than they would be if they lacked an integrated self. I will finish by considering objections to my argument.

Before I begin it is worth making clear the limitations of what I am attempting to show. First of all I am not going to attempt to show that The Integrated Self View provides the best account of the virtue of integrity. My aim is only to explain the value of an integrated self, whether or not we accept this as how integrity should be understood. This aim is relevant to the question of how we should understand integrity, if possessing an integrated self were not valuable then it would be unlikely to be accepted as a plausible account of integrity. However, it would take much more work to show that The Integrated Self View should be preferred to its rivals.

Second, I do not intend to show that possessing an integrated self should be considered a virtue. In order to show this we would have to do more than simply explain the value of an integrated self. While showing some aspect of character to be valuable is necessary for demonstrating that it is a virtue, it is far from sufficient. We would, at least, have to explain how possessing an integrated self can be a virtue given that it does not seem to involve any characteristic thought or motivation.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper however, my aim is simply to explain the value of an integrated self and leave these questions to one side. This is relevant to the question of whether an integrated self is a virtue but by itself will not suffice to show that an integrated self meets all of the necessary criteria for a virtue.

### 1.1 The Integrated Self View of Integrity

My goal in this section is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on integrity but to introduce The Integrated Self View of integrity and an objection that has been raised against it. Gabrielle Taylor sums up this account of integrity as the view that the person of integrity is someone, “whose life is ‘of a piece’, whose self is whole and integrated.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, John Cottingham describes this as the view that the person with integrity is someone who possesses, “a certain psychological wholeness — an understanding of the significance of all her various goals and desires, and the true place of each in her overall life-plan — how they fit

<sup>1</sup> See Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character and Morality,” in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

in with her sense of who she really is.”<sup>3</sup> According to this view, then, the person with integrity is someone for whom the various aspects of her self (her projects, ambitions, values, emotions, desires etc.) are integrated. These two accounts of The Integrated Self View are not identical. An integrated ‘self’ need not be understood as ‘psychological wholeness’. However, I take it that the psychological wholeness Cottingham proposes is an attempt to unpack what it might take for a self to be integrated. I will be following Cottingham’s understanding of The Integrated Self View in this paper and taking an integrated self to involve coherence amongst one’s projects, ambitions, values emotions and desires.<sup>4</sup>

On this view, integrity is to be contrasted with fragmentation. While the person with integrity has reconciled the various aspects of her life into a coherent whole, the fragmented person is someone whose self is ridden with internal conflict. This fragmentation may take a number of different forms. First, it may involve being committed to two or more incompatible desires, projects or ambitions. These need not be logically incompatible but may rather be incompatible for the agent to pursue given the particular circumstances that she finds herself in. Second, it may involve a lack of coherence between what the agent claims to be committed to or to care about and what she actually cares about or is committed to.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, it could also be a lack of coherence between an agent’s commitments and her actions (i.e. weakness of will). Alternatively it could take the form of the leading of a compartmentalized life. Alasdair MacIntyre claims that a distinctive feature of modern times is the compartmentalization of life:

Into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behaviour. So work is divided from leisure, private life from public, the corporate from the personal. So both childhood and old age have been wrenched away from the rest of human life and made over into distinct realms. And all these separations have been achieved so that it is the distinctiveness of each and not the unity of the life of the individual who passes through those parts in terms of which we are taught to think and to feel.<sup>6</sup>

This view of integrity as involving a life that fits together as a coherent whole is not the only account of the virtue. According to both Greg Scherkoske and Cheshire Calhoun, integrity should be viewed as a social virtue, one that involves standing for one’s best judgement in front of one’s fellow deliberators.<sup>7</sup> We might also view integrity as a matter of practical identity. According to these accounts, integrity is

<sup>3</sup> John Cottingham Cottingham, “Integrity and Fragmentation,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* Vol. 27 No.1 (2010), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify this.

<sup>5</sup> See Gabriele Taylor, “Integrity,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* Vol. 55 (1981), pp. 144–146.

<sup>6</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre *After Virtue* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 204.

<sup>7</sup> See Cheshire Calhoun, 1995. “Standing for Something,” *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 4292 No. 5 (1995) and Greg Scherkoske, *Integrity and the Virtues of Reason: Leading a Convincing Life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

understood in terms of possessing a character that is founded on identity-conferring commitments.<sup>8</sup>

Supporters of The Integrated Self View have claimed a number of advantages over these accounts. First, some supporters of this view have noted that it provides a natural fit with the etymological origin of the term.<sup>9</sup> The term ‘integrity’ stems from the Latin adjective ‘integer’, which means ‘wholeness’ or ‘completeness’, fitting well with a view of integrity as a virtue which involves one’s life hanging together as a complete and coherent whole.<sup>10</sup> The Integrated Self View also fits well with psychoanalytic approaches to understanding the personality.<sup>11</sup> In psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, the term integrity is used to refer to a personality that is free from division and internal conflict. For example, in Anthony Storr’s description of the assumptions upon which psychotherapy is based he claims that:

I do not believe that anyone ever reaches a condition of complete inner harmony; but those who seem to approach most nearly to this ideal share certain attributes. [...] People whose public and private lives are widely discrepant can hardly be said to be integrated; and maturity demands that the personality shall be recognizably the same under varying circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

This account of what the integrity of the personality amounts to fits easily with The Integrated Self View. According to both views, integrity is a matter of psychological wholeness and harmony and a lack of internal conflict.

However, one objection that has been raised against The Integrated Self View is that it fails to account for the value of integrity. This objection is raised in a number of different ways. Cheshire Calhoun has argued that it can be valuable to conceptualize oneself as a duplicitous or multiplicitous being, “whose identity is differently constituted in different cultural “worlds” or meaning systems.”<sup>13</sup> Greg Scherkoske, on the other hand, has argued that having an integrated self can be morally dangerous, as it would help both the morally good and the morally bad achieve their goals.<sup>14</sup> The fundamental problem that both these objections raise is that if integrity is understood as the possession of an integrated self then there does not appear to be any reason to think that integrity is a valuable trait to possess. Given that integrity is widely regarded as a virtue, if this objection is on target then

<sup>8</sup> See Williams, *op cit.*, Bernard Williams “Integrity,” in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (New York: Cambridge, 1973), pp. 108–117, and Lynne McFall, “Integrity,” *Ethics* Vol. 98 No.1 (1987).

<sup>9</sup> Those who claim (or at least suggest) this advantage for integrity include Jeffrey Blustein *Care and commitment: Taking the personal point of view.* (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 90, Christine Korsgaard *The Sources of Normativity.* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 102, and Cottingham *op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, as an anonymous referee notes, it is not clear what weight, if any, we should give to considerations of etymology.

<sup>11</sup> This point is made by Cottingham *op. cit.* p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Storr, *The Integrity of The Personality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 170.

<sup>13</sup> Calhoun *op. cit.* pp. 238–239.

<sup>14</sup> Scherkoske *op. cit.* Ch. 2.

it is a devastating one. The challenge to the defender of The Integrated Self View is to explain why possessing an integrated self is valuable.

Cottingham attempts to respond to this objection by claiming that the person with an integrated self will have a more stable life.

The person who pursues his projects and desires in a piecemeal way may, let us grant, manage to live quite well, for weeks or months or even years [...] his life, I suggest, will be less stable. He gets along all right *by accident*, as it were. Either the parts of his life fit together by pure chance, or, more likely, they are potentially liable to clash, but it just so happens that they have not, so far, come into conflict. So although the way he lives has not so far been such as to threaten his happiness and security (or those of others), there are, in the very nature of the case, various tensions in his way of living that are always waiting to surface, and which, in moments of crisis, may erupt to damaging effect.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the person who lacks an integrated self runs the risk of the various divided aspects of herself running into conflict. Unless she can find a way of integrating these various parts of herself into a coherent whole then she is in danger of facing damaging internal conflict. Of course, this conflict is not guaranteed. Someone with a fragmented self may never face circumstances that bring about conflict between the agent's conflicting projects, ambitions, values, emotions and desires. However, she will always be at risk of such circumstances arising.

This response succeeds in providing some reason to value the possession of an integrated self. However, it could reasonably be objected that it fails to provide a full response to the objection. After all, it seems reasonable to object that this fails to fully account for the value of integrity. In particular it might be thought to fail to do justice to the *moral* value of integrity. While possessing a stable character may have indirect benefits to others, it would be surprising if this were all that was morally valuable about integrity, given the high importance that we place on this virtue. It is hard to see why possessing this form of stability should make someone admirable or a worthy recipient of our trust. If The Integrated Self View is going to be a viable account of integrity then some explanation of the *moral* value of possessing an integrated self will need to be given. In the next section I will provide such an explanation.

## 2 A Tale of Two Doctors

In the remainder of this essay I will provide an account of the moral value of an integrated self. To start I will present two examples from literature: one of someone who gains an integrated self and one whose self becomes increasingly less integrated.

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<sup>15</sup> Cottingham op. cit. p. 5.

## 2.1 A Fortunate Man

John Berger's *A Fortunate Man* presents a portrait of John Sassall, a country doctor in an isolated English community. The first half of the book describes a series of Sassall's visits with patients. We see him attend to a woodsman trapped beneath a tree, comforting the dying and the bereaved. In the second half of the book Berger reflects on Sassall's life and the role he plays within the community. This is a rich and thought provoking discussion and I am not going to attempt to summarize it here. The aspect of this discussion that I want to focus on is Berger's claim that Sassall, "cures others to cure himself".<sup>16</sup> According to Berger, Sassall's desire to help his patients comes not only from his compassion for them but also to a large extent from his 'self-interested' aspiration to strive towards, "the ideal of the universal man."<sup>17</sup> Berger explains this in the following way:

His appetite for knowledge is insatiable. He believes that the limits of knowledge, at any given stage, are temporary. Endurance for him is no more than a form of experience, and experience is, by definition, reflective. [...] He is continually speculating about, extending and amending his awareness of what is possible. Partly this is the result of his theoretical reading of medicine, science and history; partly it is the result of his own clinical observations [...] But above all it is the result of the cumulative effect of his imaginative 'proliferation' of himself in 'becoming' one patient after another.<sup>18</sup>

It is through his life as a doctor that Sassall is able to satisfy to some extent this aspiration to extend himself.

Sassall's life of service helps him to fulfill an aspiration that is a central part of his character. This is important because, as Berger points out, "Sassall needs his unsatisfied quest for certainty and his uneasy sense of unlimited responsibility."<sup>19</sup> This is why Berger takes Sassall to be fortunate. He is in Berger's words:

A man doing what he wants. Or, to be more accurate, a man pursuing what he wishes to pursue. Sometimes, the pursuit involves strain and disappointment, but in itself it is his unique source of satisfaction. Like an artist or like anybody else who believes that his work justifies his life, Sassall – by our society's miserable standards - is a fortunate man.<sup>20</sup>

Sassall's life of service is one that is, for him, a source of satisfaction and that, for Berger, is what makes Sassall fortunate. This is what Berger means by his claim that Sassall, "cures others to cure himself".<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John Berger *A Fortunate Man: The Story of a Country Doctor*. (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1976), p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid* p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid* p. 143.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* p. 88.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid* p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid* p. 77.

The relevance of this portrait of Sassall is that Berger has described a man in possession, if anyone is, of an integrated self. It is through his work that Sassall is able to find a way of satisfying his aspirations. In ‘curing others to cure himself’ Sassall has narrowed the gap between his self-interested aspirations and his moral aspirations. He has found a way of living and of working that fulfills both his own needs and those of his patients.

Of particular relevance for our purposes is Berger’s explanation of how Sassall achieved this. This has not been achieved by subordinating all of his desires to one overriding ambition. Rather, it has been achieved through careful and painful self-examination, which enabled him to find a way of weaving together the various aspects of his personality. Crucial to this was an intense six-month period of self-examination that occurred in Sassall’s early thirties during which he, “analyzed many of his own character traits and their roots in the past.”<sup>22</sup> Berger describes Sassall prior to this period as:

Always overworked and proud of it. [...] He had no patience with anything except emergencies or serious illness. When a man continued to complain but had no dangerous symptoms, he reminded himself of the endurance of the Greek peasants and the needs of those in ‘very real distress’, and so recommended more exercise and, if possible, a cold bath before breakfast. He dealt only with crises in which he was the central character: or to put it another way, in which the patient was *simplified* by the degree of his physical dependence on the doctor. He was also simplified himself, because the chosen pace of his life made it impossible and unnecessary for him to examine his own motives.<sup>23</sup>

Before his period of reflection Sassall was overworked and impatient, leaving little room for sympathy or serious self-examination. He aspired not towards the ideal of the universal man but towards a heroic ideal of service. Berger explains how as a boy Sassall was strongly influenced by the books of Joseph Conrad featuring men who are “tough, controlled, taciturn and outwardly ordinary.”<sup>24</sup> As Berger points out, crucial to the appeal of these men is “the ideal of service”. Berger explains this ideal in the following way:

This ideal has double meaning. The service stands for all those traditional values which a privileged few who have faced and met the challenge esteem: esteem not as an abstract principle but as the very condition of practising their craft efficiently. And at that same time service also stands for the responsibility which the few must always carry for the many who depend upon them.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid pp. 54–55.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid p. 52.

Berger claims that this ideal held particular appeal to the young Sassall, as a youth seeking to outgrow his middle-class background. A career spent serving patients seemed to provide Sassall with the opportunity to live up to this ideal.

However, Sassall's period of reflection involved a reevaluation of the appropriateness of this Conradian ideal. This idea made his lack of sympathy for his patients appear heroic but offered little comfort for those of his patients not facing an emergency or a serious illness. In Berger's words,

He began to realize that the way Conrad's Master Mariners came to terms with their imagination – denying it any expression but projecting it all on to the sea which they then faced as though it were simultaneously their personal justification and their personal enemy – was not suitable for a doctor in his position. He had done just that – using illness and medical dangers as they used the sea. He began to realize that he must face his own imagination, even explore it.<sup>26</sup>

Sassall realized that the ideal he was aspiring towards was inappropriate for the life of a doctor. This prompted a period of intense self-analysis, looking closely at his own personality and how it was formed by events in his past. Berger describes the Sassall that emerged from this period of reflection in the following way: "When Sassall emerged, he was still an extremist. He had exchanged an obvious and youthful form of extremism for a more complex and mature one." After his period of reflection he became a patient and compassionate doctor, well aware of the need to treat himself and his patients as, "a total personality."<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2 Tertius Lydgate

Having investigated the life of one country doctor, let us now turn our attention to another, that of Tertius Lydgate in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Lydgate is a young ambitious doctor who arrives at the village of Middlemarch in order to start up a new hospital. He is initially presented by Elliot as an admirable man:

One of Lydgate's gifts was a voice habitually deep and sonorous, yet capable of becoming very low and gentle at the right moment. About his ordinary bearing there was a certain fling, a fearless expectation of success, a confidence in his own powers and integrity much fortified by contempt for petty obstacles or seductions of which he had had no experience. But this proud openness was made lovable by an expression of unaffected good-will.<sup>28</sup>

Eliot portrays Lydgate as an inventive and pioneering doctor. As Borys Surawicz and Beverly Jacobson remark, "it seems that Eliot appropriated every medical advance of the period and gave them all to her brilliant doctor."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid pp. 56–57.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> George Eliot *Middlemarch* (London: Penguin Books, 2003 [Originally published 1875]), p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Borys Surawicz, and Beverly Jacobson *Doctors In Fiction* (Abingdon: Radcliffe Publishing, 2009), p. 26.

In fact in Eliot's initial presentation of Lydgate, he appears to be someone in possession of an integrated self:

He had a youthful belief in his bread-winning work [...] and he carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship which withstood all the abstractions of special study.<sup>30</sup>

However, Lydgate is complicated by two potential sources of psychological conflict. First, a desire to not only serve as a country doctor but also to push forward medical science by making new discoveries. As Eliot puts the point:

He did not simply aim at a more genuine kind of practice than was common. He was ambitious of a wider effect: he was fired with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a new link in the chain of discovery.<sup>31</sup>

The second complicating elements of his psychology are those that Eliot describes as 'spots of commonness'. These she describes as follows:

Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices, which, in spite of noble intentions and sympathy, were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world: that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture, or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons. He did not mean to think of furniture at present; but whenever he did so, it was to be feared that neither biology nor schemes of reform would lift him above the vulgarity of feeling that there would be an incompatibility in his furniture not being of the best.<sup>32</sup>

These two sources of conflict eventually lead to Lydgate's undoing. His desire to push forward medical science leads him to become increasingly involved with Mr Bulstrode, who is funding Lydgate's hospital. Meanwhile, his expectations of his place in society lead him to furnish his house in a manner that he cannot afford and he descends deeply into debt.

As Lydgate's debts become overdue Bulstrode offers Lydgate money to make the repayments. Lydgate gratefully accepts. Afterwards he feels uneasy about the position he has put himself in. Lydgate's unease is well-founded. Lydgate is called to tend to the illness of a man named Raffles, who is staying in Bulstrode's house. Unbeknownst to Lydgate, Raffles knows a dark secret about Bulstrode's past and is threatening him with blackmail. Bulstrode knows that the only way in which he can escape this torment is if Raffles dies. Lydgate diagnoses Raffles with a disease

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<sup>30</sup> Eliot op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid p. 150.

caused by excessive alcohol consumption and prescribes moderate doses of opium and makes it clear that under no circumstances should he be given any alcohol. Bulstrode initially follows Lydgate's instructions. Later though, his housekeeper, who is tending to Raffles, comes to Bulstrode and tells him that Raffles is having trouble sleeping. When she suggests giving Raffles some brandy, Bulstrode, after a short period of inner turmoil, gives her the key to his wine cabinet.

When Lydgate returns the next day to find Raffles dying, he is suspicious of Bulstrode. However, because of his indebtedness to him, he says nothing. Eliot describes Lydgate's conflict in the following way:

He was conscious that Bulstrode had been a benefactor to him. But he was uneasy about this case. He had not expected it to terminate as it had done. Yet he hardly knew how to put a question on the subject to Bulstrode without appearing to insult him; and if he examined the housekeeper—why, the man was dead. There seemed to be no use in implying that somebody's ignorance or imprudence had killed him. And after all, he himself might be wrong.<sup>33</sup>

After Raffles' death a rumour circulates that Lydgate helped Bulstrode kill Raffles. Eventually Lydgate is forced to leave Middlemarch and set up a practice elsewhere. Eliot describes Lydgate's reflection on these events in the following passage:

That was the uneasy corner of Lydgate's consciousness while he was reviewing the facts and resisting all reproach. If he had been independent, this matter of a patient's treatment and the distinct rule that he must do or see done that which he believed best for the life committed to him, would have been the point on which he would have been the sturdiest. As it was, he had rested in the consideration that disobedience to his orders, however it might have arisen, could not be considered a crime, that in the dominant opinion obedience to his orders was just as likely to be fatal, and that the affair was simply one of etiquette. Whereas, again and again, in his time of freedom, he had denounced the perversion of pathological doubt into moral doubt and had said—"the purest experiment in treatment may still be conscientious: my business is to take care of life, and to do the best I can think of for it. Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake, but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive." Alas! the scientific conscience had got into the debasing company of money obligation and selfish respects.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Lydgate had allowed his financial dependence on Bulstrode to cloud his medical judgement. In the epilogue Eliot tells us that although he became, "what is called a successful man," he nevertheless, "always regarded himself as a failure."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid p. 712.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid p. 739.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid p. 834. We might wonder whether Lydgate's decision not to investigate the possibility of Bulstrode's involvement in the death of Raffles is obviously the wrong one. After all, Lydgate has very little evidence that Bulstrode did anything wrong. Given this we might think that Lydgate has not compromised his obligation to his patient by failing to investigate Bulstrode's involvement. However, even if we accept that Lydgate did not have an obligation to investigate Bulstrode's involvement, there still seems good reason to view this episode as highlighting a moral failure on Lydgate's part. The reason

### 3 The Value of an Integrated Self

What do these two stories have to tell us about the moral value of an integrated self? The cases of Sassal and Lydgate are interesting for our purposes as both begin as people with a degree of inner conflict. For Sassal his aspiration to be a strong, courageous and unsympathetic hero in the mould of Conrad's master mariners was in conflict with his aim to help his patients. Lydgate's conflict comes from the combination of his aspirations to be a successful practicing doctor and to push forward medical science together with his expectations for his place in society.

After these initial starting points, however, the stories of Sassal and Lydgate take quite different paths. Sassal, through his period of self-examination, was able to forge a new ideal of the universal man. Aspiring to live up to this ideal allowed him to better fulfil his aim of helping his patients. Sassal achieved this by finding a way to reshape his goals, ambitions and desires so that they formed a coherent whole. The resolution of this conflict not only enabled him to become a better doctor but also to lead a more satisfying life. By resolving this conflict, then, Sassal acquired a more integrated self.

Lydgate's tale, on the other hand, is not a happy one. His aspirations to be both a successful practicing doctor and a medical pioneer would not have been problematic by themselves. If Lydgate had been willing to accept that fulfilling these aspirations would mean having to lower his expectations for his social status, then these aspirations need not have led to conflict. Combined as they were though with Lydgate's expectations of his place in society and his inability to subject this part of himself to critical scrutiny they led to his betrayal of his medical values and to a life that he viewed as a failure. The source of Lydgate's failure was his inability to appreciate that in the circumstances he was facing, these aspirations were in conflict with each other. Had he, like Sassal, engaged in a process of critical self-examination, then he may have realized the need to refashion his aspirations into a coherent whole.

These contrasting stories tell us something important about integrity. By managing to form an integrated self Sassal put himself in a situation where by working towards his ideal of the universal man he was also furthering his goal to assist his patients. If instead Sassal's revelation about the appropriate attitude for a doctor in his position was not accompanied by a shift in the ideals he based his life upon then we can see why problems would quickly start to emerge. If this had been the case then Sassal would have been incapable of a wholehearted commitment to the pursuit of the betterment of his patients, as this goal would have been in frequent conflict with his aspiration to the Conradian ideal. In this situation working towards one of these goals would have undermined his pursuit of the other. From a self-interested point of view then forming an integrated self was beneficial to Sassal, as it enabled him to wholeheartedly pursue his self-interested goals without thereby

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Footnote 35 continued

for this is that Lydgate had allowed his relationship with Bulstrode to influence his decision about whether to raise questions about the circumstances of Raffles' death. Even those who think that Lydgate did not act wrongly in this case should concede that his motivations for acting as he did were inappropriate. Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

thwarting his other goals. This integration would also lessen the damaging conflicts that seems likely to arise in someone who knows that by pursuing one of her goals she will be undermining another.

We can see this point more clearly by contrasting Sassal with Lydgate. Unlike Sassal, Lydgate was unable to integrate his various goals, ambitions, values and desires into a coherent whole. This, combined with an unfortunate set of circumstances, led to conflict. His expectation of his place in society undermined his ambitions to be a successful doctor and medical innovator. His ambition to be a medical innovator led him to give up much of his time to work unpaid at his hospital. This meant that he did not have the financial resources to fund the lifestyle he expected for himself. This in turn led him into a situation in which he felt pressured to act in a way that violated his medical principles. His public failure as a doctor, destroyed (at least temporarily) both his ambition to be a medical innovator and his expectation to occupy an elevated place in society. By pursuing these three incompatible goals then, Lydgate failed to achieve any of them.

The value of an integrated self from a self-interested point of view then is that when our various projects, goals and desires fit together in some way then the pursuit of one will not undermine (and often will promote) the interests of the others. However, those who question the value of integrity are unlikely to be fully satisfied with this response. After all, integrity is generally thought to be a *morally* valuable character trait. An adequate account of the value of integrity then will explain why integrity is morally valuable.

I believe that comparing the cases of Sassal and Lydgate allows us to see the moral value of integrity. The starting point of this explanation is to note that it is a common feature of the lives of many people that their view of what they morally ought to do conflicts with their view of what would be best from a self-interested point of view. As H. A. Prichard puts the point:

Any one who, stimulated by education, has come to feel the force of the various obligations in life, at some time or other comes to feel the irksomeness of carrying them out, and to recognise the sacrifice of interest involved.<sup>36</sup>

Prichard's claim is likely to ring true for many people. It is a familiar part of moral experience that sometimes we feel our moral views pulling us to perform an act that will require some form of sacrifice on our part. For most people then, their moral goals are, to some extent, in conflict with their self-interested goals.

This conflict between self-interested and moral goals is one we can find in the lives of both Sassal and Lydgate. For Sassal this occurred in the realization that his aspiration to live up to the ideal of Conrad's master mariners was in conflict with his moral aim to help his patients. For Lydgate this occurs when his moral aims to be a good doctor and to push forward medical science conflict with his self-interested desire to occupy an elevated place in society. Their subsequent responses to this conflict tells us a great deal about the moral value of integrity.

By integrating the conflicting aspects of his self, Sassal was able to reduce the gap between his moral and non-moral goals. This made him someone more likely to

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<sup>36</sup> Harold Arthur Prichard, "Does moral philosophy rest on a mistake?", *Mind* Vol. 21 (1912), p. 21.

act in line with his moral judgements. The reason for this is that compared to most people who face a conflict between pursuing their moral goals and pursuing their self-interested goals, the difference between Sassal's moral goals and self-interested goals is harder to distinguish. It is for this reason that Berger says of Sassal that, "being 'a good doctor' answers some of his own needs."<sup>37</sup> While a typical doctor might want to find out about his patients or about the latest developments in medical research her self-interested desires may well lead her to spend her time in other ways. For Sassal, both his self-interested goals and his moral goals will be pushing him to act in this way. With Sassal, then, there is no need to worry about how the internal conflict between moral and non-moral goals will be resolved. The lack of such a conflict makes such concern unnecessary. For Lydgate, on the other hand, his failure to reconcile his various ambitions, desires and values mean that this conflict does not disappear. In fact, Lydgate's failure to reconcile the various aspects of himself leads to an ever widening divide between his moral and non-moral goals; the pursuit of one having ever worsening implications for the pursuit of the other.

This is why an integrated self is morally valuable. Those who manage to reconcile the various aspects of their self will have reduced the risk of the all too common conflict between doing what is morally best and doing what is best from the point of view of self-interest.<sup>38</sup> For those who, like Sassal, manage to achieve an integrated self there is likely to be little or no conflict between promoting their moral goals and promoting their self-interested goals. Such people will not feel the temptation to pursue their self-interested goals at the expense of their moral goals because there will be no conflict between the two. Those with an integrated self, then, will be more strongly disposed to perform the right act, as the pursuit of one will not undermine the pursuit of the other. Of course, the fact that someone is tempted to act against her moral judgement does not guarantee that she will do so. A strong-willed person may be able to resist such temptation. Nevertheless it seems reasonable to think that the presence of such temptation and a desire to act against her moral judgement increases the likelihood that the agent will act contrary to her moral judgement.

Up to now we have been talking in idealized terms. It seems fair to say that a complete reconciliation of one's moral goals and one's self-interested goals is unlikely. The point though can be made just as well in terms of degrees. Someone who has a *more* integrated self, whose various aims, goals and desires fit together more coherently, will experience *less* conflict between their moral and self-interested goals than someone with a less integrated self. As a result, they will be less likely to be tempted to pursue their self-interested goals at the expense of their moral goals. They will then be more likely to perform actions that are in line with their moral views.

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<sup>37</sup> Berger, *op. cit.* p. 88.

<sup>38</sup> I have discussed this integration in previous work. I have argued that it is also evidence of moral depth. See Alfred Archer and Michael Ridge "The Heroism Paradox: Another Paradox of Supererogation," *Philosophical Studies* Vol. 172 (2015). I have also argued that it should be seen as a paradigmatic feature of moral sainthood. See Alfred Archer "Evil and Moral Detachment: Further Reflections on The Mirror Thesis," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* Vol. 24 No. 2 (2016).

At this point we might reasonably think that too much is being rested on the two literary examples we started with. Perhaps in these particular cases a more integrated self led to moral improvement, but why think that this would apply generally? The answer is that this claim is backed up by recent psychological research on moral exemplars. In a study of moral exemplars, twenty-five recipients of national awards for volunteerism, Frimer et al. found that exemplars were significantly more likely than the comparison group to have integrated their personal ambitions with their moral convictions. After ruling out various alternative explanations, the researchers concluded that, “These results are consistent with the claim that moral exemplars have achieved enlightened self-interest, whereby they best advance their own interests by advancing the interests of others.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Anne Colby and William Damon conducted a study of moral exemplars selected by a nomination process involving “twenty-two moral philosophers, theologians, ethicists, historians and social scientists.”<sup>40</sup> Their study led to the following conclusion:

All these men and women have vigorously pursued their individual and moral goals simultaneously, viewing them in fact as one and the same. The exemplars have done so without devaluing their own personal goals. Nor do they disregard their own fulfilment or self-development – nor, broadly construed, their own self-interests. They do not seek martyrdom. Rather than denying the self, they define it with a moral center. They seamlessly integrate their commitments with their personal concern, so that the fulfilment of the one implies the fulfilment of the other.<sup>41</sup>

Again the message is clear, a core part of what enables moral exemplars to dedicate their lives to moral causes is that they have integrated their moral and non-moral goals so that they are no longer in conflict.

Further support for my account of the value of integrity can be found by looking at the other end of the moral spectrum, to the morally vicious. In his psychological study of the Nazi doctors who killed and tortured prisoners of concentration camps, Robert Lifton claims the following:

The key to understanding how Nazi doctors came to do the work of Auschwitz is the psychological principle I call “doubling”: the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self. An Auschwitz doctor could through doubling not only kill and contribute to killing but

<sup>39</sup> Jeremy A. Frimer, Lawrence J. Walker, W. L. Dunlop, B. H. Lee & A. Riches “The Integration of Agency and Communion In Moral Personality: Evidence of Enlightened Self-interest,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol. 101 No.1 (2011), p. 160. For further psychological evidence for this claim see Jeremy A. Frimer, and Lawrence J. Walker. “Reconciling the self and morality: An empirical model of moral centrality development,” *Developmental Psychology* Vol. 45 No.6 (2009) and Jeremy A. Frimer, L. J. Walker, B. H. Lee, A. Riches & W. L. Dunlop (2012). “Hierarchical integration of agency and communion: A study of influential moral figures,” *Journal of Personality* Vol. 80 No.4 (2012).

<sup>40</sup> Anne Colby and William Damon *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 313.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid* p. 300.

organize silently, on behalf of that evil project, an entire self-structure (or self process) encompassing virtually all aspects of his behavior.<sup>42</sup>

Lifton goes on to explain how this process works:

The way in which doubling allowed Nazi doctors to avoid guilt was not by the elimination of conscience but by what can be called the *transfer of conscience*. The requirements of conscience were transferred to the Auschwitz self, which placed it within its own criteria for good (duty, loyalty to group, “improving” Auschwitz conditions, etc.), thereby freeing the original self from responsibility for actions there.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, Abram De Swaan, describes claims that the perpetrators of genocide, “compartmentalized their murderous self from their civil self.”<sup>44</sup> What this tells us is that a process of *disintegration*, where different parts of the self are radically divided, appears to have played an important role in enabling these doctors to perform these horrendous acts. The moral views of the Nazi doctors were so radically at odds with what they viewed as being in their self-interest that only by radically detaching their ordinary moral selves could they manage to carry out their work. This gives us further reason to accept the claim that an integrated self is morally valuable. Not only do moral exemplars tend to possess an integrated self, where their moral and non-moral goals, aims and desires fit together into a coherent whole, but a disintegration of the self appears to be one way in which morally vicious people become capable of performing evil acts. Moreover the lack of integration appears to be playing a crucial role in enabling some morally vicious people to perform morally abhorrent acts. The division of the murderous self from the civil self prevents the murderous self from facing the usual self-sanctioning moral reactions such as guilt and self-blame. This makes it easier to continue to engage in such appalling behavior.

In this section I have argued that the stories of Sassal and Lydgate have an important lesson to teach us about the value of integrity. I have argued that possessing an integrated self not only promotes an agent’s self-interest but is also morally valuable, as it makes the agent more reliable at acting in line with her moral judgements.

## 4 Objections and Responses

One objection to my account of the value of an integrated self is raised by Cheshire Calhoun. She argues that The Integrated Self view of integrity is incompatible with, “the value of conceptualizing oneself as a duplicitous or multiplicitous being whose identity is differently constituted in different cultural worlds” or meaning

<sup>42</sup> R. J. Lifton *The Nazi Doctors: a Study of the Psychology of Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 418.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid* p. 421.

<sup>44</sup> Abram De Swaan *Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 244.

systems.”<sup>45</sup> Calhoun appeals to the work of Maria Lugones who stresses the value of conceptualizing oneself in this way for those facing multiple oppressions.<sup>46</sup> Lugones explains this value in relation to her own experience as both a Latina within Hispanic culture and a lesbian. In order to stand up to the oppression of Hispanic culture, Lugones must affirm her Latina identity. Similarly, in order to stand up to homophobic oppression Lugones must affirm her identity as a lesbian. This creates a problem, though, as there is no unified identity of a Latina lesbian available to her. According to Lugones, lesbianism is an abomination in Hispanic culture, while Hispanic values and ways of living are marginalized in the lesbian community. As a result, there is no unified conceptual identity available to her. As Lugones puts the point:

I do not know whether the two possibilities can ever be integrated so that I can become, at least in these respects, a unitary being. I don't even know whether that would be desirable. But it seems clear to me that each possibility need not exclude the other so long as I am not a unitary but a multiplicitous being.<sup>47</sup>

In order to maintain her identity and make a stand against oppression, Lugones claims she needs to inhabit both identities, despite their conflicting value systems. This raises a problem for my account of the value of an integrated self, as it appears that in this case there is value in *not* forming a fully coherent, integrated self. The problem, as Calhoun identifies it is that The Integrated Self View, “reduces integrity to volitional unity,”<sup>48</sup> and volitional unity is not always preferable to ambivalence, conflict or multiplicity.

However, we can avoid this objection by making an important distinction between an *integrated* self and a *unified* self. In the literature on The Integrated Self so far it has widely been assumed that an integrated self means a unified self. Calhoun for example, criticizes this view by claiming it, “reduces integrity to volitional unity.”<sup>49</sup> To a certain extent this makes sense. A unified self seems like a paradigm instance of an integrated self. Nevertheless, there is an important distinction to be drawn between an integrated self and a unified self. A unified self is one in which all the various aspects of the self are combined into one. In the case of Maria Lugones that was discussed in Section 3, this would involve either uniting her Latina identity and her lesbian identity into that of the Latina Lesbian or abandoning one or the other of these identities. Clearly then a unified self would be an integrated self, as all the various parts of the self have been joined together to form a coherent whole. That does not mean, though, that an integrated self must be a united self.

Take for example the case of an integrated society. One way in which a society could count as integrated is if every member of the society shares the same goals and are united to one common cause. However, it is also possible for an integrated

<sup>45</sup> Calhoun op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>46</sup> María Lugones 'Review: Hispaneando y Lesbiando: On Sarah Hoagland's "Lesbian Ethics,"' *Hypatia* Vol. 5 No.3 (1990), pp. 138–146.

<sup>47</sup> Calhoun op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid p. 241.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid p. 241.

society to include a variety of competing conceptions of the good, where different groups are not united behind a shared vision of how society should operate. What is required for this society to be integrated is that these different groups are involved in the decision making process, that each is willing to coexist peacefully with each other and that no group faces social exclusion. Of course much more can be said on this topic but for my purposes it is enough to note that integration need not imply unity.

Applying this thought to the case of Lugones, it is worth noting, as Victoria Davion does, that though Lugones' two selves are not, "integrated in the sense of being unitary, these two selves are connected."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, as Lugones herself points out, "Because the selves can connect, each can critique the other and avoid the demoralization of self-betrayal."<sup>51</sup> This is important as, according to Davion this shows us how a multiplicitous being can have integrity. In Davion's words, "The multiplicitous being has integrity if she can somehow keep a connection between her two selves alive, as long as one can critique the other."<sup>52</sup> What is important for integrity then is not that the agent reduces her multiplicitous being into one unified self but rather that she connects these two conflicting selves and reflects critically on the relationship between the two. Lugones can count as having integrity on this view as she claims that, "Each one of these two selves understands the other." However, Lugones also points out that this process will not be an easy one and, "requires significant work in the 'borderlands'."<sup>53</sup> Of course there will be cases where two incompatible identities are too much at odds with each other to be integrated. Someone with two competing identities that seek to undermine the fundamental goals of the other could not be described as possessing an integrated self. However, someone possessing competing ideals that are brought into dialogue with each other can count as possessing an integrated self. The value I have been claiming for an integrated self is compatible then with the claim that there can be value in conceiving oneself as a multiplicitous being.

Moreover, this process of bringing competing ideals into contact with each other may be a crucial first step to moving towards a united self. The example of Sassall highlights this point well. His period of self-examination was one in which he reexamined his ideal of the master mariner in the light of his desire to be a good doctor and his developing thoughts about what this would involve in his particular context. Examining this ideal in the light of his other ideals led to Sassall deciding that it was not an appropriate one for a doctor in his position. This led him to find a new ideal, one that did not conflict with his role of the appropriate behavior for a doctor in his position. That is not to say that this kind of reconciliation will be possible in all cases. However, the process of bringing one's conflicting desires and ideals into contact with one another may an important first step to bring about such a reconciliation. The value of bringing one's competing desires and ideals into contact

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<sup>50</sup> Victoria Davion "Integrity and Radical Change," In Claudia Card (Ed.) *Feminist Ethics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), p. 189.

<sup>51</sup> Lugones op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> Davion op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>53</sup> Lugones op. cit., p. 145.

with one another is further highlighted by the case of Lydgate. Lydgate fails to subject his individual desires to be a good doctor, make scientific discoveries and to occupy an elevated place in society to scrutiny in light of the others. If he had done he may have realized that the particular circumstances he faced meant that the last two goals were undermining his attempt to be a good doctor. The point is also well highlighted by the case of the Nazi Doctors and perpetrators of genocide. Through a process of compartmentalization they have brought about a state of affairs where their actions in certain parts of their lives are segregated from their ordinary moral reactions. This is a crucial part of what enabled many to continue to be involved in such horrendous acts. We can see from all these examples that bringing the various parts of one's self into contact with each other and questioning each in the light of the other can play an important role in making people act more reliably in line with their moral judgements. There is no need then to equate integration with unity in order for my claim about the value of an integrated self to be accepted.

The next objection that might be raised against my account of the moral value of integrity is that it makes integrity turn out to be a 'morally dangerous' character trait. This is an objection that Greg Scherkoske raises against several different accounts of integrity. While Scherkoske does not consider a view of exactly the kind I am defending, his objection to 'coherence' accounts of integrity could also be raised against my view.<sup>54</sup> Scherkoske argues that these views are compatible with the agent having repugnant moral views. This is equally true of my account. An agent who has successfully integrated her moral and non-moral goals, aims and desires may have repugnant moral views. There does not, after all, appear to be anything incoherent about the possibility of a sincere, committed Nazi with an integrated self. Such a person would see no clash between her self-interest and her moral views. However, her moral views endorse ethnic cleansing, Aryan supremacy and enforced eugenics. The first problem this example raises is that it is not clear why an integrated self would be morally valuable here. The bigger problem, though, is that it seems reasonable to think that an integrated self would be morally *bad* in this case. If an integrated self is a characteristic that makes someone act more reliably on their moral views then the committed Nazi will more reliably act in ways to promote Aryan supremacy. This is a problem for the account of the value of an integrated self outlined in the previous section, as it is shown to be entirely contingent on the moral views of the self in question.

It is true that there will be some people for whom acting in line with their moral judgements would lead to them becoming morally worse. However, for most people with imperfect but reasonable moral views, possessing an integrated self is likely to make them morally better people. For people with reasonable moral views, like Sassal and Lydgate, the reconciliation of their moral goals, aims and desires with their self-interested ones is likely to lead to moral improvement. It may well make the difference between being a moral good person and being a morally bad person.

<sup>54</sup> The coherence account Scherkoske considers is one according to which the person of integrity "maintains unswerving fidelity to the second-order 'metacommitment' of making her first-order values, principles or commitments coherent." *op. cit.*, p. 49. Nothing in my account of the value of an integrated self suggests that the agent should be loyal to this metacommitment. The person with an integrated self may have achieved this integration without such a commitment.

Alternatively, it may make the difference between being a morally decent person and being a moral exemplar. That is where the value in an integrated self lies. The claim that an integrated self may make someone with unreasonable moral views morally worse does not show my attempt to pinpoint the value of an integrated self to be mistaken; it simply highlights the modesty of the claim I am making.

However, a related problem remains. We might worry that it would be possible to resolve a conflict between one's moral goals and one's self-interested goals by seeking to subordinate our moral goals to our non-moral goals. This would lead to a self that is free from conflict between morality and self-interest but clearly would not count as morally valuable. This, we might think, shows that there is nothing inherently valuable about an integrated self.

Again though, this worry becomes less pressing if we take the value of an integrated self is to be found in helping morally decent people become more virtuous. The morally decent person will not contemplate achieving an integrated self through eradicating moral concern from their character. She may, though, consider reconciling her moral and self-interested goals more closely. If she does so, then, if we accept what I have claimed in this paper, she is likely to become a morally better person. For morally decent people, then, an integrated self will be likely to lead to moral improvement. This is a less exciting than the claim that an integrated self is *always* valuable. Nevertheless, this claim is able to tell us why we should value an integrated self.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper I have provided an account of the value of an integrated self. I argued through close reference to two examples from literature that an integrated self is valuable as it makes people more likely to act in line with their moral views. For morally decent people, developing an integrated self will reduce the risk of the all too common conflict between morality and self-interest. As a result they will more reliably act in line with their moral views. I finished by responding to objections that might be raised against my argument.

We might think that this gives us good reason to think that The Integrated Self View of the virtue of integrity is the one we should accept. However, I think there is good reason to be cautious here. As I mentioned in the introduction, in order to fully vindicate the thought that integrity is a virtue we would need to respond to the worry that integrity does not have a characteristic thought or motivation. Nothing I have said here provides any response to this worry. In addition, all I have sought to do in this paper is respond to one criticism that is commonly raised against The Integrated Self View. Defending this view against this criticism tells us little about the comparative merits of the different views.

However, despite the modesty of what I have attempted to show in relation to the philosophical debate about the nature of integrity, I think the conclusion of this paper should be of more general interest both to moral philosophers and more generally to moral agents. A characteristic feature of our moral lives is that our moral goals often conflict with our self-interested goals. If the view I have defended

is correct then by integrating our moral and self-interested concerns we can find a way to reduce this conflict that will not only make us less conflicted but also make us morally better people.<sup>55</sup>

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