INTEGRITY

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The aim of this paper is to tie together and explain the various elements of the extremely complex concept of integrity. Its complexity is so great that I cannot do justice to it; to do so would require at least a much more detailed working out of individual points, where these touch on central problems in both Moral Philosophy and the Philosophy of Mind. My account will therefore be somewhat schematic but will catch, I hope, what is the essence of integrity.

There are different ways of characterizing the person of integrity. Such a person is usually thought of as being honest, upright and loyal. Sometimes this is understood simply in terms of certain types of behaviour which conform to the socially accepted code of morality: he keeps his promises, he does not cheat at cards or in business; he does not tell lies. Sometimes it is thought that what matters is not so much adherence to an accepted code, but rather that the person of integrity should do what he himself thinks right, regardless of whether this coincides with the more conventional view. He will be true to the standards he has come to accept, stick to the principles he has evolved. The focus of his honesty and loyalty will be these principles themselves, and how he behaves in a social context will depend on their nature. We may dislike his principles, but we admire him at least for having the courage of his convictions. While on the first interpretation 'integrity' appears to be a label for a selected set of moral virtues, on the second interpretation it seems rather a label for a special application of these virtues, viz. honesty about and loyalty to one's own principles.

But the notion of integrity may also be approached not by picking out such moral qualities as are normally associated with it, but by thinking of the person possessing integrity as being the person who 'keeps his inmost self intact', whose life is 'of a piece', whose self is whole and integrated. My claim is that it is this view

of integrity which is the fundamental one. The person of integrity keeps his self intact, and the person who lacks integrity is corrupt in the sense that his self is disintegrated. An account of integrity so interpreted will explain the somewhat elusive role it plays in our moral discourse, and will account for the different sorts of demands we make on the person of integrity. It will explain, among other things, why such a person will by and large possess the moral qualities cited earlier. The lack of such qualities can, on the whole, be taken as showing lack of integrity. On the other hand, the possession of them is not enough for possession of integrity. When we ascribe integrity to him who behaves in socially acceptable ways, or to him who sticks to his principles however adverse the circumstances, then we do so on the assumption that he who behaves in these sorts of ways is he who keeps his self intact. To some considerable extent this must remain an assumption, for whatever content may be given to the notion of keeping one's self intact, it is unlikely to yield conditions which are sufficiently accessible grounds for the ascription of integrity.

I. Lack of Integrity. I shall start with what I take to be an intuitively acceptable general characterization: the person possessing integrity is true to his commitments. The ambiguity of 'his commitment' reflects the different approaches to integrity outlined earlier. Where this is interpreted as referring not to what conventionally might count as his commitment but to what the agent is supposed to feel himself committed to, the proposal is misleading. It suggests that the person of integrity must fulfil two independent conditions: he must have commitments, and he must be true to them. But these are not independent of one another, for to be committed at all requires at least to some extent being true to one's commitments. It follows that 'being true to' does not in this case function as an ordinary relation between a person and his commitments, and that an elucidation of it cannot be divorced from an explanation of 'being committed to'. Given the nature of integrity such difficulties are inherent in any general characterization. I shall not attempt to meet them head on, but consider rather different types of lack of integrity suggested by my characterization.

1. A person cannot be committed to some project or way of life if he only pretends to others that he is so committed. The hypo-

crite pretends to live by certain standards when in fact he does not. In the clearest case he consciously and calculatingly exploits for his own ends the fact that certain types of behaviour are seen by others as constituting or implying certain commitments and that therefore he will be seen by others to be acting as he does because he is so committed. But his reason for acting on relevant occasions is not that doing such-and-such will bring about the state of affairs required by his commitment; it is that this is how the person so committed would act on this occasion. As what matters to him is how he appears to others he will act on this reason only when he thinks doing so necessary for making the appropriate impression.

2. A person cannot be committed to some project if he only says so, even if he is not insincere in saying so. He is the shallowly sincere.[1] He may be the person whose undertakings are prompted by impulse and momentary enthusiasm, but are as quickly forgotten. Or he may be the person who believes himself to be uttering his sincere convictions although at other times and in different company he with equal sincerity utters 'convictions' which are quite different and incompatible with the earlier ones. He takes on the colour of his surroundings. To be committed to some view or project does not of course mean that one must inflexibly and forever hold just this view or pursue just this aim. It would be a grave flaw in any account of integrity if it implied that a person of integrity is incapable of change and development. But although he can of course come to see that he has been misguided, that he has attached too much importance to this and too little to that, he cannot change his commitments just when he feels so inclined. He must see a reason for changing them, otherwise he does not count as having been committed at all. Unlike the hypocrite, the shallowly sincere occasionally acts on the sorts of reasons required for being committed to some project, but he does not act on them with any consistency, and where he does not act on them he does not do so for sufficient reason. Again unlike the hypocrite, he is not insincere. But given this, he shows a total lack of self-knowledge: the evidence that he will not behave as in a moment of spontaneous sympathy he thinks he will, or the evidence that his deepest convictions are not what at the time he presents them as being, is there for all to see. But he is blind to this evidence.

3. Neither the hypocrite nor the shallowly sincere is true to his commitments because neither can be said to be relevantly committed at all. By contrast, it might be said of the weak-willed that although he has commitments he is not always true to them. He lets others manipulate him into positions in which he does not really want to be, and finds himself accepting as true what he knows or suspects he really wants to reject. He does not set out to deceive, it merely so happens that he deceives. He is the moral coward who does not act in accordance with his commitments when it is difficult for him to do so. On those occasions he acts on reasons which in his own view are insufficient reasons for acting; in his own view he has overriding reasons for acting otherwise. Like the shallowly sincere he does not act on the required sorts of reasons consistently enough; unlike him, he is aware of his failure.

4. A person is not committed to some project if he self-deceptively takes himself to be so committed. The case of self-deception is the most important and indeed fundamental case of lack of integrity: it combines the features of the other cases, and it shows more clearly than they do the interrelation between these features. It is therefore worthwhile to give this case some detailed attention. I start with an example of self-deception taken from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

Mr Casaubon believes, or appears to believe, that scholarship and all this implies is of great value, and his life is, or appears to be, built around this value. He appears to be a man wholly committed to scholarship, and so indeed he is seen by his neighbours. As he appears to his neighbours so Mr Casaubon appears to himself, he sees himself as the truly devoted scholar. But in order to maintain this identification he has to take certain steps: he isolates himself from other scholars in his field both physically and in the sense that he does not make himself acquainted with their work. He refuses to learn German and so lets himself remain ignorant of work already done in this field. He looks for constant support in keeping his self-image going: his marriage to Dorothea is to serve just this purpose. In short, Mr Casaubon quite systematically takes steps which are to prevent him from ever having to abolish this image of himself and the life he leads.

If Mr Casaubon is to be committed to a scholarly life then

this should be reflected in his reasons for acting (on the relevant occasions). They should very roughly be of the sort that doing so-and-so will in some way contribute towards the production of a work of scholarship. But this is only what he takes them to be, or what he has managed to persuade himself they are. The reasons which actually cause him to act in the way he does are quite otherwise, and are not consistent with the assumption that he is committed to the scholarly life. Acting on reasons related to being scholarly does not produce the type of behaviour displayed by him. From his behaviour we must understand him to mean by 'being scholarly': working away in isolation and ignoring relevant evidence. But 'being scholarly' means nothing of the kind, and Mr Casaubon himself would of course not offer this description. His dealing with the value is therefore corrupt. He thinks of himself as being committed to it, but in his handling what he values has ceased to be what he believes himself to be committed to.

Mr Casaubon is no doubt true to his commitments in a conventional sense. It is unthinkable that he would cheat his tradesmen or break his promises. In this respect he behaves towards others as a man of integrity is expected to behave. Nevertheless, he deceives others. The deception of others is a necessary consequence of his self-deception: he identifies with a certain type of person, and it must be as this type of person that he presents himself in a social context. Otherwise he could hardly be said to think of himself as that sort of person. But as this identification is a false identification he must misrepresent himself to others and so deceive them about what he is really like. I take Mr Casaubon to represent at any rate the central case of self-deception. Like all the other characters who are not true to their commitments he deceives others; like the shallowly sincere he is blind to relevant evidence, and like the weak-willed he acts on reasons which, given what he believes to be his commitment, he himself would regard as insufficient reasons for action were he to think clearly about the matter. In the self-deceived all these characteristics are interdependent, and their interdependence is not fortuitous. They are all, I shall suggest, the consequence of the self's disintegration.

II. The Possession of Integrity. If we now turn from the lack

to the possession of integrity then the discussion of the last section seems to have got us little further. Of course, the person of integrity will not behave in the ways outlined, but it would be rash to deduce from this that therefore he will always behave in certain other ways, always tell the truth, keep his promises etc. Such a move would neither yield a characterization of the person of integrity which is entirely correct, nor would it be at all explanatory of the demands we in fact make of such a person. It would leave us where we started. However, the points arising from the last section provide us at least with a new beginning: the person of integrity will be rational in a number of related ways. He will not ignore relevant evidence, he will be consistent in his behaviour, he will not act on reasons which, given the circumstances, are insufficient reasons for action.

My claim is that the person possessing integrity is the person who keeps his self intact. The first condition for doing so is that he be rational in the ways outlined. But this gives us no more than the bare bones of the notion; in our ascriptions of integrity we refer to more than just some essence of rationality. At the very least we want to say that the person of integrity is not inconsistent in ways that somehow matter.

The inconsistencies we think important are connected, in one way or another, with a person's identity. Mr Casaubon illustrates one such link: Mr Casaubon does not keep his self intact. He identifies and yet does not identify with a certain type of person. One identification is governed by wishful thinking, the other emerges in his behaviour and reactions. His behaviour is not that of a scholar, yet it is prompted by his thinking himself a scholar. The trouble with Mr Casaubon is not that he does not behave as scholars do. Many people don't and are none the worse for that. Rather, his behaviour is distorted scholar-behaviour. It is precisely because in his wishful thought he identifies himself as he does that his identity as revealed in his behaviour is what it is, and is inconsistent with what in his wishful thought he identifies himself with. The reasons on which in fact he acts are therefore not the kinds of reasons he can accept while he clings to the wishful picture of himself. His own view of his behaviour on relevant occasions must then be distorted and he will be incapable of properly assessing available evidence. He is unable

to do so because what would then be revealed would totally undermine what he wishfully clings to.

We think of this type of inconsistency as crippling the agent and the life he leads. Much of his energy will be devoted to supporting an identification which must by the very nature of the case be frustrated anyway. An agent who leads a full and non-defective life, we think, will not thus waste his opportunities and spoil all chances of self-development.

To keep one's self intact does then at least entail that one must be free of the specific kind of inconsistency just discussed. And there are further conditions related to this one which will serve to make the notion of a self which is intact somewhat more precise. One of these is the condition that a person who keeps his self intact will be under 'due' influence of his past. The phrase is Richard Wollheim's and the point relies on his discussion of persons and their lives.[2] The argument behind this condition rests on the plausible assumption that prominent among the criteria for personal identity are memory conditions. In particular, that we have experiential memory is essential to being a person at all. Not only should we without such memory lack a sense of our own identity altogether; it also contributes towards the self as it is and will be, for memories affect a person's present thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Conversely, the self has not remained static over time, and the person's way of now remembering an earlier experience will contribute to the memory something of the present self. There is thus a two-way process which links different experiences to each other and because of which they are all one person's experiences and constitute his life.

There are a number of ways in which this two-way process may go wrong, and a number of ways, therefore, in which the unity of the person's life may to a greater or lesser extent be interfered with. It could be the case, for example, that one particular memory resists modification over time and continues to flourish at the expense of other memories and of the impact of present experience. The person concerned would then be obsessed by this memory. Or a memory of some important event may be very short-lived and not be allowed to affect present experiences at all. In one case the present self does not acknowledge a present and future self whose experiences go beyond that of the past self, in the other it refuses to acknowledge the past self that had

certain experiences. Either way the person concerned will not be under due influence of his past.

The present condition for keeping one's self intact emphasizes the fact that we allow the same person to change and develop over time. It therefore does not primarily apply to cases like that of Mr Casaubon, who represents a quite static picture of lack of integrity. The appropriate illustration is rather a case of loss of integrity: Chaucer's Criseyde, insofar as she is self-deceived, shares Casaubon's basic inconsistencies, but in her case this involves suppression of memories. Criseyde sees herself as bound to Troilus, she will be faithful to him forever, it is more likely, she thinks, that every rock on earth shall break apart than that she should forget him. But once she has joined the Greeks her fidelity is short-lived and she accepts Diomede as her lover. However, she tries to save the situation by assuring herself that 'to Diomede at least I will be true.'[3] But Criseyde can play this game only by being very selective about her past. In one sense she is still in the grip of it, for she thinks of herself still as Criseyde the faithful, in spite of the evidence against this. But in doing so she also has to deny the past, for she has to slur over the fact that she has been unfaithful, and this means that she has to forget her life with Troilus. She has to do this if she is to convince herself that she is really committed to the value of fidelity, for she cannot be committed to *this* value if she remains faithful to one man only while it is easy to do so. She therefore has to keep her experiences in different compartments and blot out the memory of one set. Her life is then not of a piece, and her self is not integrated.

A further condition for keeping one's self intact can be extracted when we consider that a person's commitments may well have far-reaching implications in different areas of his life, so that there is also this dimension in which his life may be of a piece or, alternatively, fall apart. An example used by Bernard Williams in a similar context illustrates this case.[4] George is a chemist who can find no job other than one which involves him in research relating to chemical and biological warfare. He is poor and has family responsibilities. He is also strongly opposed to biological warfare. If George under these circumstances were to accept the job his life would fall apart. His opposition to biological warfare cannot possibly be an isolated commitment, it

must be related to more general views about how to treat people, and such views will find expression in other areas of his life, e.g. in the upbringing of his children. But if so then, should he accept the job, he will either be unable to express what he believes consistently in all areas of his life, or he will maintain consistency by shaping his views to fit the implications of being engaged in research into biological warfare. It is difficult to see how he could maintain either course without engaging in some form of self-deception.

The self-deceived does not keep his self intact: nor do the three other characters introduced in the last section. The shallowly sincere is quite obviously very similar to the self-deceived. The weak-willed will under certain circumstances deny the implications of his commitments so that there will be inconsistency between different aspects of his life. The same is true of the hypocrite. In his case, as in that of the self-deceived, we have two inconsistent identifications one of which is expressed in past or present behaviour and is not acknowledged by the agent.[5] Lack of self-integration is therefore at least a common feature of the most typical instances of lack of integrity.

III. Integrity and Moral Values. The account I have given of 'keeping one's self intact' explains the rather peculiar status allotted to integrity. We are inclined to think of possession of integrity as being possession of a virtue, but it is quite unlike possessing any of the other virtues that come to mind, like e.g. courage or generosity. One indication of this is that only in the case of integrity can ascription of it not be expressed in adjectival form. Those who have generosity are generous, those who have courage are brave, but what are those who possess integrity? On my account the gap would appropriately be filled by 'is integrated' or 'is intact', but in contrast to 'he is brave' etc. this would convey no specific information about the agent and would be of no practical use. This lack of informativeness reflects the fact that from the conditions to be fulfilled by the person who keeps himself intact nothing whatever can be deduced about any particular kind of behaviour on the part of that person. Bernard Williams has pointed out that integrity does not generate its own motive,[6] and it is true that when a person acts with integrity he cannot be said to act in order to such-and-such, as e.g. the

generous person may be said to give in order to help others. If integrity is a moral virtue at all then it is a curiously second-order virtue as it seems to involve possessing a set of other virtues, like honesty and trustworthiness. On my account 'integrity' does indeed refer to something other and beyond the ordinary virtues, but something which we cannot catch directly and which we therefore hope to get hold of through the virtues mentioned. We think of it as a virtue, perhaps, because we assume that being virtuous is a consequence of possessing integrity.

But while the proposal that to have integrity is to keep one's self intact has the advantage of explaining the peculiar nature of integrity, it at the same time seems to have the defect that it fails to account for our thinking of it as some sort of moral quality. We are reluctant at least to think of the wholly wicked as candidates for integrity. But nothing I have said so far shows any incompatibility between the person who keeps his self intact and the immoral. Macbeth, for example, may well be thought to have a claim to integrity. He after all pursues his aim consistently and single-mindedly enough, and so is, perhaps, wholly integrated. And if so, then this may be a consequence of my account which is counter-intuitive.

I hope to show in the remainder of this paper that, on the contrary, my view of integrity fits and explains many of our intuitions and the major demands we make on the person of integrity. In particular, nothing forces us to think of a Macbeth type character as possessing integrity, for although various types of inconsistency rule out integrity, the kind of consistency of behaviour he displays is not sufficient for its ascription. On the other hand, I cannot show that ruthless pursuing of one's own ends is incompatible with integrity. We like to think that the whole or integrated person is also the wholly good person, but to some extent at least this thought remains an assumption.[7]

A central demand in our ascriptions of integrity seems to be that the person of integrity be honest in various ways, and that deception of others is sufficient for the lack of it. We do, however, seem to allow quite systematic pieces of deception without regarding the deceiver as a hypocrite. Beethoven's Leonora, for example, finds herself involved in quite serious deception of people who treat her as a friend. But we should cite her nonetheless as a case of integrity rather than the lack of it. We should

do so because we take her to be fulfilling demands which are more basic to integrity than the demand not to deceive.

1. Leonora does not of course deceive lightly, she thinks she does so for a sufficient reason: to see justice done, to have her husband freed. But that she herself should think the reason sufficient is not enough; we should be much more reluctant to regard someone as having integrity if he did so for his own gain, irrespective of whether he regards his reasons as sufficient. We think of Leonora that she is right in some objective sense, but doubt this in the case of the egoist. We demand of a person of integrity that he get his values right. This becomes plain whenever integrity is publicly discussed, e.g. when there is a major spy revelation. The sentiment often expressed on such occasions is that the spy is in a muddle about his values, that he just cannot be right if for instance he thinks that loyalty to friends is more important than loyalty to one's country. The concern is not just that the spy is simply telling a lie about his motives, but is rather that he cannot have got at the truth, whatever he himself may think. 'Getting one's values right' may mean here: there is an objective scale of virtues where 'loyalty to country' occurs in a higher position than 'loyalty to friends', and sometimes of course this is just what the spy's critic has in mind. Similarly, we may think that Leonora is right just because she acts from noble motives and not from selfish ones. This kind of objective appeal to values I do not intend either to justify or to show to be central to the possession of integrity. But implied by this appeal to objectivity is another which is centrally relevant. The spy is thought to be so wrong in his assessment of loyalties because he does not get his values right in the light of the evidence there is. He is thought to refuse to reflect and so to be misguided. The implication of this is that on some level he was not sincere when he thought his action expressed what he valued most, that he was deceiving himself. If only he had been prepared to sort things out he would have seen the error of his ways. Interpreted in this way the demand that a person of integrity must get his values right evidently fits the notion that he keeps his self intact; if he keeps his self intact then he will in this sense get his values right. It is because we take Leonora to be sound in this respect that we allow her possession of integrity. We are inclined to regard acting from altruistic motives a better indica-

tion of not being muddled in this respect than acting from self-interested ones. So indeed it may be, but we have here not enough grounds for excluding *a priori* the possible case of someone who deceives for personal gain and yet does not lose integrity.

2. For Leonora there was no doubt that she had to act as she did although her course of action might involve her in harming others to some extent. It was inconceivable to her that she might stand by and leave her husband to his fate. Such an attitude is typical of the person of integrity: there are certain things he cannot bring himself to do, and certain other things he feels he must do, irrespective of the consequences. It is because of this feature that the charge of self-indulgence is sometimes levelled against him who acts with integrity, for, it is thought, he may not be able to bring himself to do what in fact it would be right to do, or conversely, he may feel himself obliged to engage in what is the more harmful of the alternative courses of action open to him. So integrity comes to be regarded as a specific form of weakness. Even those who wish to defend integrity against this charge occasionally present their case in such a way that they seem to lend it support. Williams, in the context already mentioned, introduces a second case where a man is confronted by a moral dilemma: Jim happens upon a scene of execution. Twenty Indians are about to be shot. They are innocent in the sense that they are randomly selected from among the inhabitants of a rebellious village. Jim is told by the captain in charge that nineteen of the Indians will be released if he, Jim, shoots one of them. It is to be understood, presumably, that Jim is not only opposed to killing in such circumstances, but that he does not think of himself as someone who will ever kill in cold blood. Williams points out that there are differences between this case and that of George discussed earlier, but he seems to regard both as equally relevant to the question of possession and loss of integrity. This seems to me mistaken. Jim's dilemma is different from that of George in that there is no reason to think that he would lose his integrity were he to shoot one of the Indians. The choice here is not between doing what integrity requires and preventing what might be regarded as greater harm, it is not that type of conflict. In showing up the short-comings of the utilitarian position Williams moves to the opposite extreme and over-emphasizes the point that the value of integrity relates to

the idea that 'each of us is specially responsible for what *he* does, rather than for what other people do.' (*op. cit.*, p. 99.) In Jim's case he makes it appear that what Jim is committed to is that *he* should not kill. But this cannot be correct. If it were then perhaps all would be well if he managed to persuade a friend to do the actual shooting, but such a move would be disgraceful as the doing the thing himself would not be. But the difference between doing this and leaving the shooting to the captain is not all that great, and so it is quite understandable that Jim's refusal to shoot should cause unease. This is so not because he self-indulgently cares more for his integrity than for the saving of nineteen lives; it is because one wonders whether in acting as he does he has in fact managed to keep his integrity intact.

Jim's case highlights two points which are relevant to the relation between a person's integrity and how he acts. The first is the familiar problem of how much importance to attach to the distinction between actually doing something and letting it happen from the point of view of the agent's responsibility. In Jim's case, at any rate, there seems to be no escape from responsibility, he is implicated in the Indians' fate, whether he actually pulls the trigger or not. The second point is that Jim's concern cannot be that whatever happens *he* must not soil his hands. If it were, then the charge that the person of integrity is likely to act self-indulgently would be much more serious than in fact it is.[8] If we are to take Jim's dilemma seriously then he must be committed to (roughly) the sanctity of life and if this is the area where his commitment lies then whatever he does in this frightful situation will anyway interfere with his commitment. If he shoots the Indian he may well think that he has done a terrible thing which will leave its stain on him for the rest of his life, but if he does not shoot him he is equally likely to be haunted by the fate of the other nineteen. Jim may conceivably disintegrate in that he may be unable to cope with the feelings of guilt generated by either course of action. But the link between what he does or does not do and this sort of disintegration is a wholly contingent one, depending on how tough he is and the like; and he may in this sense disintegrate whichever alternative he opts for. In both these respects his case differs from that of George.

Yet there is truth in the point that integrity has to do with the relation between a person and his actions. On my account,

the modal terms in 'he has to act in certain ways and cannot act in certain other ways' derive their force from the fact that were the person to act otherwise he would fall apart. If he cannot bring himself to do something, or if he just must do something else, then this implies a commitment on his part which covers much more than merely the particular action he is now concerned with. There is to the 'must' or 'cannot' a background consisting of the various implications of some one commitment or of interrelated commitments. Jim is the sort of person who will not kill, and George the sort of person who will not work for war, and such identifications cannot mean merely that on some one particular occasion they will act in a certain way. Their commitments will rather be constitutive of their view of the world and the life to lead. One implication of this is that he who is so committed will not consider the 'facts' of a situation from a detached and neutral point of view and weigh the consequences of alternative courses of action against each other. He will already see the situation in a certain light, and because he views it in that light certain features will strike him as constituting categorical demands for action or abstention, and other features will not present themselves as possible reasons for action at all.[9] It is therefore true that, as Williams says (*op. cit.*, p. 89), even if from some abstract point of view one state of affairs is better than another, it does not follow that he should regard it as his business to bring it about. It is in this sense that integrity has to do with actions which are peculiarly one's own. This has nothing whatever to do with acting self-indulgently. Jim may or may not be self-indulgent if he refuses to shoot the Indian; if he is, then for just this reason is it doubtful that he has really acted with integrity. George, rather than putting his integrity above the well-being of his family, may on the contrary be particularly concerned with their well-being for he may believe, and with good reason believe, that unless he stands firm his own corruption cannot but spread to his family as well. The self-indulgent man will act *in order to* keep his self intact, and it is hard to see how a person of integrity can act for this reason. As an agent's commitment, 'keeping one's self intact' must be a higher order commitment, for by itself it cannot be a commitment with which the agent could identify; by itself it is totally vacuous. It would therefore occupy a peculiar position *vis-à-vis* his other commit-

ments and be isolated from them. Consequently, it could hardly form part of a consistent perspective on life, and so would conflict with the conditions set out for the integrated self.

3. Earlier I rejected the suggestion that the reason why we think of Leonora as a person of integrity is that she is prompted by other-regarding and noble motives; the reason was rather that because she acted from such motives we assume that she gets her values right in the relevant sense. This seems to leave the link between integrity and morality more tenuous than perhaps it should be, for we tend to think that the wicked cannot be candidates for integrity, that it and moral goodness go together. On my account it does not follow that he who has integrity is necessarily virtuous, if by this is understood that he acts out of consideration for others. On the other hand, it follows that he will lack the defects of confusion and weakness which make a person a burden to himself and others. He will have the admirable quality of moral courage, and because he is consistent, the socially desirable one of reliability. He will also be immune to corruption. He will not be tempted to act in certain ways, because to be tempted implies that certain features of a situation will present themselves to the agent as reasons for action to be weighed against reasons for acting otherwise. But the person who is committed in the way described will not even consider such reasons. It is easy to see how this point leads to the conviction that the person of integrity has his own defence against chaos and so is a person the different aspects of whose life (or soul) are in harmony. And so, perhaps, he is the happy person. Further, the demands of consistency extend over the reasons for action generated by his commitments. If he is committed to freedom or scholarship then this provides him with a reason for bringing freedom or scholarship about, and not just with a reason for seeing to it that *he* is free or becomes a scholar. He cannot be committed to just his own advancement without thinking that others should be similarly committed, for it is hard to see on what grounds he could consistently and without ignoring relevant evidence deny that what in his view is a good for him is also a good for others. He would have to regard self-advancement as a human good and accept the implications of its general practice. Finally, the person of integrity will not deceive others, or can deceive others only for sufficient reason, where

'sufficient reason' is constrained by all the conditions he must fulfil in order to keep his self intact. This rules out at least the more common forms of moral wickedness which consist in deceitfully manipulating others for one's own ends.

The person who keeps his self intact has emerged, I think, as having those qualities on which in our ordinary judgments we base ascriptions of integrity. We expect him to have strength of will and to be honest in various ways; we do not demand that he be generous or charitable. Whether or not he has these latter characteristics will depend on the nature of his commitments. I have not ruled out the possibility that all the conditions I have given may be fulfilled by someone who ruthlessly and without regard for the well-being of others pursues his own aim, even if in doing so he behaves in ways we regard as morally wrong. Not every immoral action need be a sign of the agent's corruption. I am inclined to think, however, that the ruthless egoist will not in fact possess integrity. 'Being truly committed to some project' has no doubt more implications than I have been able to draw out. A person fulfilling the conditions of lack of confusion and lack of self-deception cannot, for instance, be in the grip of some obsession, and the ruthless egoist may well turn out to be just that. And it may be that the person of integrity has further virtues based on features of my characterization which I have not explored. As he will be free from confusion he will get his commitments right, and so he will get right his identity in terms of these commitments. In this sense he can be said to have self-knowledge. And this seems to imply that should the occasion arise he will be capable of self-criticism, and so perhaps he cannot be wholly self-complacent and self-righteous. If this is true then it may well be that this line of investigation will yield yet further constraints on the person possessing integrity.

NOTES

[1] The term is Fingarette's, *Self-Deception* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 51–2.

[2] "On Persons and Their Lives" in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. A. Oksenberg Rorty (University of California Press, 1980), sections v and vii.

See also "Memory, Experiential Memory and Personal Identity", in *Perception and Identity, Essays presented to A. J. Ayer*, ed. G. F. Macdonald, (Macmillan, 1979), sections IX and X.

[3] *Troilus and Criseyde*. Translated by Nevil Coghill (Penguin Classics 1977), Book V, 153.

[4] J. J. C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism For and Against* (Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 89. Williams uses the case to make a different point.

[5] They differ of course in the sense in which they disown this identity. The hypocrite who deliberately presents a certain persona to the world is not prevented by wishful thought from acknowledging it. It is rather that while on the one hand he takes responsibility for his behaviour in that he wants to be given credit for being the person he presents himself as being, on the other he refuses to accept this behaviour as expressing what he really is. But this difference does not alter the similarity of their falling apart.

[6] In "Utilitarianism and Self-Indulgence". *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Fourth Series, ed. H. D. Lewis (Allen & Unwin, 1976), p. 316.

[7] This is not to say that nothing more can be done in this area. But the types of arguments needed here go beyond the scope of this paper. For the kind of enquiry I have in mind see Richard Wollheim's "The Good Self and the Bad Self", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1975.

[8] This point is covered by Williams' own discussion of self-indulgence in the later paper: "Utilitarianism and Self-Indulgence".

[9] See John McDowell, "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?" *Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LII*. 1978, pp. 13–29.

INTEGRITY

Gabriele Taylor and Raimond Gaita

II—Raimond Gaita

I

Suppose someone to be suffering from a mental illness, an effect of which is to throw him into deep confusion about the significance of events in his past. So severe is this confusion that one could say he had lost his past and with it his self-understanding. He struggles to regain his past by seeing it under some pattern of sense, to see people and events in his past justly and compassionately; 'struggles' because he has lost his confidence in that without which he cannot regain his sanity—his judgement, and because his fantasies and delusions periodically lay waste to whatever he had patiently and painfully achieved in understanding. Each time that happens he has to begin again. This he does. What is to be emphasised is not merely that he tries to restore order to his life, but that he does it in an uncompromising spirit of truthfulness.

I do not know whether Mrs. Taylor would think of him as being a person of integrity. It is difficult to see how one could say of him that his "life is of a piece" or that he is one "whose self is in some sense whole or integrated" or that he is "under due influence of his past". I do not know whether if she would say that perhaps he has integrity whether she would go on to say—but not much—or at any rate, that he would be more clearly in possession of it if he became well again. As far as my ear goes, he has it in full, humbling and inspiring measure. But I have no clear idea of what would be at stake if Mrs. Taylor denied it.

Suppose someone whose nature is divided in something like this way: he is the child of two cultures and in him the two are sometimes in creative, sometimes in debilitating conflict, such that the results are interwoven in all that is significant in his character and personality; it is idle to wonder how he would be

if he could resolve this conflict. The conflict is the root of his strengths and weaknesses; at times it seems to provide him with roots, his speech and action flow as from a firm, fertile centre, whereas at other times it is the opposite: he is as one rootless, unlocated, vacillating and wasted. He too faces his life in a spirit of truthfulness. His friends sorrow over his pain but cannot wish it otherwise, for it is so constitutive of him, that to wish it otherwise would be to wish him to be someone else.

Once again I do not know whether Mrs. Taylor would think him a person of integrity. He too is not someone of whom one would naturally say that "his life was all of a piece" or that "his self was in some sense whole and integrated". Again I would think of him as a person of integrity. Again, I do not know what would be at issue if Mrs. Taylor denied it.

II

The two examples just discussed introduce something more interesting than the possible ways in which Mrs. Taylor and I might differ in our use of expressions like 'has integrity', 'is a person of integrity' and so on, and that is her understanding of what it is to "keep one's self intact". I do not find what she says here clear. She uses a number of expressions as though she thinks them consistently interchangeable, whereas I think they are often not. In the first example discussed above, as already mentioned, it would not be natural to say 'his life was all of a piece'—more precisely, what first strikes one is the inaptness of so speaking of his life. If we came to see point in so speaking of his life, it would not force us to retract our original denial under the pain of contradiction. It is not the case that either 'his life is of a piece' or it is not, and so the characterization of his life in the light of which we might see the illuminating applicability of the expression 'his life is of a piece', is not a theoretical characterization in the light of which we see, that despite appearances, something is the case though we mistakenly denied it. Uncertainty over the applicability of such an expression is not uncertainty as to the truth of a *hypothesis*—that his life is of a piece, or that his inmost self is intact. 'He has kept his inmost self intact' is *one* way of characterizing the fact that he still has a capacity to look on his life in a spirit of truthfulness, in contrast

with someone whose affliction might render him incapable of the concentrated, disciplined attention necessary for that. (One might equally have said—the centre has held.) There might be a body of psychological or physical theory that is in some way relevant—he might, for example, be on tablets without which that effort of attention becomes impossible for him. It doesn't follow that the expression 'he has kept his inmost self intact' is a hypothesis explaining, albeit incompletely, but in a way to be completed by further theory, the fact that despite the manifest but surface disintegration, he is able to face his life as he does. This way of speaking is a way of describing his demeanour in the face of his affliction, the way he resists cliché and consoling fantasy in his effort to understand his past, the manner in which he stands fast in seriousness, and so, the manner in which we find him behind his words. There may be a theory of 'the self' and the conditions of its modes of intactness and disintegration, perhaps of a kind suggested by Richard Wollheim,[1] to whom Mrs. Taylor refers, which might be deployed in understanding the manner of his illness and why it does not threaten the kind of disintegration characteristic of one incapable of any sustained and serious thought at all. But this is not the 'self' of 'has kept his inmost self intact', nor does that phrase betoken a premonition of it.

A related example might clarify. We talk of the human capacity for speech. In one sense of 'capacity' that capacity might be explained by some branch of physical theory, say, neurophysiology. It is the same sense of 'capacity' as in "after his accident he lost his capacity for speech"—meaning he became dumb. There is another sense of 'capacity' in which philosophers sometimes conjecture whether computers have, or could have, the capacity for speech, meaning, could they talk as one person talks to another, could they talk to us and we to them? My answer is—clearly not. For what could it be for a machine to stand behind its words, to call upon it not to be so stupid, to say to it "for pity's sake *think* about what you have just said", or "surely you can't think that", or "why do you always think in clichés!"? These are not possibilities of speech at a *sophisticated* level; they are internal to our understanding of what it is to speak, to *say* something at all. If I am right then there are limits to the way physical theory relevant to the explanation of the

'capacity' for speech in the first sense, can be relevant to our understanding of the 'capacity' for speech in the second. Suppose someone, in consequence of a car accident, who retains a capacity for speech in the first sense, but whose thought and conversation is so fragmented, so confused that it is "impossible to talk to him". Someone might say of him: we can never locate him in his words; it's as though one were talking to a machine. But expressions like 'we can no longer locate him in his words' are not *explanations* of his incapacity, or pre-theoretical markers recording a commitment to, or hope of, an explanatory theory. The fact that there is a physical theory which explains the man's condition, in the sense of explains in which the surgeon explains to his relatives what has happened to him and what hopes there are for him, is not the slightest reason for pinning one's hopes on, for example, a functionalist theory of speech, of a materialist variety, according to which there can be no principled objection to the idea that machines might converse with us. For the physical explanation (again in the sense of how the surgeon might explain this to relatives) of how a human being might lose the 'capacity' to stand behind his words is irrevelant to the understanding of why it can be said of a human being, but not of a machine, that he can stand behind his words. How relevant this has been to what Mrs. Taylor says I am not sure. I do not know whether, when she says that she hopes to "catch the essence of integrity", she has any thought of catching the 'real essence' of integrity as it might be thought to be revealed in a psychological theory, and which (essence) is such as to have been presciently pre-figured in the 'literal' meaning of the word. She does not say this, but she does talk as though her thought that integrity is "keeping one's self intact" etc is a *hypothesis*, the endorsement and deeper ramifications of which would be revealed in a species of psychoanalytic theory, and which explains the 'surface' characteristics according to which we usually say that someone has or does not have integrity, and which will gather the extension of the term, (for example, which varieties of the wicked fall under it and which not).

Her practice, however, is not to offer, nor even hint towards a theoretically deepened construal of such expressions as "a self whole and integrated", save in a reference to Wollheim and

by a use of 'identity' which hints at a quasi-technical construal. Rather, she presents examples so as to invite the characterization of the actors in them as inconsistent in various ways in their conduct. Indeed she strives for a p, $\neg p$ construal. So, for example Casaubon "identifies and yet does not identify with a certain type of person", and Criseyde "is still in the grip of her past . . . but . . . she also has to deny her past". I think this forced in the case of Casaubon, and wrong in the case of Criseyde.

The example of Criseyde is simpler. I find Mrs. Taylor's discussion of it baffling, firstly in what she directly says about Criseyde's infidelity, and secondly by the manner in which that discussion is located in her immediately preceding remarks about the way in which the idea of a person "being under due influence of his past" might "serve to make the notion of a self which is intact somewhat more precise". Criseyde she says is "a case of loss of integrity" and at once I am reminded that my ear for the use of this word is different to Mrs. Taylor's. For it seems to me that Criseyde had no integrity to lose; by turning, after ten or so days, to Diomede she did not end her fidelity to Troilus, but revealed that faithful she had never been. Mrs. Taylor continues ". . . she tries to save the situation by assuring herself that 'to Diomede at least I will be true'. But Criseyde can play this game only by being very selective about her past . . . she has to keep her experiences in different compartments and blot out the memory of one set". I can recall no evidence in Chaucer's text for what Mrs. Taylor says, but be that as it may. I see no reason for thinking that Criseyde "can play this game *only* (my emphasis) by being very selective about her past". She need only be stupid (Chaucer calls her 'foolish'). There are people who think nothing of tearfully and sentimentally vowing "to take this person for better or for worse . . . till death do us part", for the fifth time, and inviting their previous four husbands to the wedding.

There are many kinds of stupidity, some connected with a lack of integrity, some not. The kind identified above is so connected because of the lazy self-indulgence characteristic of it, and the banality of spirit that it both feeds and feeds upon. I would not call it a kind of irrationality, and what contrasts with it is not rationality, nor indeed wisdom, but that kind of striving for

lucidity and the serious and truthful relation to one's life that I described in my first two examples.

To return to Criseyde. Suppose I am right that her lack of integrity is given by the mode of her stupidity, or if you do not happen to think this of Criseyde, then of the person at the altar for the fifth time. Suppose also I am right that her stupidity and the way it identifies the manner in which she lacks integrity does not depend on the notion of 'irrationality' and there is no p, $\neg p$ formulation readily apparent. What then? Are we to wonder whether, after all, she lacks integrity?

There is something more interesting. I do not mind if someone says that Criseyde's 'inmost self was not intact'; indeed I might say that or something like it myself. But the emphasis should not be on 'self' as in 'her *self* is not intact'; instead the emphasis should be on 'intact', and grammatical pressure (by no means irresistible) might lead one to say 'her inmost self is not intact', in preference to 'she is not intact', for after all one is talking of what is 'inner', though not in any Cartesian sense. So I might say 'this girl has no centre, everything is soft and scattered' or 'there is no core below the surface'. At any rate, one can see how these metaphorical expressions generate a grammar of an 'inner scatter', and how the word 'self' lends itself as being a natural, but by no means inevitable, grammatical subject. Suppose now that there is a psychological theory that tells me Criseyde has a disintegrated self, which, in conjunction with other factors, the significance of which is disclosed in the theory, explains her fecklessness. Would I then think what I had hitherto thought to be only one of many possible metaphorical characterisations, to be, after all, rather prescient. Well suppose the theory to be overtaken by another which says Criseyde's behaviour is characteristic of one with a too *firmly* integrated self, and that to cope with painful and constricting inner tautness she gives an outer appearance of inner scatter! To all this one must say 'who knows?' But the grammar of the expression 'having one's inmost self intact', as it appears in the context of characterisation of the behaviour of someone like Criseyde or Casaubon, has, I think, nothing to do with any of it.

III

The relation of a person to his past, is of central importance in

moral philosophy and is something one is brought to reflect upon if integrity is his topic. Mrs. Taylor is right to emphasize it. Unfortunately I am unclear as to what she wants to say.

She introduces her discussion of a person's relation to his past by saying that it will "serve to make the notion of the self which is intact somewhat more precise". She then talks of the necessity of "experiential memory" for personal identity, where "personal identity" is to be understood as it is when philosophers wonder as to what might happen if you put one person's brain in another person's skull—and such like. I doubt this has much to do with integrity. She then introduces another expression which has—"the unity of a person's life".

There is a trivial sense in which, necessarily, a person's life is a unity, it being the life of a single subject. There is another sense in which a person's life is necessarily a unity which is not so trivial: there is no person of whose life some story might not be told. ('story' as in 'story-teller'). But both these kinds of unity are compatible with kinds of severe disunity. The first for example could be the life of a person so severely mentally ill that he had little if any sense of his past as *his* past. Perhaps the second kind is compatible with this too, but I doubt it. It is, however, compatible with someone who is persistently 'starting his life over again', who disclaims his past anew each time; he is like a man on the run, a refugee from his many 'pasts'.

This last is the kind of example that has to do with integrity; it has little, if anything, to do with what concerns one troubled by the criteria of the identity and individuation of persons. So I take 'being under due influence of his past' as being the expression of a judgement of value. A person who fails to take responsibility for his past in certain ways is a person without integrity, but he is not in a condition, the worsening of which would catapult him into the thought experiments of a philosopher thinking about clones or deltas in the stream of consciousness. Moreover, if someone's relation to his past, or a significant section of it, is such that he does not recognize (as opposed to does not acknowledge) it as his, in the manner of one severely mentally ill, he is not thereby an example of the *spectacular* loss of integrity.

There are many ways in which a person might be said to 'lose his past' sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently,

in ways not connected with loss of memory. He might be an exile, uprooted, and so his past might no longer nourish him. He might have suffered a terrible misfortune, such as the death of his child, which has ravaged his past as a fire can a forest, leaving him with nothing living to feed on. Or he might have learnt something which alters his sense of his own past so that it becomes lost to him. When it does so it comes about only through evil. No matter how profoundly a person's sense of his past is altered through some good, or, more precisely, through something that he sees as good, it is never *thereby* lost to him. But good can bring evil with it, as when, for example, a man discovers that the child he had raised was indeed his own, thought dead, but at the cost of learning that his dearest friend had betrayed him. To what extent and for what time the knowledge of his betrayal will poison his past will depend, though not only, upon whether his love for his child is of the sort able to give birth to a spirit of forgiveness and of consent to what he has suffered, and in different form, still must suffer.

Another example: a man gives his life to some project which has been financed through a source of which he has little knowledge. It has become the central, though not distortive, focus of his life; his family and some of his close friends have become involved in it. He learns that the money, without which he could not have begun nor continued, came from the profits of that kind of child pornography in which the children are actually murdered on screen. He feels his entire life has become filthy. After some months he shoots himself. Was he 'unduly' influenced by his past?

Reflection on these examples leads to something obvious: how a person will locate himself in his life, whether, in certain extremities, there is somewhere in his life he can locate himself without despair, will depend upon whether his understanding of good and evil will throw its light upon such a place for him. A man with no conception of good and evil needs live out of a suitcase, since having given his well-being as a hostage to fortune he is on the run, fleeing from misfortune to find some place in his life where he can nurse his will to live. Whether or not misfortune hounds him out of his life is a matter of luck and can only be so.

In moral philosophy it is argued a controversial matter

whether a person's 'morality' is internal to his well being. I think that we have reason to think so: conceptions of good and evil, in varying degrees and ways limit the tendency internal to suffering, if severe enough, to lead to despair. This is because they *are* (though, this is not all they are) ways of seeing the possibilities of good in one's life in some degree of independence from the non moral determinants of its sense, all of which are vulnerable to misfortune. No doubt conceptions of good and evil can bring their own kind of despair, as was illustrated in the example of the man whose sense of his life was fouled by his unwitting relation to the vile murder of children. I used the neutral word 'relation' because what his relation to these murders morally relevantly *is*, beyond being unwitting, is not to be described independently of some moral perspective. He judged it to be such as to find suicide (morally) inescapable. That does not mean that it was, not even relative to what was, so to speak, morally available to him in the moral perspective in which light he judged as he did.

There are moral conceptions according to which a person can suffer deep and irretrievable dishonour through no fault of his own: if, for example, one of his children should murder the king. The dishonour he so suffers can permeate his life: in memory he now presents as the man whose son murdered the king; his previously joyful remembrance of his wedding is one of tying this lovely and innocent girl (as she was then) to the man who was to become the man whose son and so hers, murdered the king; the memories of the honours he received now present themselves in bitter irony; and so on. It is not that what his son did is unconnected with what he did. It is just that there are no relevant connections which would undermine the claim that his dishonour is no fault of his own. The connection is of this sort: everything that he has done is given a certain colour by the murder. It would be wrong to think that this man has only an 'external' conception of value. The idea of an 'external' conception of value has not so much to do with *what* claims a man in moral responsiveness but with the manner in which it claims him.

Has such a man, could such a man have 'kept his inmost self intact'? Is he under 'due influence' of his past? I have argued, that there is not one sense of 'he has kept his inmost self intact'.

There is a sense in which one can say that he had; it would be if he faced his dishonour in proper seriousness. What it would be for him to do *that* will depend upon the details and nuances of the conception of value according to which he judged himself, and was judged by others, dishonoured. It is only within these nuances that the contrast between a serious and lucid response to what he has suffered and various corrupt responses can be articulated; amongst those corrupt responses will be corrupt construals of the significance of what he has suffered upon his past, and so, of the possibilities in his present and future.

It might be said that in the nature of a person's relation to value, in the manner in which he tries to understand himself, there is permanent place for one conception of integrity, and that this is so irrespective of what conception of value it is. Perhaps. It might also be said that here is a permanent place for the expression 'keeping oneself intact'. Perhaps. However, it would not thereby be an expression for which we should expect to find an equivalent in the critical vocabulary of any conception of value. If one should not find it there, nothing that has been said above would give one any reason to say: there *is something* for which they do not have a name—the keeping of one's inmost self intact.

One can speak of 'keeping one's inmost self intact' in connection with the expression 'the unity of a person's life', and this, with a notion of harmony and of well being. "The person of integrity has his own defense against chaos and so is a person the different aspects of whose life (or soul) are in harmony. And so (perhaps) he is the happy person." So thinks Mrs. Taylor. It is not easy to recognize the man in my last example under this description.

The only way in which a person can have "his own defense against chaos", in the way that Mrs. Taylor appears to think of it, is for him to understand himself, and the way in which his life can have the relevant unity, according to a conception of value that gives only contingent power to anything outside the parameters of his own agency (or perhaps even, will) to destroy that unity. The power will be contingent upon the person's psychological make-up and his capacity to see clearly within the perspective according to which he looks upon his life as he

does. This does not entail a conception of value according to which one cannot do evil unintentionally, as did Oedipus, nor be unwittingly caught up in it, as was the man who found himself connected with a murderous pornography racket. But the conception must give sense to the idea of consenting to one's life in that way affected—'that way' not being relevantly describable independently of the possible modes of such consent. However, that kind of consent is a spiritual possibility internal to certain conceptions of value, which, because they make such consent possible, bring with them construals of 'the unity of a person's life' and of 'keeping one's inmost self intact'. There are other conceptions which do not offer such consent as a moral possibility: they might offer no possibilities between seeing oneself as finished and various failures of moral seriousness. The man in my last example did not have the unity of his life contingently shattered by his dishonour; the unity was itself given by that conception of value according to which this kind of misfortune necessarily shatters it.

It would not however lay waste his 'inmost self' in the sense now being discussed, that is, a sense which connects with kinds of invulnerability to what lies outside one's will, not because his was peculiarly resilient, but because he had no such inmost self to be threatened. The 'inmost self' the 'integrity of which gives a man 'his own defense against chaos' is not something that exists as an empirically discoverable entity. It is the child of a certain conception of value and has no home outside of it. It is called the '*inmost* self', not because of any Cartesian presence at its baptism, but because what contrasts with it as 'outer' is a 'self' vulnerable to the 'external' play of fortune. At the risk of labouring the point: whether there is thought to be a 'self' to which, after its full development, the play of fortune is 'external' depends upon a moral perspective on fortune. The 'inmost self' is not a discovery which then led to a further discovery about the possibilities of our relation to fortune. It is a way of characterizing certain possibilities of moral demeanour in the face of misfortune; possibilities which are given by, not creative of, our moral understanding.

III

Mrs. Taylor writes: "He (the man of integrity) will not be

tempted to act in certain ways, because to be tempted implies that certain features of the situation will present themselves to the agent as reasons for action to be weighed against reasons for acting otherwise. But the person who is committed in the way described will not even consider such reasons". She provides no reason for believing this save by referring to an article by John McDowell.[2] The trouble is that McDowell does not provide much reason for believing it either.

Suppose a man just back from three months climbing in the Himalayas. He arrives home to find a friend's wife, after whom he had previously lusted, in his bed. She is as beautiful as you like to make her. He is tempted. Has he thereby 'weighed' any reasons for acting. Not if he sees the action to which he is tempted as adulterous. As far as *deliberation* goes he has nothing to deliberate about, for there is nothing in the situation which is even a bad reason for committing adultery. He does not for example, get a better reason if she throws off the bed covers revealing herself exquisitely naked, not even if he had been a year in the Himalayas. As far as the *deliberative* context is concerned, what tempts him can have nothing to say for itself. In that sense, his understanding of what it would be for him to commit adultery "silences rather than outweighs" (McDowell) other considerations. But that only amounts to saying that only moral consideration can enter moral deliberation. So it is not only for the man who is not tempted that moral considerations 'silence' the voice of temptation, if we mean by that that they do not enter deliberately in judgements of the form 'all things considered. . . .' This will be so for the tempted man as well, even if we think of his as necessarily, as one tempted, one whose vision is 'clouded', for it takes no peculiarly clear vision, no especially deep or perspicuous moral understanding to realize that pleasure is no reason for committing adultery. But of course, there is a sense in which what tempts him has plenty to say. That is why it would be wrong to say that, should he succumb he *acts* on no reason. How this is to be understood relative to the idea of 'having a reason for acting' I have neither the space, nor sufficient understanding to say. It is important that we would not be the slightest bit bewildered should he succumb, as we can be in other situations in which we might say "he acted on insufficient reasons", so we must be careful not to offer too simple

an account of the 'because' in 'he succumbed because . . .' in the interests of making perspicuous why weakness of will is not a 'pseudo-problem'.

Why should anyone think that a "clear perception of the requirements of virtue" (McDowell) should prevent someone from being tempted? Part of the answer is that it sometimes does, or at least, that would be a natural way of putting what sometimes happens, so the onus of arguments shifts onto someone who, perhaps from commitment to a philosophical theory (for example of the relation between action and desire) denies it. What once tempted a man might no longer do so because in the light of a certain moral understanding he sees it as squalid, or ridiculous, or perhaps more generally, as ugly. And, of course, this is not restricted to contexts of temptation. An important dimension of Socrates's polemic was his attempt to offer a different understanding of what those whom he engaged in argument cared for and pursued. Thus, in *Gorgias*, part of the argument is that oratory is not at all a manly pursuit, nor one to which someone who cares for freedom and power should be attracted, since the orator is a man with no centre, soft and fragmented as he is in pandering accommodation to the fickleness of mobs. This is the kind of example that makes the idea that that temptation is to be seen as a clouding of one's moral perception, plausible. Desire can often speak with a charmed and sophistical voice when one's hold on that perspective, in the light of which something appeared squalid, falters, and it appears instead, perhaps in a romantic light, as daring, or a free and open responsiveness to life itself. Thinking of such situations there is much sense in drawing attention, not so much to spiritual push ups, but as Simone Weil has done, and as too has Iris Murdoch, to the importance of what we attend to. As Plato said, we become like that which we love.

Unfortunately, however far this goes it will not go far enough, and that for two reasons. The first is that even if a person's understanding is clouded in temptation, while he understands to the degree that he does in order to count as one tempted, why cannot he, through strength of character and will, do what he knows, by no means emptily, he ought? That is not an un-Platonic thought, for he might be described, in language taken from *Phaedrus*, as one "clinging in recollection" to things once

understood in their full significance. The notion of 'the will to do one what one must, or ought' can become empty if too much is asked of it, as has often been done in moral philosophy. But I think that there are no good Socratic, Platonic or Aristotelian reasons for denying it a place. The second reason is that not all temptations are like this.

A man with a deep but adulterous love for a woman need be under no illusion about the blighted character of that love in order to be continuously tormented, and seriously debilitated by his need of her and the (moral) impossibility of its fulfilment. The moral impossibility consists not only in the impossibility of his going to her, but also in the impossibility, even if he should, of his life with her being anything other than blighted. However tender their love, however deep, they can never celebrate it, and if they should, in moral forgetfulness of its adulterous nature, then they will have cheapened it; but *not 'still further'*, for it is not already necessarily cheap in virtue of being adulterous, nor need it necessarily be describable in such a way that one whose affective life had been transformed by 'clear moral vision' could no longer be tempted into adulterous love. There is no moral description of what it would be for him to go to her such that his understanding of it could not both satisfy the requirement that he have "clear perception of what virtue requires", and yet fail to ameliorate his crippling need of her. To be sure, it does not *follow* from the fact that he suffers this kind of need of her that he is tempted to go to her. But it does follow that one cannot talk as frivolously as McDowell does when he says ". . . the attractions of the competing course count for nothing", and as Mrs. Taylor does when she says "It is easy to see how this point (about temptation) leads to the conviction that the person of integrity has his own defense against chaos, and so is the person the different aspects of whose life (or soul) are in harmony".

Socrates thought that he who knew what evil was could not do it. He thought this (at least in part) because he thought that he who knew what evil was knew the harm he did himself in doing it. I think that the way to understand this is not by thinking of the way in which a woman's sexual attractiveness can be suddenly and sharply reduced by the knowledge that she is syphilitic, but by, for instance, considering remorse in a Socratic

light as the terrible understanding of *what it is* to have done the evil one had done and what had become of one in the doing of it. One might then think of remorse as a 'clear perception' of what it is to do evil. It would not follow that remorse is merely a most likely, but nonetheless contingent, entry into such understanding. More seriously, for the purpose of this discussion, it does not follow that a man cannot properly or fully understand what (in the Socratic sense) would become of him in the doing of some evil deed yet still be tempted to do it, not because of its 'lure' or 'attraction' but in the desperation of suffering deep enough to threaten despair. That he so suffers—desperately—does not entail that his understanding is clouded; on the contrary it might be just because he sees clearly that he suffers as he does. There are times when this seems to be so.

A temptation to evil, even if it arise out of suffering, "beyond human strength" (Aristotle) to endure, remains a temptation to evil, and if a person is overwhelmed by it then he does evil. Evil does not cease to be what it is in action because resistance to it in certain circumstances might be impossible for us. To think that it should would be to follow Aristotle in a mistaken criticism of Platonic 'Forms'—"even if there is some one good which is universally predicable of goods or is capable of separate and independent existence, clearly it could not be achieved or attained by man; but we are now seeking something attainable".[3] The trouble with this as criticism of the 'form' of the Good is that 'The Good' is not an object of pursuit but that in the light of which we are judged. But we cannot see ourselves as judged by a *picture* of a man who cannot be tempted because for him what tempts us, "tainted with continence" (McDowell), counts for nothing. Nor can we see ourselves judged in the light of a picture of a man who though not tempted, shares those sufferings which to us seem inextricably connected with our temptations (for example, when our children are murdered by terrorists cunning enough to make the effective means of defense against them evil), unless we are able to see how the connection between suffering and temptation can in all relevant cases be severed. Our sufferings are often connected with our loves and some of these are internally connected with our self-understanding not as 'human all too human', but just as human. A picture of a man so portrayed that he appears to us as problematically

human is no example of worthwhile 'idealization' in ethics. But as Plato showed, we need no picture anyway.

It has not been my intention to argue that there is no way, which if we could recognize it and stick with it, would lead us an understanding of what Socrates meant when he said that "a good man cannot suffer evil either in this life or the next". (Aristotle did not think this, in fact he thought it absurd and that only one arguing for a thesis could get so carried away.) If there is a way, then it is far longer than McDowell thinks it *if* he thinks that the thought that reasons need not engage with previously existing and independently characterizable desire in order to motivate, together with the thought that moral reasons or the 'dictates' of virtue 'silence' rather than outweigh other considerations, will take him an appreciable distance along it. And it is a different way to wherever he might end up by keeping attention fixed on *'the noble'*, for that notion is too mediocre to put him on the right way. It is a different way too than the way of someone seeking a deeper understanding of integrity in psycho-analytic or any other psychological theory. "Hope is the knowledge that the evil we bear within us is finite, that the slightest turning of the will towards good, though it should last but an instant, destroys a little of it, and that in the spiritual realm, everything good infallibly produces good. Those who do not know this are doomed to the torture of the Danaids".[4] This is not moral psychology as Wollheim thinks of it.

NOTES

[1] R. Wollheim, "The Good and the Bad Self", *Proceedings of The British Academy. Vol. LXI, 1975.*

[2] J. McDowell, "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?" *Proceedings Of The Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LII 1978.*

[3] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics* 1096b.

[4] S. Weil, *Gravity and Grace,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.