Integrity and its relationship to morality

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Abstract

Some scholars take it for granted that one’s possession of integrity has nothing to do with one’s moral quality whereas others believe that they are no doubt intertwined. Hume, for instance, holds that a person who ambitiously tries to gain a great achievement can still be a person of integrity even if he is dishonest with others. Plato’s concept of integrity can be formulated in the way that a person with morally vicious commitments has disunity in his soul and fails to possess integrity. In order to decide which side is right, I suggest that we examine the most promising current views on integrity and see whether the most appropriate one can offer an answer to the relationship between integrity and morality.

The integrated-self view turns out to be the most appropriate one out of five promising theories. According to the integrated-self view, integrity is a unification of one’s inner desires or volitions in the way that one does not fail to make up one’s mind. According to my version of the view, however, the integration of oneself would not be complete if one does not take considerations of how others think of his actions or decisions. Especially when you try to decide on an action that you think that others would disagree with, you would ask yourself ‘Are you okay with the way that other people see
you with this new decision?" Such decision-making is a certain compromise between the way that you reflect upon how other people would think of yourself and the way that you reflect upon yourself with the decision. My argument suggests that if a person possesses integrity, it usually means that he does not have the morally vicious commitments or principles that other people would obnoxiously disagree with.