J Value Inquiry (2014) 48:53–68
DOI 10.1007/s10790-013-9402-0

Revisiting Williams on Integrity

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Published online: 17 November 2013

1 Introduction

Forty years ago it would have been correct to say that integrity is a neglected topic in analytical discussions of ethics. Bernard Williams' "A Critique of Utilitarianism" put an end to that trend.[1] A large body of literature is now available on the nature of integrity.[2] Williams' early writings on integrity and character were also key factors in the turn in moral philosophy from impartial, conduct-based moral theories (Kantian deontology and consequentialism) to a focus on views that at an earlier time were described as "personalist ethics" and we now commonly classify as

[1] Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism," in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, eds., *Utilitarianism For and Against* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 77–150.

[2] For early discussions of integrity, see Raimond Gaita, "Integrity," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55 (1981), pp. 161–176; and Gabriele Taylor, "Integrity," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55 (1981), pp. 143–159; and Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Lynne McFall, "Integrity," *Ethics* 98 (1987), pp. 5–25; and Mark Halfon, *Integrity: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); and Stephen Carter, *Integrity* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996). For recent discussions of integrity, see Cora Diamond, "Integrity," in Lawrence Becker and Charlotte Becker, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 2nd Ed., Vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 863–866; and Damian Cox, Marguerite LaCaze, and Michael Levine, *Integrity and the Fragile Self* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003); and Damian Cox, Marguerite LaCaze, and Michael Levine, "Integrity," in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, URL <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/integrity/>, 2013; and Greg Scherkoske, *Integrity and the Virtues of Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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virtue ethics or character-focused moral theories.[3] (In speaking of Williams' 'early writings,' I am referring to his work prior to *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*.[4]) Williams was not the lone voice in the shift from impartial moral theories to a central concern for character and virtue. The work of Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, and the personalists were other major voices during this transition in analytic moral philosophy. Susan Wolf's "Moral Saints" is another refinement and development of Williams' arguments against impartial moral theories.[5]

Consequentialists and Kantian deontologists have articulated forceful objections to Williams' arguments against impartial moral theories.[6] His arguments have pressured defenders of impartial moral theories to find room, or explain why they do not need to make room, in the moral space of reasons for considerations of partiality.[7] So, should consequentialists and deontologists now move on and address new problems? Do they have good reasons for moving on? Have they survived the trial posed by Williams' arguments?[8] I argue that Williams' integrity-based critique of act-utilitarianism (hereafter, AU) presents a compelling objection against that particular version of consequentialism. Contemporary defenders of AU (e.g., Peter Singer) face a decisive problem posed by one strand of Williams' argument against AU.

Williams' integrity-based critique of AU is not a straightforward matter. Williams' writings, like those of Wittgenstein, are often obscure but they are particularly interactive and handsomely reward return visits. His early writings in ethical theory are systematic and contain overlapping arguments that have intrinsic philosophical significance and the arguments bear on one another in ways that are easy to overlook. The task of reconstructing his critique of AU is both historically and philosophically valuable. I reconstruct his integrity-based critique of AU with an eye to showing how it criticizes AU on the grounds of both first-order normative considerations and second-order meta-ethical considerations.

Section 2 reconstructs Williams' critique of AU. In response to the arguments, some defenders of AU have argued that his conception of integrity is narcissistic and, therefore, even if AU does somehow attack Williams-style integrity, that does nothing to undermine the legitimacy or normativity of the demands of the principle of utility. Section 3 reconstructs Williams' conception of integrity and examines a range of objections that clarify the view and reveal some its normative limitations. I contend that the charge of narcissism is unmerited.

[3] See Steven Boer and William Lycan, *Knowing Who* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 163–167.

[4] Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[5] Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," *The Journal of Philosophy* 79 (1982), pp. 131–148.

[6] For representative utilitarian replies, see Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13 (1984), pp. 134–171; and Alastair Norcross, "Consequentialism and Commitment," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (1997), pp. 380–403. For representative Kantian responses to Williams' arguments, see Herman 1993, op. cit., pp. 23–44; and Marcia Baron, *Kantian Ethics Almost Without Apology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[7] See Samuel Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[8] See Sherkoske, op. cit., pp. 186–189.

2 Williams' Critique of Act-Utilitarianism

Williams' central criticism of AU is that it *attacks the integrity of agents.* His critique is not intended to undermine rule-utilitarianism and other forms of consequentialism (e.g., perfectionist consequentialism).[9] He presents the well-known cases of George and Jim to illustrate his main arguments against AU. It will be helpful to briefly review their stories so that the particulars are fresh in mind. We shall then examine his two main arguments.

George has recently received a doctorate in chemistry and is having serious difficulties finding a job. His health is poor and his illness limits his job prospects. George is also married and has young children. He urgently needs a job to help his family. An older chemist who knows about George's situation informs George about a well paying job that is available at a laboratory that is involved in research for bio-chemical warfare. George is strongly opposed to bio-chemical warfare and does not want to do anything that would directly support it. However, he needs the money and he is informed that if he does not take the job, there is another candidate who has no scruples about bio-chemical warfare and will pursue the research with much greater zeal and efficiency than George would. In fact, the older chemist has approached George with the job offer because of his concern for George's family and the zealousness of the other candidate. Williams asks, "What should he do?"[10]

Jim is a reporter on a botanical expedition in South America. He wanders into the central square of a remote village in which twenty people are restrained against a wall and are being guarded by armed men in uniforms. Pedro, the officer in charge, questions Jim and comes to believe that his presence in the village is a mere coincidence. Pedro informs Jim that the captives are a randomly selected group of inhabitants that are about to be killed in order to put an end to recent acts of protest against the government. Pedro would like to honor Jim's presence by offering him the opportunity to kill one of the innocent villagers himself. If Jim accepts the offer, Pedro will release the surviving nineteen villagers. If Jim refuses, Pedro will kill Jim and the twenty prisoners. Violent resistance is not an option. Williams asks, "What should he do?"[11]

Williams claims that if AU is true, then it is *obviously* true that George should take the job and it is *obviously* true that Jim should shoot the innocent villager.[12] The obviousness objection maintains that AU makes it too easy to determine the morally right course of action in cases like the ones facing George and Jim. The obviousness objection suggests that there is more involved in practical and moral deliberation than AU considers. Even in stories as roughly formulated as those featuring George and Jim, AU presents a simple directive: maximize aggregate utility.

[9] See Walter Sinnot-Armstrong, "Consequentialism," in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, URL <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/#WhiConActVsExpCon>, 2011.

[10] Williams 1973, op. cit., 97–98.

[11] Williams 1973, op. cit., 98–99.

[12] Williams 1973, op. cit., p. 99.

A standard reply to the obviousness objection is that AU does not require that all persons must actively pursue the project of maximizing aggregate utility. It may be an empirical fact that persons do a better job of maximizing aggregate utility by acting on preferences that have not been consciously tested by the principle of utility: consciously deploying the principle of utility in everyday decision making may not maximize aggregate utility. As Sidgwick observes, "It is not necessary that the end which gives the criterion of rightness should always be the end at which we consciously aim."[13] Defenders of AU deny that AU is a good *decision procedure* for practical deliberation and instead construe AU as a *criterion* of the moral rightness of actions. As Railton observes, Williams' arguments against AU do not distinguish the acceptability conditions and the truth conditions of the theory.[14] I argue below that this distinction does not weaken the force of Williams' main insights against AU and that Williams' early writings contain a serious objection to AU as a criterion of right action.

The obviousness objection is closely related, but not identical with, the familiar *demandingness objection* to AU, which contends that AU makes moral decision making too demanding by requiring persons to make accurate future-looking calculations in everyday deliberation. Walter Sinnot-Armstrong discusses the argument that AU is self-defeating because the verdicts of AU regarded as a decision procedure may come into conflict with its dictates as a criterion of right action.[15] Sinnot-Armstrong makes a convincing case that the demandingness argument does not reveal that AU is self-defeating but the conflicting demands (to follow the dictates of the decision procedure or the criterion of right action) do pressure defenders of AU to take a stance on whether they endorse *actual utilities* or *expected utilities* as the metric of value that AU requires to be maximized. This is a serious challenge for AU but does not show the core weakness of the theory, since this point can be addressed by developing an axiology for AU. I argue that Williams' next objection poses a more serious problem for AU.

The *alienation objection* is the charge that AU cannot make sense of the way that individuals are related to their own actions and it cannot make sense of significant differences between your own actions and the actions of others.[16] According to this objection, AU alienates persons from their own projects and it cannot make sense of morally significant differences between *your* deepest projects and desires and the deepest projects and desires of *others*. I argue below that the alienation objection can be reconstructed in a manner that shows that AU commits its defenders to an inadequate moral psychology. That is, I interpret the alienation objection as showing that AU has unsatisfactory meta-ethical commitments that cannot be resolved by revising the axiology of the theory.

The alienation objection arises from considering the utilitarian doctrine of *negative responsibility*, which Williams describes as the view that "if I am ever

[13] See Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, *Seventh Edition* (London: Macmillan, 1907, First Edition 1874), p. 413.

[14] See Railton, op. cit., p. 155.

[15] See Sinnot-Armstrong, Ibid.

[16] Williams 1973, op. cit., pp. 98–99.

responsible for anything, then I must be just as much responsible for things that I allow or fail to prevent, as I am for things that I myself, in the more everyday restricted sense, bring about."[17] The doctrine of negative responsibility expresses the utilitarian denial of the moral relevance of the distinction between acts and omissions. (Whether there is a morally significant difference between doing and allowing is a central issue in applied ethics. There are volumes of debates on this topic. Relevant debates include discussions of The Trolley Problem, The Doctrine of Double Effect, and the nature and extent of duties of rescue. Singer presents a standard AU argument against the distinction between acts and omissions.[18]) The utilitarian commitment to the doctrine of negative responsibility stems from the fact that AU is a version of consequentialism. According to Williams, consequentialist moral theories are characteristically concerned with maximizing certain *states of affairs* in the world and from a consequentialist point of view it is irrelevant whether the states of affairs to be maximized are the results my own deeds or are the results of other causal factors: "for consequentialism, all causal connexions are on the same level, and it makes no difference, so far as that goes, whether the causation of a given state of affairs lies through another agent, or not."[19] Williams holds that the doctrine of negative responsibility is an upshot of consequentialism's commitment to regarding states of affairs in the world as the bearers of ultimate value. (It is not obviously true that AU is logically committed to the metaphysical thesis that states of affairs are the ultimate bearers of value. Getting to the bottom of this issue would require one to examine the ontology of states of affairs. Moreover, it is not obvious that a non-cognitivist or anti-realist utilitarian, such as Hare, must accept this purported logical commitment of AU.[20]) Since consequentialism only regards states of affairs as morally valuable, consequentialist theories leave no room for me to see *my* actions and *my* projects as valuable.[21] It is worth noting that Williams' point is true of AU and other agent-neutral versions of consequentialism, but it does not undermine non-agent-neutral or agent-relative versions of consequentialism. (On the distinction between maximizing and non-maximizing moral theories and agent-neutral and agent-relative moral theories, I follow Derek Parfit.[22] Christine Korsgaard raises important criticisms of the distinction.[23] It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the feasibility of the distinction. I encourage interested

[17] Williams 1973, op. cit., p. 95

[18] See Singer, op. cit., pp. 180–186.

[19] Williams 1973, op. cit., p. 95.

[20] See David Wiggins, "Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life," *Proceedings of the British Academy* LXII (1976), pp. 366–372; and R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952); and R.M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

[21] See Stephen Darwall, "Agent-Centered Restrictions from the Inside-Out," *Philosophical Studies* 50 (1986), pp. 291–319; Scherkoske, op. cit., pp. 186–213.

[22] Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1987).

[23] Christine Korsgaard, "The Reasons We Can Share: An Attack on the Distinction Between Agent-Relative and Agent-Neutral Value," in Christine Korsgaard, ed., *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 275–310.

readers to see Sinnot-Armstrong's "Consequentialism" for a helpful framework for describing and evaluating agent-neutral consequentialism.[24])

Williams suggests that AU's neglect of the moral significance of an agent's own actions and projects is the result of the extreme form of *impartiality* that pervades AU, which assumes that moral considerations require a criterion of right action that all moral agents must satisfy in order to do what is morally right. From the point of view of the utilitarian calculus, there is no comprehensible moral difference between *me* bringing about a certain outcome rather than someone else producing it. AU views all actions from a perspective of the world *sub specie aeternitatis* and Williams suggests that this God's eye perspective on the world is not, and should not, be considered the point of view that morality requires us to adopt.

Williams argues that AU glosses over morally significant differences in the ways that the projects of others may bear on our decisions.

> It is absurd to demand of such a man [i.e., a person who possesses integrity], when the sums come in from the utility network which the projects of others have in part determined, that he should just step aside from his own project and decision and acknowledge the decision which utilitarian calculation requires. It is to alienate him in a real sense from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions. It is to make him into a channel between the input of everyone's projects, including his own, and an output of optimific decisions; but this is to neglect the extent to which *his* actions and *his* decisions have to be seen as the actions and decisions which flow from the projects and attitudes with which he is most clearly identified. It is thus, in the most literal sense, an attack on his integrity.[25]

Williams' conception of projects, and what it is for a project to be *mine*, challenges the conceptions of nature and human action that are presupposed by AU. It does not acknowledge the difference between what nature can throw our way and what people can! AU treats all individuals in the in the causal nexus (raccoons, lizards and persons) on par: the actions and events that they partake either do or do not promote aggregate utility. This idea is expressed in Singer's principle of equal consideration of interests:

> The principle of equal consideration of interests acts like a pair of scales, weighing interests impartially. True scales favour the side where the interest is stronger and where several interests combine to outweigh a small number of similar interests, but they take no account of whose interests they are weighing.[26]

We'll return to Singer's principle of equal consideration of interests, which will be one target of Williams' critique of AU.

Williams suggests that in the case of George, who is struggling with the difficult decision to either accept or refuse a job working for a bio-chemical weapons

[24] See Sinnot-Armstrong, Ibid.

[25] Williams 1973, op. cit., pp. 116–117.

[26] Singer, op. cit., pp. 20–21.

company, George's concern for his own integrity may be at odds with the verdicts of the utilitarian calculus.[27] The impartial standpoint from which AU evaluates the moral rightness or wrongness of actions may run roughshod over the standpoint from which George forms his moral commitments. In this case, George's concern with integrity presents a first-order moral judgment that is in conflict with the moral demands of AU. Williams suggests that George's concern with integrity presents an objection to AU's credentials as a first-order, normative theory in ethics. He also suggests that Jim's concern for his integrity may not require him to take a different course of action than what AU demands, but AU and the doctrine of negative responsibility fail to accurately describe the influence of *Pedro's projects* on Jim's decision. Williams contends that utilitarianism fails to register the moral significance of *Jim's commitments* on the situation. If Jim does not shoot one villager, then his decision is causally responsible for the resulting deaths of twenty one people (himself and the other twenty victims), but AU and the doctrine of negative responsibility do not register the moral significance of the fact that the massacre is the result of *Pedro's* projects and actions. Intuitively, there does seem to be an important moral difference in these situations from the first person perspective.[28] Jim may take issue with being forced to directly cause harm to others, but there is also the fact that he is being co-opted into Pedro's agenda. Jim has involuntarily become a servant to the interests and projects of a homicidal and sadistic individual. AU alienates Jim from his own projects by requiring him to be co-opted into Pedro's scheme.[29] Williams' argument suggests that there are *pro tanto* moral reasons regarding Jim's integrity that AU does not acknowledge in morally requiring that Jim should not shoot the villagers.

An act-utilitarian might reply that Williams (and defenders of Williams on this point) do not understand the logic of *pro tanto* reasons. (Shelly Kagan provides the classic formulation of *pro tanto* reasons and their role in moral deliberation.[30]) If Jim has a *pro tanto* moral reason to not shoot the innocent villager, then that is a consideration that does not lose its moral force when an all things considered judgment rules that Jim should shoot the villager. A defender of AU can reasonably hold that the pain that the death of the villager will cause (including Jim's guilt and pangs of regret) is a consideration against shooting the villager, but it is simply outweighed by the overall consideration of interests. Just because a five pound weight is outweighed by a fifty pound weight, it does not follow that the former is weightless. Likewise, just because the negative outcomes of Jim killing the innocent villager are outweighed by the negative outcomes of the massacre that will ensue if Jim does not kill the villager, it does not follow that the former has lost its negative moral valence.

[27] Williams 1973, op. cit., p. 117.

[28] For discussions of the role of the first-person perspective in explaining Williams' emphasis on the importance of *my* projects, see Darwall, Ibid.; and Sherkoske, Ibid.; and Daniel Markovits, "Integrity and the Architecture of Ambition," in Daniel Callcut, ed., *Reading Bernard Williams* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 110–138.

[29] For a helpful discussion of the conflict between first-person, second-person and third-person perspectives that arises from Williams' arguments, see Markovitz, Ibid.

[30] Shelly Kagan, *The Limits of Morality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

Williams might respond that although the utilitarian does have the resources to give moral weight to Jim's interests (they are *pro tanto* moral reasons), the conception of interests that AU assumes presents a distorted picture of the deep commitments and desires that may motivate individuals (in Williams' sense of *individual*). Those projects do not aggregate in the way that AU demands. AU, by definition, requires that the criterion of morally right action is to maximize *aggregate* utility. The realization of a person's deepest projects is not necessarily a way to improve that individual's well-being: projects are not preferences. The concept of an agent's *projects* presents a type of motive that challenges the moral psychology and meta-ethical assumptions of utilitarianism. Project pursuit is a fundamental psychological property of human agents that cannot be reduced to the satisfaction of either interests or preferences.[31] The realization of one's own projects does not constitute a form of hedonic pleasure or preference satisfaction. The central place of projects in Williams' critique of utilitarianism shows it to have ramifications for both normative ethics and meta-ethics. The debate is not merely on the level of first-order moral judgments. It is also a substantive challenge to a core assumption of AU. Williams' conception of integrity shows that there are motivational states that cannot be aggregated from the third-person perspective.

3 Williams' Conception of Integrity

A defender of AU might reply to the alienation objection with the *charge of self-indulgence*, which maintains that acting contrary to the verdicts of the utilitarian calculus on the grounds that Williams suggests constitutes a morally repulsive act of squeamishness or self-indulgence.[32] According to the charge of self-indulgence, if an agent refuses to maximize aggregate utility because doing so would alienate that agent from his or her *own* projects, then that agent is either too selfish or too squeamish to do what that agent has a moral obligation to do. Daniel Markovitz makes the point as follows: "it is not obvious that the burdens associated with lost integrity are *ethical*, rather than merely *emotional*."[33] An act-utilitarian may contend that Jim may feel moral repulsion at the thought of shooting an innocent person and Jim may shatter his self-image by doing so (and such repulsion is praiseworthy since it usually maximizes aggregate utility), but Jim's (utilitarian) moral obligation to maximize aggregate utility demands that he must shoot the innocent villager and, thus, it is morally impermissible for him to refrain from shooting the person because of his own self-image, projects and personal commitments. Jim may have a wide range of unpleasant feelings after shooting the villager, perhaps because his emotional reactions are the result of his upbringing in an (irrational) Judeo-Christian society, but his moral obligation to do so is sufficiently weighty to justify his action. According to this objection, Williams'

[31] See Loren Lomasky, *Persons, Rights and the Moral Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[32] See Kagan, Ibid.

[33] See Markovitz, op. cit., p. 121.

concern with projects and integrity expresses a narcissistic point of view that would give greater priority to psychological considerations than it would to moral ones: it seems that Williams would give one's own sense of moral purity greater weight than he would give to one's actual moral obligations.[34]

Williams addresses the charge of self-indulgence in "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence."[35] It had been neglected until about ten years ago.[36] Williams argues that if the charge of self-indulgence is to avoid begging the question against his own conception of integrity, then the charge of self-indulgence must not be equivalent to expressing disapproval of persons that knowingly act in an anti-utilitarian fashion.[37] He contends that the utilitarian charge of self-indulgence should rest upon considerations that are acceptable to non-utilitarians in order for the utilitarian charge of self-indulgence to be compelling.

Williams maintains that a concern for integrity need not be self-indulgent. The argument begins by describing general features of self-indulgent actions and character traits. He contends that if an action is self-indulgent, then that action does not express a concern for other people; at best it expresses a concern for *the agent's own concern* for other people, and such concern is blameworthy but not just for utilitarian reasons.[38] For instance, a person may act in this problematically self-indulgent manner if she performs a generous action *because* she is motivated by a concern for *her* own generosity. An objectionably *reflexive* concern with one's self is at the heart of the charge of self-indulgence.[39] So, the utilitarian charge of self-indulgence suggests that if George and Jim do not perform the actions mandated by utilitarianism because George and Jim are concerned with their own integrity, then they are motivated by narcissistic concern. So, their narcissistic actions are deplorable, not only for utilitarian considerations, but for independent non-utilitarian considerations as well. Narcissistic concern is inherently blameworthy. One does not need to be a utilitarian to accept that narcissistic self-concern is bad.

Williams argues that a concern for integrity is not objectionably reflexive. He contends that if integrity were a virtue, then it would be subject to what Williams calls "reflexive deformation."[40] However, he suggests that integrity is not a virtue: "In saying that, I do not mean that there is not all that much to be said for it, as one might say that humility was not a virtue. I mean that while it is an admirable human property, it is not related to motivation as the virtues are."[41] He suggests that integrity is neither a disposition that yields motivations (such as generosity or benevolence) nor an executive virtue that does not yield a characteristic motive but

[34] See Thomas E. Hill, Jr. "Moral Purity and the Lesser Evil," in Thomas E. Hill Jr., ed., *Autonomy and Self-Respect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 67–84.

[35] See Bernard Williams, "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence," in Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp. 40–53.

[36] For recent discussions of the essay, see Cox, La Caze and Levine 2003, Ibid.; and Scherkoske, Ibid.

[37] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 41.

[38] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 45.

[39] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 47.

[40] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 49.

[41] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 49.

is necessary for acting from desirable motives in desirable way (e.g., courage and self-control). Instead, he suggests, "one who displays integrity acts from those dispositions and motives which are most deeply his, and has also the virtues that enable him to do that. Integrity does not enable him to do it, nor is it what he acts from when he does so."[42] Williams holds that if we regard integrity as a virtue, it would exemplify moral self-indulgence, because "if it is regarded as a motive, it is hard to reconstruct its representation in thought except in the objectionable reflexive way."[43] So, to avoid the charge of narcissism, he claims that integrity is not a virtue. Williams claims that integrity requires no "characteristic thought," but only requires the thought associated with the projects in the carrying out of which a person may display integrity. He adds, "Relatedly, one cannot directly bring someone up to possess integrity, in the sense of teaching him to display or exercise it; rather one brings it about that he genuinely cares for something and has the characteristics necessary to live in the spirit of that.[44]

Williams claims that integrity is an admirable human quality but it is not a virtue. His argument for this claim assumes that integrity is a trait that results from individuals carrying out her or his deep projects. His conception of integrity requires success in the pursuit of one's deep projects. Integrity requires the realization of one's projects. If someone tries or does the best that one can to achieve one's deep projects, then that person does not have integrity, in Williams' sense. If one has the intuition that a person who tries one's best to realize one's deep projects does, or must, have integrity, then one's intuition is at odds with Williams' conception of integrity. For Williams, whether a person has integrity will largely be a matter of luck: it requires success in the pursuit of one's deep projects. This theme emerges again in "Moral Luck," where Williams claims that in the situation of Gauguin, "the only thing that will justify his choice [to pursue the life of painting instead of pursuing family life] will be success itself."[45] According to Williams, integrity is not a unique disposition or motive that enables S to act from S's deepest motives. He contends that integrity may result from a heterogeneous mix of dispositions: if S acts from S's deepest motives or dispositions, then S displays integrity but S is not motivated by S's integrity, S is motivated by those deep motives and concerns. Since the deepest motives of persons are highly idiosyncratic, there will be a wide array of motives, concerns, and dispositions that can issue in integrity. Williams' view suggests that integrity is *epiphenomenal*: it is the result of carrying out one's deepest commitments but it does not have any causal or motivational force itself. According to Williams, integrity as an *achievement* that is the result of an individual's deeds and pursuits but it is not a motivation or a disposition with a characteristic thought associated with it.[46] Integrity, like a reward, may indirectly motivate someone. Just as a desire for a reward may be what motivates an individual

[42] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 49.

[43] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 49.

[44] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 49.

[45] Williams 1981, op. cit., p. 23.

[46] Bernard Williams, "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence," in Bernard Williams, ed., *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 40–53), p. 23.

to pursue the activity that will be rewarded, a desire to have integrity may motivate an individual to pursue one's deepest projects. It is the desire to have integrity that is motivating the individual and not the integrity itself. So, Williams suggests, S achieves integrity by pursuing S's deepest projects and also having the virtues required for successfully pursuing them. Moreover, this conception of integrity avoids the charge of narcissism, because pursuing one's deepest projects need not be narcissistic: other-regarding desires such as a parent's concern for her child or a citizen's love of her country may be projects that are sources of integrity.

Williams does not make a convincing argument that integrity is not a virtue. Williams' main support for the claim that integrity is not a virtue is the claim that if integrity is a virtue, then a concern for one's own integrity is narcissistic. It is implausible to hold that if integrity is a virtue, then a concern for one's integrity is narcissistic. One dubious claim that Williams uses to defend this view is the suggestion that virtues are either dispositions that characteristically involve distinctive representations in thought or they are executive virtues, such as courage. Perhaps it is true that some virtues involve distinctive representations in thought: perhaps the virtue of justice (in persons) requires that a just person sees just actions *as just* or *as right*. However, the suggestion that all virtues, except executive virtues, require distinctive representations in thought is not supported by any of Williams' other writings on virtue and is quite dubious.

Williams' view is particularly vulnerable to a problematic dilemma facing any theory of the virtues. Are virtues dispositions that require their possessors to possess certain characteristic motives or psychological states? Or, are virtues individuated by persons on the basis of those persons consistently performing certain types of action, regardless of their psychological dispositions? (For contrasting perspectives on this issue, Julia Annas defends the view that a certain psychological state (practical wisdom) is required for the possession of virtue and Robert Adams defends the view that virtues do not require the possession of a characteristic motive or psychological state.[47]) There is no consensus on this topic, but I am persuaded that neither view provides a complete theory of the virtues: each view may pick out subsets of the virtues. If I'm right about this, then Williams' assumptions about the nature of integrity are mistaken. If there is a subset of virtues that consists of epiphenomenal achievements that depend upon the success of one's ground projects, then the virtue of integrity does not require a disposition to generate a particular, self-reflexive representation in thought. Integrity, according to Williams, requires being true to one's *commitments*, and doing that is the result of consistent patterns of choices. Williams' account of the role of luck in determining the moral value of one's projects and determining the shape of one's character strongly suggest that he does, and should, regard patterns of successful choices as an important type of moral virtue.[48]

It would have been helpful if Williams would have made some familiar distinctions between different kinds of integrity. One major conceptual confusion

[47] See Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Robert Adams, *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[48] See Williams, "Moral Luck," Ibid.

that permeates the literature on both integrity and Williams' integrity-based criticism of AU is that participants in these debates often do not distinguish and see the importance of the difference between moral, personal, and psychological integrity. (Greg Scherkoske is a major offender in this regard.[49] Matthew Pianalto is a notable exception: his account of the distinction between psychological and practical integrity is a helpful shift in the debates.[50]) Moral integrity and personal integrity require being guided by standards. Moral integrity requires being guided by objective moral standards and personal integrity requires being guided by personal standards.[51] Williams' conception of integrity is a conception of personal integrity. Many of his critics contend that he does not provide an adequate conception of moral integrity. This is correct. Williams is plausibly understood to provide a conception of personal integrity. His (personal) integrity-based critique of AU also raises the intractable issue of whether objective moral standards and values must outweigh or otherwise trump personal standards and values. Williams' formulation and defense of internal reasons and his conception of practical necessities are natural developments of his conception of the value of personal integrity.[52]

One might argue against William's conception of personal integrity on the grounds that having personal integrity is not just a matter of being true to one's *commitments*. According to this objection, the term 'commitment' is too ambiguous and obscure to provide a satisfactory account of personal integrity.[53] It is unclear whether Williams is using the term 'commitment' to refer to a person's deep concerns, choices, decisions, declared intentions, personal vows, promissory obligations, resolutions, or public proclamations. There is a salient difference in our moral evaluation of a person's deep concerns and that person's promises. A person's deep concerns are, in an important sense, less social than a person's promises. Promises create expectations in others. A person's deep concerns may be completely hidden from others. The ambiguity of the term 'commitment' raises doubts about whether there is a clear conceptual relation between commitment and integrity. The fact that a person successfully carries out his or her choices or personal vows does not straightforwardly imply that the person's life, character, or identity are *integrated*.[54] Moreover, a person may have a deep and abiding concern with coffee, chess, boxing, film, fashion trends, and computers, but the successful pursuit of those concerns may not *integrate* the person. There must be a further unifying element for those concerns, choices, vows, and other psychological states

[49] See Scherkoske Ibid. I discuss this book in a forthcoming book review for *Ethics*.

[50] Matthew Pianalto, "Integrity and Struggle," *Philosophia* 40 (2012), pp. 319–336.

[51] The importance of the difference between moral and personal standards is a major theme that runs through Thomas E. Hill's "Moral Purity and the Lesser Evil," Ibid.; Elizabeth Ashford, "Utilitarianism, Integrity and Partiality," *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (2000), pp. 421–439; John Cottingham, "Integrity and Fragmentation," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 27 (2010), pp. 2–14.

[52] See Williams' "Internal and External Reasons" in Williams 1981, op. cit., pp. 101–113; and see Williams' "Practical Necessity" in Williams 1981, op. cit., pp. 124–131.

[53] See Nancy Schauber, "Integrity, Commitment and the Concept of a Person," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33 (1996), pp. 119–129; and see Cox, La Caze and Levine, Ibid.

[54] See Cottingham, Ibid.

to be *integrated*. There also remains the issue of *what* is integrated by being true to one's commitments. Is it one's life, personhood, character, practical identity, personality, or agency that is *integrated*? A critic of Williams' conception of integrity might contend that these ambiguities in the term 'commitment' reveal a deep instability in his account. I think these are serious concerns for Williams view, but they do not present a decisive objection to it. Concerns are not the conclusions of arguments. These concerns are best construed as a frank request for clarity. To be clear, Williams' account of an individual's *commitments* refers to an individual's *projects.* According to this view, individuals who are true to their projects have personal integrity.

Williams' first book, *Morality*, contains related insights into his understanding of the moral significance of integrity.[55] In a chapter entitled "What is Morality About?" Williams attacks the claim that there is a single criterion of moral rightness (e.g., the principle of utility or the categorical imperative) and he specifically takes aim at the (utilitarian) view that well-being or happiness is an element of the criterion.[56] Williams makes the case that there is a kind of "Protestant outlook," which takes pain and suffering to have positive moral value, which can be intelligibly construed as a "moral outlook." This Protestant outlook is also shared by Romantic figures, such as D.H. Lawrence. Williams considers a "moral outlook" inspired by Lawrence's response to Benjamin Franklin's catalogue of conventional moral virtues—Lawrence encourages his readers to "Find your deepest impulse and follow that."[57] Reflecting on Lawrence's counsel, Williams writes,

> The notion that there *is* something that is one's deepest impulse, that there is a discovery to be made here, rather than a decision, and the notions that one trusts what is so discovered, although unclear where it will lead—these, rather, are the point. The combination—discovery, trust, and risk—are central to this sort of outlook, as of course they are to the state of being in love. It is even tempting to find, among the many historical legacies of Protestantism to Romanticism, a parallel between this combination and the pair so important to Luther: obedience and hope. Both make an essential connection between submission and uncertainty; both, rather than offering happiness, demand *authenticity*.[58]

Williams' development of the Lawrencean idea that morality could be about finding your deepest impulse and following it is part of a larger argument that he formulates against utilitarianism. This Lawrencean moral outlook assigns a great deal of moral significance to an individual's *authenticity*. To be clear, Williams is not endorsing the view that this Protestant/Lawrencean moral outlook is a complete moral theory;

[55] Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972).

[56] Williams 1972, op. cit., pp. 79–88.

[57] See Robert Solomon, "The Virtues of a Passionate Life: Erotic Love and 'The Will to Power,'" in Ellen Paul, Fred Miller, and Jeffrey Paul, eds., *Virtue and Vice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 91–118. Also see Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 3–18.

[58] Williams 1972, op. cit., p. 86.

rather, he is arguing that there is not a single criterion of moral rightness and these evaluative outlooks should be included in the domain of the moral.

The Lawrencean/Protestant outlook described in the above passage is also helpfully read as an elaboration of Williams' view that personal integrity consists in an individual carrying out her deep projects. This suggests that there may be a certain kind of moral imperative that requires agents to live *authentically* or to make *authentic* decisions, i.e., decisions that are true to one's projects. Since authenticity is commonly regarded as being true to one's *commitments*, it is intuitively plausible to see the motivation for Williams' concerns with the inter-related moral significance of (1) a person's commitments, (2) authenticity, and (3) moral identity. Williams asks us to consider widening the scope of morality to include personal and partial considerations: a person's moral identity and moral commitments may involve a concern for one's own authenticity, friendships and intimate relationships. This moral perspective may be incommensurable with other moral perspectives, especially since there is not an external perspective from which we can use those standards to weigh the moral imperatives of authenticity against the all things considered judgment from the third-person perspective from which the utilitarian calculus is determined.

A defender of AU might contend that Williams' appeal to moral imperatives to act authentically (or live authentically) cannot withstand a suitably refined version of the self-indulgence objection. It might be argued that the Protestant/Lawrentian outlook that is a motivation for Williams' conception of integrity is a kind of Romantic outlook that has the danger of promoting a form of mono-mania. To make the case that Williams' conception of integrity as authenticity is problematically self-indulgent, one might argue that there are counter-examples to the thesis that authenticity can provide a basis for *moral* considerations or a *moral* identity. A common objection to existentialist moral theories is that authenticity cannot sustain a moral outlook because evil persons may exemplify a great deal of authenticity but their authenticity does not imbue their characters, concerns, or deeds with any positive *moral* value. Accordingly, Williams' conception of integrity as authenticity suggests that it is possible for a morally wicked person to have integrity. So, the objection goes, moral virtues should not be realized by persons who are egoistic, amoral, or immoral. Moreover, it is often argued by critics of individualist and existentialist moral theories that their outlooks are not compassionate or other-regarding enough to sustain a moral point of view—authenticity is too voluntaristic, individualistic and atomistic to ground moral considerations.

The moral value of authenticity is illuminated by considering how it helps one to correct certain vicious tendencies in human nature. Authenticity may serve as a corrective to human tendencies towards (1) passive conformity to social conventions, (2) escaping from one's first-person perspective on the world to an overly abstract view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis,* and (3) a self-indulgent and narcissistic view of the world.[59] Persons who are *authentic* pursue projects that are

[59] See Christine Swanton, "Can Nietzsche be Both an Existentialist and a Virtue Ethicist?" in Timothy Chappell, ed., *Values and Virtues: Aristotelianism in Contemporary Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 171–188.

their *own* and their projects are not the products of blind or mechanical allegiance to social conventions. Authentic persons are also not alienated (emotionally or intellectually) from their projects by the tendency to view the world from a third-person perspective. Authentic persons are well-grounded individuals. They are not characteristically self-indulgent or narcissistic: the deepest desires of authentic persons (e.g., the desire to be a good friend, a good spouse or a good parent) are usually other-regarding. However, it must be admitted that some individuals who are true to themselves authentically embrace other-regarding desires that are the opposite of compassionate. Human beings may possess deep concerns, motives, and commitments that are ferocious and horrific. Writers such as the Marquis de Sade, Émile Zola, and Joseph Conrad vividly describe the dark and sadistic desires that reside in human beings. As Hobbes clearly saw, those desires run deep in human nature. Persons can authentically inhabit horrific worldviews and strive to change the world to fit those points of view.

Some argue that although cruel and sadistic desires are widespread in human nature, the authenticity that is exemplified by persons of integrity must be sustained by an appreciation of, and commitment to, objective moral goodness.[60] This objection conflates moral integrity and personal integrity. The latter may be a source of moral imperatives that are discovered from the first-person perspective. It must be admitted that following the dictates of personal integrity does place one in a certain kind of moral danger: it may lead one to face a conflict between personal standards and objective moral standards. Personal integrity is a human excellence but it does not shield one from objective moral wrongdoing. Therefore, it is hyperbole to say that a person who obeys the dictates of personal integrity is narcissitic or self-indulgent, but it must be admitted that personal integrity places one at risk for being committed to the demands of evil projects. One might contend that personal integrity is not a human excellence, because it would be better for an agent with immoral projects to lack personal integrity. This objection rests on the assumption that all forms of human excellence are inconsistent with agents having deep projects that are immoral. Although it may be appropriate to hold agents morally blameworthy for pursuing immoral projects (and those agents may be condemned for lacking moral integrity), it would not be unreasonable to also commend those agents for their personal integrity. Walter White has immoral projects but many viewers of *Breaking Bad* admire his personal integrity. Drawing on Kimberley Brownlee's helpful work, one might make the following distinction between conscience and conviction.[61] 'Conscience' is a normative term that refers to genuine moral responsiveness. 'Conscientious conviction' is a psychological term that refers to an agent's sincere and steadfast pursuit of her projects. Given this usage, one can see that moral integrity is based on acts of conscience and personal integrity is based on conscientious conviction. Following Brownlee, one might argue that there are reasons to commend and legally protect conscientious

[60] For defenses of this kind of approach to integrity, see Cottingham, Ibid.; and see Jody Graham, "Does Integrity Require Moral Goodness?" *Ratio* 14 (2001), pp. 234–251.

[61] Kimberley Brownlee, *Conscience and Conviction: The Case for Civil Disobedience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

convictions, even if they are in the service of immoral projects. In many contexts it is reasonable to commend the personal autonomy, psychological integrity, and conscientiousness of others, even when those others are deploying those traits for immoral ends or against us. There may be trade-offs between human excellences and the pursuit of immoral projects may come at the cost of moral integrity but the value of the personal integrity that may be acquired may promote certain human excellences. Moreover, projects that are immoral along one dimension of morality may also be permissible along another dimension or morality: however, defending this claim would require taking a stand on the difficult issue of whether there are genuine moral dilemmas.

4 Concluding Remarks

Williams' conception of integrity reveals the importance of widening one's conception of morality to include considerations of partial inter-personal relations, authenticity, practical identity, and loyalties. One challenge facing both AU and defenders of Williams' conception of integrity is that both views are straddled with the task of explaining the psychological placeholders that are going to do the normative work in their theories. Utilitiarians need to explain the nature of the psychological states that are the basis for utility. Defenders of Williams's critique of AU must explain the nature and value of the deep commitments that are the basis of integrity. I have argued that Williams' conception of personal integrity as the pursuit of one's projects provides a strong objection to AU and reveals the normative significance of integrity. Williams' arguments reveal that AU has untenable second-order, meta-ethical commitments. Those arguments should pressure consequentialists to revise AU and promote a version of consequentialism that avoids aggregating utility. I have also argued that Williams' conception of integrity can withstand the scrutiny brought upon it by the self-indulgence objection. However, defenders of his conception of integrity must admit that personal integrity does place one in the danger of having evil projects.[62]

[62] I am grateful to Robert Adams, Simon Blackburn, Dana Falkenberg, Carl Ficarotta, Thomas E. Hill Jr., Loren Lomasky, William Lycan, Alastair Norcross, Gerald Postema, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, C.D.C. Reeve, Walter Sinnot-Armstrong, and Susan Wolf for helpful discussions regarding the arguments contained in this essay. I am particularly indebted to Cora Diamond, John Hacker-Wright, and two anonymous referees for *The Journal of Value Inquiry* for valuable comments on earlier drafts of this essay. Research for this project was supported by grant number (2T32NR008856, Barbara Mark, Director), which was funded by The National Institute of Nursing Research and The National Institutes of Health.