Integration, Ambivalence, and Mental Conflict

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To my parents, Gary and Rosalind, for their love and support.

Abstract

In this thesis I critique a philosophical ideal of mental organization: that one's mind ought to be integrated, that is, lack conflicts or ambivalence between mental states, because disintegration is argued to impair one's agency and undermine one's well-being. My argument has three parts. In part one, I describe Plato's maximalist version of the ideal where, if ideally organized, one's psyche lacks conflicts because one's rational faculty, aware of what is valuable, harmonises one's motivational and affective states. I also argue that any dispute about integration is orthogonal to the dispute between value monists and value pluralists. In part two, I contest the integration ideal by criticizing three manifestations of it in contemporary philosophy. I focus on the organization of desire, and on deliberative and affective ambivalence. My arguments have a similar structure. First, I challenge the link between the integrated mind and the purported benefits of unimpaired agency and well-being. On investigation, this apparent connection is largely contingent. Not all conflicts or ambivalence are harmful, and other social or psychological factors are relevant in case where they are damaging. Secondly, I argue that there are contexts where integration is a form of mental rigidity or harmful impoverishment. Thirdly, I argue that being disintegrated seems morally good in some situations where one manifests fitting states of mind, particularly emotions. In part three, I ask whether integration can be reinterpreted to salvage an alternative ideal. After rejecting a promising candidate found in Kleinian psychoanalytic theory, I offer my own account of integration as a two-part capacity to tolerate difficult mental states (not necessarily *bad* mental states - excitement can be hard to tolerate), and to avoid being reflectively passive as one's mental organization changes. This capacity has rational and non-rational elements. Finally, I consider how this reinterpreted capacity relates to the practice of virtue. I conclude that integration is not a virtue, and may be compatible with some viciousness, but it enables one to be virtuous in situations where there are pressures towards being insensitively singleminded.

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The pleasurable fantasy of writing my acknowledgements has shadowed me for over three years. I envisioned myself in the future perfect tense at a time by which I *would have* written them: a time of unpredictable significance. As that moment nears, and reality interjects, I feel trepidation and gratitude.

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Introduction

> We *are* already a set of disparate elements; whether or not we then *become* a whole of which they are parts depends on the success of our attempts at self-unification, on the measure of artistry we import into our existence. (Landy, 2004, p.123)

A few years ago, before I committed to novels as the ideal form of bedtime reading, I was reading something from the literature of virtue ethics before I slept. My memory is hazy, but I suspect it was by Julia Annas, whose work I admire. It was late and I was reading for pleasure, not a specific project, but I could not shake off a claim I encountered: one's whole life is the ideal frame of reference when thinking ethically.

My tired eyes could have justifiably skipped over this idea, for surely ethics is about life in some capacity, and it must be terrible after years, even decades, to realise that one has overlooked something of ethical importance, or allowed some important project to sink into the background. Troublingly, however, my mind remained utterly blank: What would it even mean to think of my life as a whole?

Usually, I resolve to address questions in the morning only to forget them: there is no notebook on my nightstand. But this question remained with me. Initially, I struggled against my selective memory. I had no clear sense of my past life as a unity, so I turned to the future. Again, I discovered little: scrappy ambitions, part-intimations, fragmented conceptions of success, but no sense of my life as a whole. My interest in the claim I had encountered was exacerbated by this foray into the empty rooms of my mind; I seemed unable to think it, which – by its own lights – amounts to an ethical failure.

In reading more, I noted that several distinct ideals were frequently blurred together. In particular, the passive ideal frame of reference internal to one's ethical thinking is to be contrasted with the active ideal of a life that one has shaped into a unity. The latter ideal is consistent with my psychological shortcomings. Even though I had a poor grasp of my life, I could work to unify it: my ends and goals should harmonise, my relationships and commitments should complement each other, and my character should facilitate these unities.

Still, I struggled to grasp why this is ideal. A compartmentalised or double life did not seem obviously compromised in virtue of its organisation, especially if deliberately shaped around a core commitment to honesty, or emotional integrity. Nor was I willing to blindly swallow references to unity and harmony, with their resonant histories, without further thinking.

This thesis arose out of such thoughts. Quickly, I realised that it is important to distinguish between the organisation inherent in lives, such as the relationship between one's job, social roles, and wider values – matters which organise one's time and constrain one's actions - and the organisation of character and mind. For internally conflicted people can lead unified lives by accident, and the lives of unified people can break down due to unanticipated external pressures. Each form of organisation, in the circumstances of a life, and in one's mind, reciprocally impacts upon the other, a fact that motivates the interest within virtue ethics in lives alongside its obvious interest in the development of character.

However, it began to seem natural first to think about mental organization, and eventually I lacked space to write about the organisation of lives. The character of one's mind directly affects the life one can pursue. More contentiously, but not implausibly, even if one is unable to change one's circumstances one can certainly work on oneself. This thought has appealed to philosophers since Socrates, and many are seduced by the idea that philosophy generates a distinct form of relationship with, or work on, oneself. Once shorn of arrogance, it is plausible to think that a valuable form of self-directed attention underpins both personal flourishing and good ethical reasoning. A forceful question that one inevitably faces, however, is this: to what personal end should this attention be directed?

In both philosophical writing, and ordinary speech, one such end is described in terms of organisational harmony. Contrast, for example, the organisation of virtuous traits (must they form a unity? what would that mean?) – a longstanding object of interest in philosophy – with the distinct ideal invoked when one praises of a friend who has "got it together" after losing their job or experiencing a troubled breakup. The ideal of a unified self has wide appeal, to the point that 'harmony' and 'unity' are common self-help tropes. Philosophy is not the only genre where phrases can bear rhetorical weight only to collapse under scrutiny.

My initial incomprehension surfaced again with respect to personal ideals of the unified or integrated mind. Why are ideals of unity and harmony often lauded? To me it seems obvious that conflicts and ambivalence are inescapable features of any mental landscape. That thought helped motivate my research. Still, one cannot argue from the fact that an end state is seldom or never realized, to the normative claim that such a state represents a false ideal, without further premises. My aversion to talk of unity might just be a revealing artefact of my own psychology.

That remains a possibility. Indeed, it remains possible that my incomprehension before the idea of my life as a whole is equally revealing. Reticence is often a sign of immaturity, and with the perspective of a few more years my opinion of the 'origins' of this work may change. Motivation aside, however, I hope to have replaced my vague intimations with arguments in the following chapters.

At times I think philosophers exaggerate the extent to which their work consists of argument in the formal sense. Much of what I offer here is just exhortation to look differently upon the ideal of a mind free of conflicts and ambivalence. But if my arguments are right, I am safe in saying that often a change in one's *response* to a knot in mental life is more important than the removal of the knot itself. As with personal conflicts, so with philosophical problems, perhaps.

The Structure of my Argument

My argument divides into three main parts. In part one, chapters one and two, my primary task is to outline and motivate the ideal of mental organization - which I call the "integration ideal" - which I examine in the subsequent two parts. In chapter one, I describe the integration ideal and locate it within a historical context; in chapter two, I illustrate that the ideal is of philosophical and practical interest irrespective of one's view about the structure of value. In the second part, chapters three to six, I criticize this ideal by criticizing three different ways in which it is articulated in contemporary philosophy. My arguments in each of chapters three to six have a similar structure. First, I challenge the link between the integrated mind and its purported benefits; secondly, I argue that there are contexts when being integrated incurs its own costs; and thirdly, I argue that there are contexts when being disintegrated confers benefits. In the third part of the thesis, chapters seven to eight, I ask whether it is possible to salvage an alternative ideal of integration by reinterpreting the notion. I offer my own account of integration as a capacity, and amplify what this ideal amounts to by asking how it relates to moral virtue.

Chapter One

Ideals of an integrated and conflict-free mind are common, and can be developed in many directions. My task in chapter one is to define and motivate a version of this ideal, and give it some historical context. I do the latter by considering the ideal, in its maximalist form, as presented in Plato's *Republic*. Plato's conception of mental organisation encompasses many kinds of mental state and experience. He develops an ideal of the harmonious soul, which lacks conflicts between its parts because reason rules. Plato thinks that one's integrated soul enables one to act well, to possess well-being, and to be virtuous. Using Plato as a starting point, I then provide my own statement of the integration ideal, its central features being absence of conflict and of various kinds of ambivalence. This ideal then serves as the target of my arguments, while retaining the Platonic points of focus: action, well-being, and virtue.

Chapter Two

One premise I share with Plato is that many mental states – a term I intend to be as colourless as possible – are oriented (as I shall put it) to value, by which I mean they are accompanied by, or open to, a belief about the value of their object i.e. they are judgement sensitive attitudes. Acceptance of this premise threatens to drain the integration ideal of independent interest, for one might think that the good or bad of integration depends entirely on another philosophical dispute: that between value monists and value pluralists. Specifically, if value monism is true, and mental states are oriented to value, then isn't the ideal state of mind just that which follows from being duly attentive to the one and only value? Thus integration would not be a self-standing ideal. Meanwhile, if value pluralism is true then can one not be warranted in being mentally conflicted simply because values themselves conflict? Thus integration would be a false ideal. My task in chapter two, therefore, is to show that the integration ideal is worthy of independent consideration, irrespective of one's view about the topology of value.

I argue that value monists may have reason not to subscribe to the integration ideal, so the ideal is not a simple consequence of their commitment to monism.

Not all mental states are oriented to value, for example, some non-rational desires and affective states, and it is not clear that rational ideals should dominate one's life. A similar argument applies to value pluralism, for some issues of mental organization are orthogonal to the issue of value topology. But in any case, even if values unavoidably conflict, it is not – I argue – incoherent to try to actively shape one's mental life to *avoid* these conflicts. This is a further reason why the standing of the integration ideal cannot be settled simply by grasping the correct theory of the topology of value.

Chapter Three

In chapter three, I focus on Michael Smith's conception of the ideal organization of desire. According to Smith, even non-occurrently conflicting desires ought to be integrated together. His view appears to reflect the character of everyday forms of justification and explanation.

Smith's view is worth considering for several reasons: it aids my later examination of ambivalence; is a manageable target when arguing that conflicts need not impair agency or undermine well-being; relates integration to rationality in a manner similar to Plato's conception of soul; and allows me to respond that even integrated people can be harmed as a result of their mental organisation.

Smith's argument involves an analogy with coherentist views of belief. I reconstruct the argument to offer a critique. Siding with Niko Kolodny, I argue that one's concern with coherence *simpliciter* is not rational in the case of belief, so if the analogy with belief holds, it does not support Smith's ideal for desires. But it is not clear there is an end towards which desires 'tend' that is analogous to truth in the case of belief. One might think desire-satisfaction is a good candidate, but I argue it is highly contingent that integrated desires are easier to satisfy; that one's focus on the organisation of desires can contribute to alienation from one's desires; and – drawing on cases of neurotic desire - that some forms of unified desire are harmful. Thus if there is a viable ideal of mind, rightly named integration, it does not involve this kind of unity, as this unity is compatible with one's being in a bad way.

Chapter Four

To focus my approach to the integration ideal, I shall examine two philosophers who argue that the avoidance of ambivalence is necessary for unimpaired agency and for well-being. Ambivalence is a suitable focus for several reasons. First, ambivalence is a familiar phenomenon. Secondly, ambivalence is a complex phenomenon that ranges over affective life, motivational states, and one's values, in both diachronic and synchronic manifestations. Thirdly, ambivalence looks as if it is closely tied to action: episodic ambivalence may interfere with an action, whereas habitual ambivalence is taken to radically impair agency. Fourthly, ambivalence is taken to be unpleasant and is thus associated negatively with well-being. Finally, to understand ambivalence one has to distinguish it from other kinds of mental conflict. Thus it is a useful focal point in a broader discussion of the ideal of integration, as integration and conflict are contraries. I have two goals in chapters four and five: to describe the varieties of ambivalence, and to argue that ambivalence is a familiar and unthreatening experience. In both chapters, I will argue that there is no direct connection between ambivalence and its purported consequences: impaired agency and diminished well-being.

In chapter four, I analyse ambivalence, and distinguish between deliberative and affective ambivalence. I then focus on deliberative ambivalence, and Harry Frankfurt's arguments to the effect that it is bad. He thinks deliberative ambivalence is a form of irrationality, undermines action, and is a form of self-betrayal; he contrasts ambivalence with the state of being wholehearted – his articulation of the integration ideal.

The main thrust of my argument sees me develop David Velleman's suggestion that usually it is one's response to one's own ambivalence, not one's ambivalence itself, that generates agential problems or compromises well-being. I consider some of the factors that can problematize one's ambivalence, but I am cautious when trying to define which kinds of ambivalence would be experienced as a problem. I am motivated by Patricia Marino's idea that from an agent's perspective, both ordinary and intractable conflicts have the same subjective character, and thus the objective character of one's ambivalence is orthogonal to its experienced place in one's mind. Furthermore, ambivalence may constitute part of one's identity, so its removal could constitute a tragic loss.

In the final part of the chapter, however, I argue that there is one form of ambivalence that really is specially harmful, because it manifests underlying distortions in one's ability to be motivated and thus to make decisions based on one's desires. This is the grain of truth in Frankfurt's hostility to ambivalence, and articulation of the integration ideal. I term this "obstructive ambivalence" and argue it is seldom reasonable, is marked by dissatisfaction, and is not readily removed by rational deliberation.

Chapter Five

In chapter five, I turn to what I call affective ambivalence, and the work of David Pugmire. Pugmire argues that an integrated mind, one free of background conflicts and ambivalence, is necessary for deep emotions, and that one's emotions cannot be stably configured in ambivalence without substantially impairing one's agency. One is indeed harmed if one's emotions cannot be deep, so taking on Pugmire's view furthers my attempt to show that the absence of integration is neither necessarily harmful, nor impairs agency.

Like Smith's, Pugmire's arguments rest on a coherentist analogy. Pugmire thinks one's emotions have to be stably integrated into one's harmonious mental life if they are to be valuable. Against this, I argue that some deep emotions may arise in a compartmentalized and thus not fully integrated mind; or, more strongly, may presuppose disintegration. I also challenge the viability of his comparison with belief. Pugmire thinks ambivalence is almost impossible, because as he conceives it, it would embroil one in conceptual tensions and render one unable to act. I argue this is mistaken. Specifying conceptual connections between any emotions is difficult. Moreover, one might be ambivalent in a broadly ramifying way, and thus retain the conceptual links between one's emotions because they are all experienced ambivalently. The link between ambivalent emotions and action is also indirect. Pugmire is wrong to think ambivalent emotions straightforwardly undermine one's motivations, or that having internally conflicting motivations will directly make decisive action difficult. He is also wrong to think that appeals to various kinds of emotional self-management illustrate that people are unable to be ambivalent. This self-management must presuppose ambivalence, but more importantly the forms of self-management he describes are often more likely to undermine one's well-being and agency than ambivalence itself.

I explore the latter idea by examining a form of unconscious defence against difficult emotions: "projective identification", a concept at the heart of Kleinian psychoanalytic thinking. After introducing the concept, my argument mirrors that made against Smith; namely, there are times when the absence of affective ambivalence is directly harmful. I suggest that defences like projective identification can do away with affective ambivalence, but at the cost of being greatly insensitive to what is going on within oneself (to whether one is angry, sad etc.), and to the mental lives of one's interlocutors. Thus not only is affective ambivalence possible, and not in direct tension with action and well-being, but its presence can indicate one is not gripped by distorting defence mechanisms.

Chapter Six

In chapters three to five, I contest the alleged link between integration, action, and well-being. In chapter six I push my argument further, arguing that the presence of conflicts and ambivalence can manifest good character. I situate my argument in a line of ethical thought, exemplified by Iris Murdoch, which resists the "choice and argument" model of agency in which choice and deliberation are prioritized, or are regarded as the only modes of ethical thinking.

Although I argued, in chapter four, that deliberative ambivalence is not necessarily in tension with acting well, it is obvious that one often needs to act decisively. Yet there are many different ways in which decisive people act - many ways in which actions are modified adverbially – and one may act ambivalently, even if one is not ambivalent with respect to one's decision. Indeed I argue not only that acting in this way is possible, but that there are contexts where it is good. I offer the positive example of Captain Vere from Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Foretopman*, and a negative example of Agamemnon at Aulis, as envisioned by Aeschylus. I argue that these men differ in terms of their ethical sensitivity.

There are three components to ethical sensitivity: sensitivity in deliberation, in action, and over time. Prior to action, one must reason imaginatively. In action, one manifests good character in one's affective posture, tone, etc. and must maintain an awareness of the reasons that bore on one's situation prior to decision. One may object that psychological limitations make it hard for people to be sensitive whilst they act. I respond by pointing out that I am describing an ideal; that psychological claims do not automatically justify failures of sensitivity; and that momentary lapses of sensitivity can be recovered from at a later time, but the fact one values these recoveries merely illustrates that these lapses are exceptions from an underlying ideal sensitivity. One needs to be sensitive to past actions over time. One is able to be so by manifesting a rich array of remainders and past-directed attitudes, by remembering what one did, and, in some cases, by making reparations. I situate this view against the background debate about whether countervailing reasons should be 'silenced' in a virtuous person as they act, and argue against the silencing view. Thus having a good character may involve being ambivalent. Then I discuss descriptive ambivalence in which one maintains or develops a variety of descriptive perspectives on one's situation in difficult contexts. This is linked to forms of creative action and the wider issue of what constitutes good practical reasoning.

Chapter Seven

My arguments in chapters three to six may appear to have undermined the viability of the integration ideal. But can we salvage the basic thought that a certain form of mental organisation, concerned with the way aspects of one's mental life hang together, is ideal, and potentially connected to moral character? If my remarks in chapter six are plausible then there are grounds to look for another kind of integration, one that might underpin Captain Vere's moral sensitivity, for example.

My attempt to salvage a new interpretation of integration rests on an initial distinction between a "Parts Conception" of integration, where integration consists in the absence of conflicts and ambivalence between one's various states of mind, and a "Character Conception", where integration is understood in terms of the relations between those states and oneself. The latter conception, unlike the former, is compatible with those states being in conflict with each other.

At the end of chapter five, I discussed how projective identification might do away with inner conflict at the cost of ethically relevant failures of self-awareness. These failures are failures of integration on the Character Conception. Thus one natural way of developing a new ideal would be to turn to the Kleinian notion of the "depressive position": a form of mental organisation in which processes like projective identification are relaxed and one is able to tolerate and acknowledge a variety of possibly conflicting experiences; like pleasure or excitement, these experiences need not be *per se* negative.

After noting the ambiguous normative status of the depressive position within the

Kleinian tradition where it originates, I present some objections to the suggestion that if integration is interpreted as 'being in the depressive position', this will serve to rehabilitate integration as an ideal. Though I dismiss the first two - that one cannot stably aim for the depressive position, and that a conscious focus on it is liable to have an inflexible role in mental life – the third sticks: the depressive position lacks sufficient generality for an ideal of mental organization because leaving it can be pleasurable, instrumentally valuable, and ethically appropriate in some contexts.

These shifts of mental position are commonplace, but one ought not remain reflectively passive in the face of them. This thought motivates my positive suggestion that the right way to see integration, if it is to be salvaged as an ideal, is as a capacity, not an end state. I argue this capacity has two interlinked facets: first, the ability to tolerate difficult states of mind, and secondly, the ability to navigate between different forms of mental organization, the depressive and contrasting positions, in accordance with what the context requires. Both facets of this capacity have rational and non-rational elements.

Chapter Eight

The integration capacity I describe in chapter seven is surely in some sense a personal excellence, so it will help to fix what kind of personal excellence it is by asking whether it belongs to moral philosophy's best-known kind: moral virtue. One might think I answered this question in chapter six, where I suggested that one's ability to tolerate and manifest ambivalent emotions, for example, shows good character. However, one can ask whether this is because one possesses a distinct capacity, or because one manifests ordinary virtue traits (if the latter was true, the integration ideal would once again vanish as a self-standing ideal). The behaviour of my exemplars may seem good, but the character of this is unclear.

I reject the idea that integration is akin to many Aristotelian-type virtues due to the way it relates to a field of characteristic activity and motivation. However, the virtue of courage also has these features. Moreover, courage and the integration capacity appear similar, because the latter requires one to tolerate difficult mental experiences and, like the former, may appear to play an executive role in one's mind. I contest this association and argue that integration is not courage under another name. Nor is it a related, yet hitherto unnamed, virtue. I argue that the toleration internal to integration is not akin to stoic toleration, though that would motivate the claim that it is a virtue. My main argument to the effect that integration is not a virtue rests on the idea that it might underpin specific forms of cruelty. One who is integrated in my alternative sense does not defensively project away their states of mind. Thus they can accurately engage with the mental lives of others: a form of intimacy that underpins forms of knowing harm. However, integration might not be compatible with sustained viciousness. Thus I conclude that the capacity underpins virtue, though it is not sufficient for virtue.

Why This Matters

My discussion of integration as an ideal may seem rarefied, but it matters. In philosophy, ideals of mental organisation can be investigated separately from ideals of virtuous character. Ordinary talk about 'balance' or 'getting it together' corresponds to the former domain, even if there is no corresponding domain of philosophy, yet. This talk concerns one's attitude to the familiar pressures within mental life, including conflicts and ambivalence, not one's moral character directly.

Integration is also a practical ideal. It's a familiar feeling to 'fall to bits', even if this happens infrequently. Thus anyone has *prima facie* reason to be interested in how these experiences should be understood, what they involve, whether they are bad, and how they relate to broader moral concerns. This is especially relevant once one notices the prevalence of social norms that inhibit this thinking: norms of decisiveness, resolve, stoicism, and so on. Not only are these norms often unwarranted or destructive, but it is easy to overlook the fact that they manifest substantive views about how one's mind ought to be organised. These views are worthy of scrutiny. Such scrutiny is of academic interest because these views have a history and seem plausible because of their relationship to background conceptions of mind, value, and ethical life.

This scrutiny is also personally relevant because it is easy to labour under a false ideal that is hostile to ambivalence and conflict. If sustained, one's life can be brought to breaking point by the attempt to avoid conflicts or suppress ambivalence, by the attempt to outrun or avoid difficult emotions or momentary indecision. One's relationships to others, particularly one's most intimate relationships, are directly affected by one's conception of what states of mind are acceptable. If a couple cannot tolerate each other's conflicts and ambivalences; if each partner attempts to remain stoical, or never acts ambivalently even when a situation is complex, their relationship will suffer. This is so even if each person is sufficiently good, or acts on the basis of good reasons. Ideals of mental organisation shape the impact and reach of such reasons. One might grasp all the reasons in the world, yet remain insensitive to one's own emotions, and thus fail to be related in the right way to those reasons, because they fail to move one in the right ways. Over time, one may become aware of this impoverishment, and realise that although one 'made up one's mind', there is more to having a mind than making choices: the meanings and affective contours of those choices also have to be experienced and in some contexts: tolerated. A person who is integrated in the sense that their mind lacks conflicts between mental states (as on a Parts Conception of integration) can still struggle make up their mind in this sense. Although they may be free of conflict, they may remain in the grip of various mental pressures, or suffer forms of loss, which far outweigh the benefits of their integrated state. On my revised conception of integration (a Character Conception), one may experience conflicts and ambivalence, but one is not shorn of important aspects of one's identity, wracked by loss, or beholden to fragile ideals of coherence; ideals which can mask one's continuing failure to confront the pressures and constraints that saturate any life.

Chapter One

The Integration Ideal

> "He [Plato] no doubt had his own experience of the divided soul." (Murdoch, 1990, p.15)

> Conflict, social and psychological, was the great evil for Plato and Aristotle. From the stratification of classes in the city, each playing its own role, a satisfying harmony is to arise, and that harmony defines social justice. Similarly with the governance of an individual soul. Individuals cannot fall into painful inner conflict if in each of them personal ideals, desires, emotions, and habits of feeling are governed by certain knowledge of fixed norms and principles. (Hampshire, 1996, p.156)

Introduction

My goal in this thesis is to examine the character and plausibility of an ideal of mental organization, which I shall call the integration ideal. Advocates of this ideal argue that one's mind is better, in respect of one's agency and well-being, to the extent that it lacks conflicts and ambivalence.

The integration ideal can be advocated in different ways. In its maximalist form, one's mental states will be harmonised, according to a rational conception of what is valuable, with the consequence that one's well-being is promoted, and one is able to act well. This is a strong and substantive view. Not all advocates of the integration ideal will subscribe to such a view. Weaker versions of the integration ideal focus on the supposed connections between the absence of conflict between mental states, or the absence of ambivalence, and personal well-being, rationality, and agency.

The maximalist form of the integration ideal has a eudemonistic character. Advocates of this view, such as Plato, whose account I outline below, argue that an integrated mind is inseparable from practical rationality and personal well-being, and that a disintegrated mind underpins unethical conduct. For Plato, integration is not simply an ideal of "psychological topology" (Pippin, 2010, p.107), that is, of mental organization; it is also an ideal of "moral topology" (Taylor, 1989, p.111-

14)[1] because mental organization is held to be inseparable from a nexus of wider ethical concerns. Pauline Chazan, for example, develops an Aristotelian conception of mental organization, and argues, negatively, that:

> Conflict, instability and changeability within the self preclude the presence of the kind of psychic strength and harmony required for virtue. (1998, p.87)

More positively, she thinks:

> what must be true of a self, in order that it be capable of relating to another in the way that a character-friend does, is that it be a self that has no need to develop strategies to avoid self fragmentation, and that it have the flexibility of response to the world and to others that precludes the development of a 'false self'. (Ibid. p.81)

Often it is hard to distinguish ideals of mental organization from claims about the ideal structure of moral traits, such as virtues. However, ideals of mental organization distinct from ideals of moral character abound. Debate about the structure of desires and ends is visible in Stoic philosophy, in post-Kantian philosophy, in existentialism, as well as in ongoing debates in psychoanalysis and the philosophy of psychiatry. These debates focus on a range of personal values, including aesthetic value, as well as the nature and significance of internal conflicts in relation to action, well-being, and variously understood notions of resilience, health, and creativity. One cannot assume that these ideals of mental organization are straightforwardly related to ethical matters. It is *possible* to develop an ideal of mental organization in isolation from a view about good character or ethical conduct, as a variety of theories – such as Nietzsche's moral psychology, or psychoanalytic theory in its various manifestations – attest. Of course, one faces hard questions about the purpose and plausibility of a free-floating ideal of mental organization. I will face these questions directly in chapter eight. Even Plato and Aristotle, who are key advocates of a tight relationship between mental organization and virtue, developed their views at two theoretical levels: that of the various faculties of mind and how they are best put together, and that of the individual virtues. Until the recent revival of virtue ethics, discussion of the virtues was relatively rare, yet broad organizational concerns featured in burgeoning

[1] Taylor urges us to remember that, "being a self is inseparable from existing in a space of moral issues, to do with identity and how one ought to be" (Ibid.)

accounts of autonomy or authenticity. Moreover, the distinction between questions of moral structure and mental organization has a clear place in ordinary language – one can be concerned whether a friend's emotions and desires are 'balanced' or 'out of sync', and whether they have 'got it together', without this concern touching on their moral character. So one is justified in not identifying the two, or presupposing a tight relationship between them, from the outset.

One might be concerned that in taking a critical stance towards the integration ideal, I am presupposing that the self is a fiction, or fragmented into discrete states.[2] But considerations of mental organization are in fact orthogonal to the question whether the self is ultimately a fiction, for if the self were ultimately a fiction, one could still ask what ideal form the fiction took – whether or not, for example, it might have room for various forms of disunity.

For similar reasons, my arguments will be of interest to people who argue that one's general concern with persons, including our ethical concern, can drift free of one's views about their metaphysical status. Susan Wolf, for example, whose claim that her "reasons for being interested in persons never had much to do with [her] beliefs about their metaphysical composition in the first place" (1986, p.705), is clearly influenced by 'minimalism': the view that "metaphysical pictures of the justificatory undergirdings of our practices do not represent the real conditions of justification of those practices. […] [T]he presence or absence of "deep facts" about personal identity is largely irrelevant to justifying our ordinary normative practices" (Perrett, 2002, p.375).

The integration ideal is a practical concern distinct from considerations about how one's theoretical beliefs or reasoning should be organised. Though such considerations make for useful analogies, my primary interest is in the relationship between mental organization and practical thought and behaviour, because it is widely thought that disharmony in these aspects of mental life cause suffering, and undermine action, more directly than do epistemic errors or errors of theoretical reasoning.

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[2] A view often associated with David Hume (1978, p.251). The ancient Indian Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu develops a related argument that the self is a fiction, (Vasubandhu, 1989, pp.137–87). For a postmodern view, see Gergen, (1991). For an overview, see Sorabji (2006).

In general, ideals are “models of excellence or conceptions of perfection around which we can orient our thoughts and conduct” (Brownlee, 2010, p.242). Ideals span two dichotomies: personal vs. public, and optional vs. mandatory. Personal ideals concern individuals: their characters, conduct, and moral lives. Impersonal ideals concern groups and broad goals, such as the pursuit of truth. Optional ideals, like artistic excellence, organize activities we have no obligation to pursue. Mandatory ideals, by contrast, concern all individuals. One’s conduct ought to be shaped by ideals of kindness and civility, for example.

Ideals are occasionally understood as being essentially unrealizable, i.e. they purportedly function as paradigms one can aspire towards, but never instantiate fully (Rescher, 1992). This claim is controversial. It can also take two forms. The first mentions contingent, yet unavoidable, features that prevent the realization of the ideal, such as imperfect knowledge or practical imitations. The second regards unrealizability as a constitutive aspect of an ideal, where the very thought that one has perfectly realized the ideal is in tension with what is required from one who *properly* understands the ideal.[3]

Integration is a personal ideal, because it concerns one’s mental life and one’s actions. (I shall not consider the existence and extent of potential obligations regarding the integration of other people.) Over the course of my argument, I will question whether integration is a mandatory ideal and, if so, of what kind.

Finally, any ideal of mental organization is first, informed by a conception of the constituents of mental life, and secondly, by a conception of threats to mental structure; integration is only interesting if disintegration is a potential danger.

The Platonic Soul

In the *Republic,* Plato presents probably the best-known philosophical ideal of mental structure.[4] In this section, I recapitulate Plato’s arguments and describe his conception of the ideal soul. My exegesis will not definitively summarize Plato’s view. Instead, I will present a reconstructed account of how the moral-

[3] Jonathan Lear’s discussion of “subjective concepts” such as “psychoanalyst” is a good example of this kind of ideal (Lear, 2003, Chapter Two).

[4] I use ‘soul’ when discussing the *Republic*, and ‘mind’ elsewhere.

psychological themes of the *Republic* coalesce into a maximalist ideal of mental organisation that remains attractive today.[5]

The *Republic* contains a complex and multifaceted conception of the elements and organisation of the soul (*psuche*).[6] One is told at least six things. First, what comprises the soul; second, how, as a matter of fact, the soul's elements can be organised; third, the origins of these organisational structures; fourth, the ideal form of the soul's organisation; fifth, the dangers that threaten this ideal; and, finally, the means one can take to secure the ideal.[7]

Plato's ideal of the integrated soul encompasses the quality of one's inner life, one's ability to experience pleasure, the nature and content of one's practical reasoning, the qualitative character of one's actions (including their moral character), the vivacity of one's emotions, and the expansiveness of one's self-conception. Plato emphasizes the role of education, the force of social and cultural pressures, and the importance of sociality, in shaping the well-organized soul.[8]

The argument about the nature of soul (starting in book IV) arises in the context of a discussion driven by an analogy between the city and the soul.[9] True understanding of justice depends on whether it is applicable to both contexts (cf. 434e). Socrates establishes a theoretical principle, to aid his investigation of the similarities between city and soul:

> It is clear that the same thing cannot do or undergo opposite things; not, at

[5] I will sidestep the question of 'whose' view is being advanced in the *Republic* and the knot of questions surrounding the relationship between the historical Plato, the historical Socrates, and how they are both conveyed in the text.

[6] All references to the *Republic* are to Plato (2004).

[7] Some scholars argue the view in book IV is in tension with the later books of the *Republic* (Ferrari, 2007). I shall remain agnostic as to whether this tension is merely apparent or substantive.

[8] However, as MM McCabe reminds me (personal communication), some may contest this broad view, and argue that analogies like the Cave, in the *Republic*, present a more solitary conception of human flourishing.

[9] See 368c. The city is presented as a "larger" object where justice can be easily seen, which aids Socrates and his interlocutors when it comes to finding it in the soul. Ferrari argues that the city-soul comparison is an analogy not a more substantial relation (cf. Ferrari, G. 2005).

> any rate, in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, at the same time. So, if we ever find that happening here, we will know that we are not dealing with one and the same thing, but with many. (436b)[10]

Variants of this principle arise in discussions of the integrated mind, and underpin some theses I discuss in the following chapters (e.g. chapter five where I discuss ambivalent emotions).

If one appears to be undergoing opposites at one time, then further explanation may be required in terms of multiple elements of one's soul (436a).[11] The principle trades in opposites, not logical alternatives (i.e. pushing and pulling, rather than pushing and not-pushing). Socrates illustrates this idea through a series of examples (436c, 436d-e). Although people can undergo opposites at once, both pushing and pulling a bow, for instance, an apparent contradiction is avoided by distinguishing between a whole *person* undergoing opposites, and their *parts* doing so, in this case their distinct arms. The principle inclines us to specify the subjects of apparently conflicting predicates (cf. Lorenz, 2005, p.150).

This principle is then used to explain examples of human behaviour where people seem to be undergoing opposites. If substantiated, these cases would evidence that one's soul is multipartite, which raises the question as to the relations between the elements (cf. Lorenz, 2005, p.146).

The first example concerns a thirsty person who does not drink (439c). Although urged to drink, something holds them back. Socrates stipulates that the "element doing the stopping" in these cases, is a form of "rational calculation" that counteracts the "drive and drag" of perceptive errors, or diseases like dropsy (439c). Socrates continues:

> It would not be unreasonable for us to claim, then, that there are two elements, different from one another; and to call the element in the soul with which it calculates, the rationally calculating element; and the one with which it feels passion, hungers, thirsts, and is stirred by other appetites, the irrational and appetitive element, friend to certain ways of being filled and certain

[10] This is often described as the "Principle of Opposites" (Anagnostopoulos, 2005, p.171).

[11] I follow Ferrari in using the term 'elements' of soul, in order to reflect the, possibly deliberate, vagueness of Plato's terminology (Ferrari, 2007, p.165 fn.1). This usage also accords with the translation of the *Republic* that I quote from.

> pleasures. (439c-d)

Thus the soul has at least two elements: appetitive and calculative. Discussion then turns to the purported "spirited element" of the soul, which accounts for a person's anger and indignation. Socrates' interlocutors are familiar with spirited behaviour but it requires an explanation. Perhaps anger and other passions should be assimilated to the appetitive aspects of the soul (as Glaucon suggests at 439e).

Socrates offers the story of Leontius to challenge this:

> Leontius, the son of Aglaeon, was going up from the Piraeus along the outside of the North Wall when he saw some corpses with the public executioner nearby. He had an appetitive desire to look at them, but at the same time he was disgusted and turned himself away. For a while he struggled and put his hand over his eyes, but finally, mastered by his appetite, he opened his eyes wide and rushed toward the corpses, saying: "Look for yourselves, you evil wretches; take your fill of the beautiful sight." (439e)

Socrates suggests this complex case indicates that anger "makes war against" appetitive desire i.e. Leontius' desire to look at the corpses.[12] Socrates also appeals to instances where one reasons that one's appetite is unwarranted, and *then* becomes angry with oneself (440b). Waves of anger or resistance to injustice (440c-d) have the superficial character of appetite, but always appear to side with rational calculation (440e). But this does not show that rational calculation and the spirited element of soul are distinct, so the conversation turns to new examples.

Glaucon notes that children are highly spirited, but "as for rational calculation, some of them seem to me never to possess it, while the masses do so quite late" (441b). For Socrates, this is true of animals. He then presents a decisive literary example:

> our earlier quotation from Homer also bears it out: "He struck his chest and spoke to his heart." You see, in it Homer clearly presents what has calculated

[12] There is some lack of clarity about whether the spirited element is active *before* the eventual dominance of the desire in question – when Leontius is "disgusted" and tries to avert his eyes – or whether it is active afterwards, in his theatrical self-admonishment. cf. Lorenz (2005, p.152) for the latter reading. Lorenz appears to overlook the role of disgust in his focus on shame.

> about better and worse, rebuking what is irrationally angry as though it were something different. (441b)

If spirit seems to challenge appetite (as with Leontius) and spirit can be present without reason (as in children) or be challenged *by* reason (as with Odysseus) then it is possible for one to feel anger whilst being led to act contrary to its force by reason, or appetite (and vice versa). One can undergo opposites at the same time: anger urges revenge; reason advocates restraint, which evidences a further partition in one's soul.

Book IV does not describe the soul's three elements of soul in detail. Rational calculation, spirit, and appetite appear to be various capacities; sources of a form of psychic motion, analogous to the push and pull of the bow in Socrates' earlier example (436c, cf. Lorenz, 2005, p.150).[13] This conception is complicated as the subsequent arguments unfold.[14]

As in the city, reason is associated with its natural ally, the spirited element (442). People with wisdom are wise,

> because of the small part that rules in him, makes those pronouncements, and has within it the knowledge of what is advantageous—both for each part and for the whole, the community composed of all three. (442c)

Together rational calculation and spirit control appetite, which is described as the "largest [element] in each person's soul and, by nature, the most insatiable for money" (442a). Appetite can seemingly expand, accommodate or be "filled with" bodily pleasure, and consequently "overturn the whole life of anyone in whom it occurs" (442b).

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[13] At this point this is only a tentative analogy (thus one should not think that this 'motion' is intrinsic to the elements of soul). In the later books of the *Republic,* notions of psychic 'pushing' are more appropriate as the constituents elements of soul begin to look like drives.
[14] Book IV lacks detail about the goals or aims of each mental capacity. Appetite, although linked to money, has other paradigmatic objects such as food and drink. Spirit has been discussed in terms of anger, and resoluteness in action and adversity (and thus appears limited). Rational calculation issues directives, exercises foresight, and also appears to have independent motivational force. For example, reason alone seems sufficient to prevent the thirsty man from drinking. cf. Lorenz, (2005, p.154)

Book IV contains Socrates' most significant description of the ideally structured soul:

> [Justice] is not concerned with someone's doing his own job on the outside. On the contrary, it is concerned with what is inside; with himself, really, and the things that are his own. It means that he does not allow the elements in him each to do the job of some other, or the three sorts of elements in his soul to meddle with one another. Instead, he regulates well what is really his own, rules himself, puts himself in order, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three elements together, just as if they were literally the three defining notes of an octave—lowest, highest, and middle—as well as any others that may be in between. He binds together all of these and, from having been many, becomes entirely one, temperate and harmonious. Then and only then should he turn to action, whether it is to do something concerning the acquisition of wealth or concerning the care of his body, or even something political, or concerning private contracts. In all these areas, he considers and calls just and fine the action that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and wisdom the *knowledge* that oversees such action; and he considers and calls unjust any action that destroys this harmony, and ignorance the *belief* that oversees it. (443c-d, italics in translation)

This passage takes us to the heart of the Platonic conception of the integrated soul: the ideal soul is precisely organized, under reason, with three harmonized parts, which lead to excellent, virtuous, action.

This account presupposes that it is possible for one element of soul to take on the role of another, as when appetite or spirit leads one to act. Socrates is not describing the unity of personhood.[15] A person with a just soul has harmonized its elements: an earned unity that can be lost, or modified (cf. Brown, 2012). If one is ruled by appetite, for instance, one is disintegrated but still a person. Thus people are not identical to their rational elements of soul, although they may identify with it.[16]

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[15] I use the concept of personhood anachronistically here for the purposes of rational reconstruction.

[16] This picture is complicated in book X of the *Republic,* where the soul is compared to the barnacle-encrusted sea God, Glaucus (611c). One way of understanding the comparison is that the encrustations stand for the appetitive and spirited elements of soul directly, thereby suggesting that there is a time when these features of the soul may be removed (i.e. when soul and body separate). I shall not discuss this further.

If Plato is not concerned with the unity of personhood, a further point follows about action. Plato relates the unified mind to action, but Christine Korsgaard interprets the argument as concluding that unity is necessary for any action: "Platonic justice is a constitutive principle of action" (Korsgaard, 2009, p.152). Contrary to this, Socrates describes an ideal of unity that qualitatively alters one's agency. A person whose spirit dominates momentarily is not in any ordinary sense unable to act (they might kill someone in anger), nor is what they do a species of behaviour that falls short of action (indeed such a murder might be intentional). Indeed, Socrates would criticize their actions. Furthermore, Socrates mentions actions that establish harmony in the soul, which *ex hypothesi* only disunified people can undertake. Considerations of unity are relevant, not because they help one locate the existence of agency, but because they help one account for the ways one's actions might go awry or be defective; like Plato, I shall be considering agency in this sense.

The relation between the soul and the good is specified in book VI where Socrates is clear that:

> No one is satisfied to acquire things that are *believed* to be good. On the contrary, everyone seeks the things that *are* good. In this area, everyone disdains mere reputation…[the good] is what every soul pursues, and for its sake does everything. The soul has a hunch that the good is something, but it is puzzled and cannot adequately grasp just what it is or acquire the sort of stable belief about it that it has about other things, and so it misses the benefit, if any, that even those other things may give. (504d-e)

For Plato, one's soul naturally tends towards the good, and ideally reason rules under knowledge of what is good for the whole soul: knowledge that it seeks instinctively. Yet one can be mistaken about what is good and these errors can constrain one's life. Plato details various kinds of non-ideal constitutions, both of city and soul, in book VIII. In doing so, he describes common errors people make about the good.

Disharmony arises out of ignorance. False beliefs about the soul's good arise in particular guises, and coalesce into determinate ideologies. These ideologies are associated with fixed character forms (cf. Parry, 2007, p.319). Today, steadfast 'achievers' frequently have certain beliefs about effort, capitalism, and money, for instance.

In the *Republic* there are only a finite number of ideologies that accompany an equally finite list of soul and city constitutions: the aristocratic, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical.[17] (Plato's *intra*-subjective ideal of soul is reciprocally bound with an *inter*-subjective ideal of social interaction.[18]) The constitutions are understood in terms of what they dispose one to desire (money, bodily pleasure), and how they structure one's wider soul (is spirit likely to ally with reason to tame appetite?).

The activity of the soul's elements ossifies in different forms. One may harbour desires for certain objects, or find that one's desires are rarely checked by judgments about what is good. Alternatively, one may struggle to know what one desires, and lead a neurotic life. Not all of these forms accord with the natures of the soul's elements.[19] Thus they cannot be ideal forms of psychic organization. Only the aristocratic/philosophical constitution has this status.

Plato complicates his conception of appetite by distinguishing between necessary and unnecessary appetites (558d) and "lawful" and "lawless" appetites (571c). He also describes the varieties of pleasure sought by the parts of the soul (580d). Appetite aims after diffuse pleasure, which is represented by the desire for money (580d). The aim of spirit "is always mastery, victory, and high repute" (581ab). Finally, the aim of reason is to "wholly strive" after wisdom and the truth. Socrates labels it "learning-loving and philosophic" (581b).

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[17] It is an open question whether this is a contingent fact, one dependent on the available social ideologies at the time, which may support and underpin various mental dispositions to generate character types. We can wonder whether other constitutions may be possible, such as the anarchic, or technocratic, and so on.

[18] Jonathan Lear develops an interesting reading of the *Republic* along these lines by charting the interactions between the way individuals internalize aspects of their cultural context, and the way that such contexts are shaped by the externalizations of individual souls, cf. "Inside and Outside the *Republic*" in Lear, 1998. Ferrari is critical of Lear's reading (Ferrari, 2005).

[19] Plato's conception of the constitutions of soul does imply that there are very substantial regularities between certain kinds of city and soul. In other words, it may not be appetite's *nature* to dominate, but there is a strong tendency for it to do so.

The philosopher has an integrated soul guided by reason. Thus they experience the pleasure of learning, as well as all other pleasures (528b), and have a qualitatively different experience of pleasure because the rational element of soul alone seeks truth, and thus ensures any resulting pleasures arise from engagement with reality, not mere appearances (586d).

This shift of emphasis from book IV, means Plato no longer presents reason as the tired nanny of the soul.[20] In book IX, Socrates portrays the soul metaphorically in his elaborate image of a wax creature, comprising a multiform beast, a lion, and a human, covered by a form resembling a larger man (588b). Socrates addresses one who thinks injustice (disharmony) is beneficial, and argues that unguarded appetite, like an unguarded lion, is dangerous (588e). He describes the just soul in terms of this new image:

> wouldn't someone who claims that what is just is profitable be saying we should do and say what will give the inner human being the greatest mastery over the human being, to get him to take care of the many-headed beast like a farmer, feeding and domesticating the gentle heads and preventing the savage ones from growing; to make the lion's nature his ally; and to care for all in common, bringing them up in such a way that they will be friends with each other and with himself? (589a)

The various elements of soul are now understood to have ongoing passions for specific objects (money, honour, truth). These passions can be modified but not stopped entirely, a thought that underpins the analogy with cultivation: only certain crops can be cultivated and other encroaching forms of life need to be weeded out altogether.

To summarize, the soul comprises three elements with different foci: pleasure, honour, and knowledge. One's desires can be categorized, educated, some can be removed, and some ought to be removed. Even tamed appetites can remain volatile. Reason's natural role is to rule, and this brings positive benefits. Love of

[20] Ferrari aptly captures the difference between this view and the conception of soul in book IV in discussing the rational element "even within the soul, ruling is work. (Philosophy by contrast, though it takes exertion, is the finest and most serious play)" (Ferrari, 2007, p.166).

wisdom is pleasurable, and if one's soul is unified, one can experience this alongside other pleasures. The pursuit of truth ensures reason governs under an appreciation of what is good, which ensures one's reasoning is not merely instrumental. One secures unity by cultivating the elements of soul in accordance with their natures, and by resisting the defective ideologies of soul constitution.

The Integration Ideal

I shall draw out several strands of Plato's general view to motivate a version of the integration ideal, which will then be the focus of my arguments in subsequent chapters.

In its most basic form, if one's mind is integrated it will be free from conflicts and ambivalence. One need not adopt a Platonic topology of soul *parts* to think that, ideally, one ought to lack conflicts, or instances of ambivalence, between mental states, where 'state' is used loosely to denote emotions, desires, judgments of value, and so on.

In the subsequent chapters, my focus will be on integration understood as the absence of conflicts and ambivalence within one's mind. Although I will try to remain uncommitted to a particular topology of mental life, most of the philosophical arguments I examine do presuppose that one's rationally reflective capacities bear on the other aspects of mental life, that one's mental states are alterable by rational reflection: a view that Plato also found appealing. However, like Plato, I will also assume that some aspects of mental life are not always consciously experienced, or remain outside one's direct rational control.

In daily life one encounters forms of mental pressure that require a response. This explains why integration appears to be both practically valuable and philosophically interesting as an ideal of mental structure. Two particularly ubiquitous forms of pressure are these: conflicts in one's motivations, and evasiveness towards the truth. Both these forms of pressure can be experienced consciously and unconsciously. Plato also alerts his reader to the possibility that mental life can be chaotically organized when one's conception of what is valuable is distorted or incomplete.

One would be mistaken, however, to assume that integration is merely lauded as a reactive response to these pressures. There are further reasons to regard it as an ideal even if these pressures lapsed or could be addressed in a different way.

First, as Plato argued, being integrated arguably leads one to have a new relationship with pleasure, where one's experiences of pleasure are both heightened and variegated. If one is integrated, then one will not be subject to conflicting desires, for example, and thus struggling to act. Thus one will not struggle to enjoy life as a result of one's impaired agency. Moreover, since conflicts are typically understood as generating negative emotions, one will also be free of unwanted phenomenology. It is plausible to think pleasure must be accommodated within any serviceable conception of well-being. Certainly it makes sense to think one is more likely to be well if one is able and willing to pursue an expanded range of pleasures in life. Plato conceived of the harmonious mind as a well mind, and one component of mental well-being is the ability to enjoy things that are rightly the objects of enjoyment.

Secondly, to be integrated, one needs to be aware of what is good and valuable, both in terms of what one knows oneself to value, and in terms of what is actually valuable. This knowledge arguably aids one in avoiding conflicts that involve judgements of value, and prevents one from self-sabotage. Plato also portrays one's secure orientation to what is good as generating its own pleasure. This idea further motivates the integration ideal. It is attractive to think the play of wisdom will have positive consequences (to philosophers, anyway) and one may derive pleasure from one's secure orientation to one's mental life, an orientation free of ambivalence.

Thirdly, Plato thinks that having an integrated soul alters the character of one's agency. I argued that this is a claim about the nature of one's actions, and not about the ability to act at all. The ideal of integration is an ideal of mental organization and is more demanding than the unity one requires to act at all. Disintegrated people, people with emotional conflicts, people who are ambivalent or hesitant, or whose judgements of value conflict with their desires, are not prevented from being agents in this minimal sense, but - the thought runs - lack a form of agential excellence. One might argue that this excellence, whatever it is, is connected to one's integrated mind (although to avoid circularity one cannot argue define "acting well" as "action that flows from one who is integrated").

One way of adding detail to the qualitatively different form of agency integration arguably generates, is to suggest one is able to act stably. For example, if one is integrated, and not conflicted, one might think one is thereby able to live on the basis of desires that will not require subsequent change.

Stability is an important concept for it is apparently orthogonal to concerns about the nature and topology of value, and thus independent from the way the structure of one's mental life is shaped by one's relationship to what is *really* valuable. If stable action is valuable, then there might be contexts where one would benefit from a circumspect relationship with what is of value. To say this is to depart from Plato's conception of integration.

I will explore the relationship between sensitivity to reality, and stability, in several places as my argument develops. To anticipate, I retain the Platonic sense that attention to what is really valuable is important, yet I also entertain the possibility that this sensitivity may have its limits, and be in tension with valuable forms of agency.

To understand further what stable action may involve, we can first deconstruct agency into various practical capacities.[21] Three capacities are important: the capacity to evaluate reasons and make judgements, the capacity to decide what to do, thereby forming intentions to act, and the capacity to maintain intentions over time, to be resolute (cf. Cohen & Handfield, 2010).

Each capacity can be exercised in various ways, and with complex temporal dynamics (a point which plays an important role in my argument in chapter six). Action may swiftly follow a decision, or an intention might have to be secured for some years. Within these periods of time, the exercise of the capacity may change, at one moment the outcome of deliberation may seem assured only for this to slide into subsequent uncertainty, only for that to result in convictions, and so on. Moreover, the exercise of one capacity may interact with, or be influenced by, the way another capacity is exercised. The choices of one who cannot maintain intentions over time will differ from one who is resolute. Stable action can be described as action that flows from these capacities without tensions within, or

[21] For the notion of a practical capacity, and its use in discussing aspects of practical rationality, akrasia, and weakness of will see: Smith, 2003; Holton, 2004; and Cohen & Handfield, 2010.

between, them. This presupposes that one can exercise these capacities, but that is not a given. Sustained mental conflict or disharmony can make it hard to reason, to form intentions, and to safeguard intentions.

Even if one's concern with stable action is in local tension with one's sensitivity to what is actually valuable, those who endorse the integration ideal may also retain Plato's emphasis on the importance of the relationship between reason and the good. The integrated person arguably benefits from a better understanding of how things are - what is true, what is valuable - because they avoid conflicts that may muddy their vision.

However, this forces us to ask a further question: how is the domain of value structured? This question is important if one wants to live stably. One may argue that one has to act on the basis of what is objectively good, thus retaining Plato's focus on value in general terms, but then separately argue that the topology of the good is more complex than Plato suggests. For instance, one may argue that there are many irreconcilable values.

I take up this possibility in the next chapter. It is important to foreground that fact that one may agree with Plato that there is a substantive connection between the structure of value and that of the mind, but maintain substantive disagreement about which values exist.[22]

Furthermore, the *Republic* describes a soul that is formed inter-subjectively. We seem to have a basic need for attachments to others, to care and be cared for. If this is accurate then the integration ideal may have to accommodate the forms of partiality that stem from these appetites. Our relationship to things of value may be modified by these needs.

Plato clearly thinks that integration of the soul is also a form of health, a form of rationality, and form of moral goodness. Controversially, he regards these ideals as one: being integrated is not a *means* to being healthy, or rational, or good. Conceptually, these relationships can be teased apart and subject to scrutiny, which is necessary because Plato's vision is no longer widely shared in detail.

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[22] Roger Crisp suggested I emphasize this difference.

However, many will be drawn to the ideal of the integrated mind because it seems to manifest more fundamental concerns with rationality; one who lacks conflicts, it may be thought, is more rational, either because they avoid contradictions directly, or because they are more able to subject their mental attitudes to holistic justification. Moreover, many will also think integration is plausibly related to moral goodness in some sense; that conflicted and ambivalent people are more likely to act viciously. Finally, although notions of health are fraught with interpretive difficulties, one may also motivate the integration ideal with the basic thought that being conflicted is bad, and liable to disrupt the health of one's mind.

Conclusion

I have situated the integration ideal in historical context by examining a version of it in Plato's *Republic*. The ideal of the harmonized soul inspired my own conception of integration, which will I will scrutinize below.

Chapter Two

Value, Singular and Plural

Obey, obey, or a heavy doom will crush me!
Oh but a doom *will* crush me
once I rend my child,
the glory of my house –
a father's hands are stained,
blood of a young girl streaks the alter.
Pain both ways and what is worse?
Desert the fleets, fail the alliance?
No, but stop the winds with a virgin's blood,
feed their lust, their fury? – feed their fury! –
Law is law! –
Let all go well. (Aeschylus, 1966, lines 205-16)

Introduction

On the Platonic version of the integration ideal, the organisation of one's mind is intimately related to the structure of value. One's mind is in a better state to the extent that it is organised under knowledge of what is valuable, so one must ask: How is value structured?

In this chapter I want to challenge an assumption inherited from the discussion of Plato's ideal of soul-organization in the previous chapter, namely that mental organisation ought to mirror the structure of value. Now as it happens, I am inclined to think pluralism about the structure of value is true, and that it makes sense of many aspects of our ethical lives, including a range our emotions. Though I will not be in a position to argue for this view, it matters in the present context for the following reason. If value pluralism *is* true, one might argue, then, if mental organisation ought to mirror the structure of value, one's mind would *not* be better to the extent that it is integrated: since value is plural, minds cannot be the worse for being plural (i.e. admitting of conflicts) too. So the integration ideal would be a false ideal. But, crucially, its falsity would follow straight from a thesis about the structure of value, so what would be the point of making the integration ideal a topic of philosophical discussion in its own right?

A parallel worry arises on the alternative assumption, that value monism is true. For if monism is true, the thought runs, then, again if mental organisation ought to mirror the structure of value, a disintegrated mind could only indicate the subject's irrationality, or that the subject is in error about what is of value. So the integration ideal would be confirmed, but confirmed because, again, it follows straight from a (different) thesis about the structure of value. To show, then, that the integration ideal *is* a fit topic of philosophical discussion in its own right, I need to show that its truth or falsity isn't a simple consequence of the issue between monists and pluralists about the structure of value. That means challenging the Platonic assumption that mental organisation ought to mirror the structure of value. I will challenge this assumption by arguing that both monists and pluralists could either endorse or oppose the integration ideal, for several reasons that are independent from their respective views about the topology of value.

The question whether value is plural is a metaphysical one. One should not confuse this issue with the fact that there are plural bearers of value, and different procedures for reasoning and making choices (Mason, 2011). Nor is this question restricted to moral values, but encompasses all forms of value. So are there many values, or are the many apparent values all reducible to one fundamental value? [23]

Bernard Williams thinks that utility is the only candidate for a monistic value, and thus pluralism can be understood as denying that utility is the "universal currency" of value (1981, p.78). The notion of a universal currency points towards a weak monism; namely, that there are different values, but they can be articulated in terms of a single value. A stronger monism would claim that liberty and equality, for example, are actually mere modes of presentation of a single good like well-being or pleasure.

Value pluralism, in contrast, is often motivated by discussions of conflict, but there is a contingent relationship between pluralism and conflict. There are two kinds of pluralism, which I shall name "tragic" and "harmonious" pluralism respectively.

[23] The writings of Isaiah Berlin, and the critical discussions that resulted from it, are a good starting point for this aspect of the value pluralism debate, cf. Berlin, 1969 and Berlin, 1991. For some critical engagement with Berlin's pluralism, see part two, 'Pluralism', of Dworkin et al., 1998.

Harmonious pluralists think there are distinct values that cannot be reduced to ones more basic, but which never conflict. In every context a single value or good dominates. W. D. Ross holds such a view (2009). A stronger view is that held by those who think human lives are guided by multiple ends that must harmonise if practical reasoning is to be possible (Rödl, 2007). Therefore, in many respects, harmonious pluralism resembles value monism. Although the former view portrays a richer universe of value, conflicts are not possible. Epistemic problems may remain but that is also true under value monism.

Advocates of tragic pluralism, in contrast, motivate their position by appealing to apparent value conflicts. A good explanation of why values appear to conflict is that they do conflict, a thought which is taken to show certain emotions, like regret, are not irrational. Tragic pluralism is also motivated by empirical research that suggests people are intuitive pluralists (cf. Gill & Nichols, 2008 who focus on a pluralism of principles that people use in reasoning about what to do).[24]

Value pluralists often think values are incomparable and incommensurable. Incommensurability holds there is no single scale or measure that different values can be translated into, although they can be compared. Incomparability holds that there is no way to compare different values. Ruth Chang argues, plausibly, that being unable to compare values is more problematic than being unable to reduce them to a single scale. For instance, one may compare whether to spend some money on a bottle of wine, or on going to a concert, without holding that the values of wine and concert-going are necessarily reducible to a single scale of value. One may simply evaluate them relative to one's intentions and desires at that time (Chang, 1997, introduction).

If value pluralism is true, then mental conflicts can reflect how value is structured, although one may also be erroneously conflicted, mistakenly fail to experience conflict whilst surveying alternatives, or still experience the subjective pain of a conflict.[25] This view seems to entail that integration is a defunct ideal, for mental

[24] These reasons will have greater weight on some metaethical views rather than others, especially views that suggest value is created or projected by humans onto the world.

[25] On certain conceptions of practical rationality, the possibility of value conflict may seem to prevent one from maximising one's personal good. However, the matter of whether one is rationally required to maximise one's personal good cuts across the dispute between value pluralists and monists. Thus if maximisation of one's personal good is regarded as part of

conflicts are warranted in many contexts. In the next two sections I will argue, first, that it is open to the monist to be unconcerned with integration, thus showing that the integration ideal is not an automatic consequence of her views about the structure of value. Then I will argue that there is no inconsistency between value pluralism and the integration ideal.

Monism and Integration

There are reasons to think there is no implication from monism to the ideal of mental integration. First, not all mental states are oriented to value, either directly, like judgments of value, or indirectly, as on accounts of emotional states with a cognitive component, i.e. a judgement about the value of the object of the emotion (e.g. Solomon, 2007; Nussbaum, 2001). Some desires illustrate this point nicely. As I note in the next chapter, non-rational desires have a motivational force that can only be cultivated and shaped indirectly. Other conative states have a similar character. If value monism is true, then even if such states demand organisation, one cannot argue that they require organisation as a consequence of how value is organised. Instead, one must attend to other reasons.[26]

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what is involved in integrating the mind, then neither monists nor pluralists have an advantage. As a matter of philosophical temperament many pluralists support the rationality of satisficing in some instances. Satisficers hold that one can be justified in choosing a less-than-maximal option, such as a large yet not-optimal offer on a house, provided that the option of choice is good enough (cf. Slote, 2010). But value pluralists can also be maximisers and think it is rational to always try to choose a good that is better than, or equal in value to, the available alternatives, (provided that value pluralism does not entail the incomparability of values). This view is compatible with also thinking that maximising choices may be difficult to make. One can think that practical rationality demands maximisation, but that the structure of value is in tension with this, and thus people are frequently irrational. One who holds this view might also think that this explains the painful aspect of these decisions. Alternatively, like Michael Slote (2013) they can argue that rationality, although important, is not overriding. (Value monism and satisficing are also compatible. There could be only one value, many bearers of that value, but no rational demands on us to maximise that value.)

[26] This argument is only open to those who conceptualise at least some desires in isolation from value, including but not limited to those who deny the “under the guise of the good” (Oddie, 2005) thesis that desires are for things that appear good.

Secondly, even if one thinks that mental conflicts 'drop away' as a consequence of practical rationality, it is not clear that ideals of practical rationality should dominate one's life. If a rational life is one of suffering, for example, it can seem impoverished. Thus if having an integrated mind serves to avoid suffering, that end may provide reasons to prefer the ideal of integration to an ideal of practical rationality, at least in some contexts. Some sophisticated monists might reply that these considerations fall under their conception of the single value; that if well-being, say, is the only candidate for value then suffering will have to be accounted for in terms of some deficit of this value (in a localised value-bearer).

This cogent line of response points to a further reason to think that the integration ideal is not something a value monist automatically shares, namely that one's concern with the world should be impersonal. One who holds that one's concern with the world should be impersonal denies that partial ties have a special weight or significance, and holds that everyone has reasons to maximise value as such. Moreover, this impersonal concern ought to be transparent: as an agent one engages with value, but without special attention to one's mental life. This is a stark view, but it exposes the potential gulf between the rational concern with what is valuable in general, and a concern with one's mental life, in particular, as a potential site of value. As the integration ideal concerns mental structure, this view is further evidence against any direct implication from at least some kinds of monism about value to a stance on the integration ideal.

Value monism and adherence to the integration ideal are thus logically independent. The same considerations also apply to harmonious pluralism, which holds that different values are organised in such a way that they never conflict.

However, one may still worry that the integration ideal is beholden to the dispute between monists and tragic pluralists from a different direction. My second concern was that if tragic pluralism were true, integration would be a false ideal because non-integration, in the shape of mental conflict, would properly reflect the conflicted topology of the domain of value. I shall now argue that, in principle, tragic pluralists can also endorse integration.

Tragic Pluralism and Integration

Value pluralists argue that mental conflict is admirable in some contexts. If one is torn between two courses of action, as Agamemnon was by his roles as father and as general, often one is being receptive to multiple prevailing values (Aeschylus, 1966, lines 205-16). On the assumption that values conflict tragically, and on the further assumption that one ought to honour values insofar as they bear on courses of action, then it seems like mental conflict is inevitable. Conversely, if one were free from conflict in such a situation, for contingent psychological reasons, one might be open to criticism: one *ought* to be conflicted. Indeed, being in conflict can itself evidence one's respect for and sensitivity to value, and is thus valuable itself.

This conclusion is in tension with the integration ideal. For that ideal implies that one's mind is in a better state to the extent that it is free from conflict or ambivalence, whereas the tragic pluralist appears to hold that one's mind is in a better state to the extent that it is (in the situations just described) subject to conflict. I will now investigate whether this tension is substantial and argue that it is not.

As I have already suggested, if not every mental state is oriented to value, then there are regions of the mind that could be subject to an ideal of integration irrespective of how value is organised. I appealed to this consideration to show that it is open to monists to deny that the *whole* mind needs to be integrated. But the same point can be inverted to apply to the tragic pluralist, who can argue that there are regions of the mind that can be unified and harmonised even if values conflict.

In other words, the organisation of some states of one's mind may be an orthogonal concern from the topology of value. Even if one decides that those non-value oriented states are ultimately to be integrated together, that conclusion is not a consequence of background premises about value. This alone is sufficient to show the integration ideal is a fit topic of philosophical study independently of considerations about the topology of value. However, there are additional reasons for that conclusion, because there are additional reasons why integration might appear as an ideal from the perspective of a value pluralist.

Avoiding Conflicts

Even if tragic pluralism is true, and values conflict independently of one's subjective attitudes towards them, one might think that it is worth trying to organise one's life, or one's mind, to personally avoid conflicts or ambivalence. Call this suggestion "the avoidance strategy". This strategy need not involve denying that one's practical efforts are frequently hostage to circumstance.[27]

For an advocate of the avoidance strategy, various forms of organisation might appear valuable as a way of avoiding the harmful features of conflicts and ambivalence. The tragic value pluralist, who thinks values conflict can still argue that one should try to avoid situations where conflicting values come into play, for example, and so could cause harm or impair one's agency. The desire to avoid conflicts, and the belief that such avoidance is worthwhile, is even compatible with the strong claim that being conflicted can be good in some contexts because it manifests ethical sensitivity (an idea I explore in chapter six). The avoidance strategy is only concerned with one's efforts to avoid conflicts, even if one thinks their presence, when they arise, is not due to subjective error as would be the case if value monism were true.

There are many ways to try to avoid or outrun conflicts. At one extreme, one might pursue an ascetic lifestyle, in which one is devoted to a limited cluster of values or activities. An ascetic can live their life in full awareness of the richness of what is valuable, but actively organise it so as to avoid the tensions that other people face; tensions between work and career, gender norms and personal desire, family obligations and political life, and so on. The ascetic may also reason that in changing the way they organise their life, they can come to alter the scope and nature of their desires and other mental states: for example in time they will simply want less. Asceticism arises in many forms, and need not be religious, or radical.

Weaker versions flow from recognising that one is limited in what one can value personally, and in the commitments and activities one can attend to fully (a thought I develop in the next section.) For example, a person in a committed relationship might be aware of their sexual desire for others, and thus seek to organise their life to avoid entering contexts where their desires become salient.

[27] One loose end I cannot pursue in detail is the difference between the organization of one's life and the organization of one's mind. The latter is likely to be more demanding when compared to the former, which may just involve one's avoidance of very specific contexts.

This person does not deny that their various desires might conflict, or be at odds with the value they place on monogomy; they simply try to prevent these conflicts from having practical force by taking practical action.

More importantly, one's attachments to other people are part of a good life, but they are also sources of tension, because of one's desires and values. Loving relationships can be undermined by errant sexual desire; the desire for proximity with those one loves may be challenged by one's unwillingness to abandon creative or professional ambitions. Many lives are marked by conflicts arising from parental interference. Tragic pluralists who heed the influence and significance of attachments in life might endorse the integration ideal out of recognition of the facts that one cannot help but have attachments to other people or projects, and they are the source of tension in a world of conflicting value. Thus one has reason to organise one's lives around these attachments, and attempt to avoid bringing them into conflict with other regions of life, as when a mother focuses on her child, and avoids work.

If tragic pluralism is true, then one is frequently warranted in experiencing negative emotions (like regret) about foregone options of choice, even in contexts where one could have acted to avoid the conflict. But these emotions are painful, in a way that is not helped when one merely knows that they are warranted. Thus the tragic pluralist could argue that integration enables one to side-step those feelings. Indeed, if values really do conflict, as the tragic pluralist suggests, then the ideal of the integrated mind may seem fairly ordinary and natural, a consequence of the fact that one cannot 'have it all' and has to carve a life within a knotted domain of values.

The avoidance strategy can be applied to attempts to organise one's mind, not just one's life, in a way that will reduce one's exposure to conflict or ambivalence. Some desires and standing sources of motivation, such as personal or creative ambitions, or social roles, may generate further tensions over time, so one might think it is wise to modify or organise these things. This last point rests on an awareness of the contingent consequences of some mental states. Certain forms of life, in their social context, may be especially prone to conflict. Vulnerability to potential conflicts, given reasonable assumptions made on an understanding of one's current social position, provides one with reason to endorse the integration ideal.

These strategies may seem conservative, and they can certainly be pushed in that direction. But the avoidance strategy can render the integration ideal attractive to those that think values tragically conflict. The strategy can be understood as a way of avoiding conflicts because one thinks conflicts are bad, or have negative consequences, even if being conflicted is an ethically appropriate response to a domain of independently knotted values. Alternatively, the desire to avoid conflicts can be understood in terms of one's wish to be more stably oriented to the values or commitments one already has. If one's life already contains valuable projects or relationships, or if one's character is already reasonably well-formed, then integration might seem like a fine means of safeguarding such values against disruption, even if one does not deny such disruption is warranted when it arises.

The avoidance strategy relates the pursuit of mental integration with the good of a stable life; the kind of life lauded by Plato in his discussion of the harmonious soul in the *Republic*. One can imagine a life in which many forms of value are sustained, but only in a contingent and unstable way. The person concerned got lucky, but in a world of conflicting values, they took undue risks (cf. Cottingham, 2010). Integration is a form of limited stability in a tragically plural world. This line of thought plays a role in the next chapter.

Avoiding Conflicts and Personal Value

One can further motivate the force of the avoidance strategy by referring to a distinction between different kinds of valuing. After all, people value many things, but do so in a variety of ways. Some of the things people value are actually valuable: they are not swayed by mere appearances. In what follows, I will assume that what is valued is actually valuable unless otherwise specified.

Even if one is a value monist and thinks there is only one fundamental value, this value is evidently instantiated in different bearers of value. Because there are many bearers of value, one can ask whether one is related to them all in the same way. Some consideration suggests one is not. Human lives are limited and constrained along many dimensions (Scheffler, 2010, p.10). One's socio-historical position, one's income, one's character, and the general nature of one's psychological constitution all affect one's relationship to valuable objects and the extent to which one can engage with them.

Samuel Scheffler has written perceptively about the character of human valuing (Op. cit.). The limitations of human lives, even those that are privileged and comfortable, mean that whilst one is able to recognise vast amounts of value in the world, one is more limited in what one actually values: what one draws into one's life. For example, one may recognise that the friends of other people are valuable, yet one does not value them in the same way one values one's own friends. Similarly, one's colleagues can have valuable hobbies, but although one might judge (say) running or painting to be valuable, one need not value those things oneself.

Thus people appear to relate to valuable objects in at least two ways. This is unsurprising, because there is no clear reason why one should think that merely judging something to be valuable is sufficient for that object to play a significant part in one's life. Indeed, given the abundance of valuable things in the world, and the reasonably automatic character of one's capacity to make judgements, there had better be substance to this difference otherwise one would be unable to cultivate commitments or pursue projects because one would be easily distracted by sudden exposure to new things of value. Stability in one's valuing is something one also values.

The difference between judging to be valuable, and valuing something personally, is partly affective and conative. I understand this in the following way: when one values something one is disposed to be moved by it, in both senses of 'moved': first, one is emotionally receptive to the object, and secondly, it gives one reasons to act.

For example, in valuing one's friends, one is emotionally open to joy at their successes and their company, and pain when they suffer. One's friendship also gives one reasons to act, reasons to visit one's friends, to consult them, to defend them. Other people lack these reasons to act because they do not value these people in the same way. They may judge them to be valuable, and thus have other reasons to act, but they do not have reasons arising from the inherently partial relation of friendship that is constituted by personally valuing another person.

Scheffler also suggests that one personally values something when one's disposition to be emotionally moved by an object is accompanied by the belief that these emotions are appropriate (2010, p.26). This has the right consequence that valuing is distinguished from accidental emotional responsiveness to an object, or forms of compulsive vulnerability to something.[28]

There are complex relationships between judging to be valuable, personal valuing, and caring. Temporally, these ways of relating to the world often follow on from each other. One can judge another person to be clever and attractive, then come to personally value them, because their character moves one emotionally and is no longer an abstract consideration, then come to care for them, a state which may persist if their character changes or they commit a wrong which changes one's judgements about them. Conversely, one may be emotionally moved by something like a political cause, affording it an important place in one's life, only to subsequently see it as merely an abstract good, not an important personal project.

The dispositions bundled together in valuing are structured. When one personally values another, such as a friend, then one's dispositions to have emotions must take certain forms. If one despairs every time they do well, or hates the thought of seeing them, then one does not value them. The constraints on these dispositional patterns are assessed in terms of rationality; what it is rational and irrational to feel. However, one can question what the apt patterning of emotions, desires, and thoughts is in a particular case, my argument in chapter five, for instance, contests one approach to these patterns with respect of emotional ambivalence.

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[28] A further distinction in this area, though it is often not drawn, is that between valuing and caring. A key difference (Scheffler 2010, pp.24-5) is that one may care about things that one does not judge to be good, such as poverty, or the decrepitude of the archaeological ruins at Pompeii. I would add that one often persists in caring for people that one used to value personally, such as past lovers or estranged friends. Whilst one may care, one now lacks one's past beliefs about that person's character, or goodness. Instances of nascent love also indicate that one can care about people one has not thought about explicitly. Caring orients people to objects, like valuing, but without the necessary presence of a positive judgement about them. One's most significant cares are typically one's attachments to other people. For Harry Frankfurt, for example, caring is significant because it provides one with fundamental forms of orientation to things in the world. On his view, one's cares ground attention in a way that one cannot but have as a human creature (Frankfurt, 2004). However, although Frankfurt does not draw this connection himself, it is clear that the manifestations of human caring need not be positive, that is, be accompanied by positive evaluations and/or emotions. Envy and the pursuit of revenge strike me as possible forms of care in this sense.

The distinction between valuing and personal valuing helps explain why one might want to avoid conflicts, even if such conflicts are warranted because value monism is true because first, one's conflict might concern something one personally values in Scheffler's sense and secondly, one's conflict might arise between two or more things that one personally values. In other words, noting that a sub-set of the things one values are the things one personally values, one is well placed to think the latter will have greater importance within one's mental life. One could then argue, on the basis of this importance, that one is more likely to want to avoid conflicts between those objects. Such an argument rests on the idea that conflicts about, or between, objects of personal value will resonate more deeply, and impact negatively upon one's emotions, not merely one's beliefs and judgements. Therefore there is natural affinity between the avoidance strategy and recognition of the diversity of human valuing. Integration appears valuable as a way of avoiding tensions that afflict one's personal valuations.

However, the recognition of the centrality of personal valuations within a life does not automatically generate pressure towards integration. One can also run an opposing argument from the same premise; namely, that the very centrality of the objects that one personally values, to one's life, means that one is particularly justified in not addressing conflicts that arise from or between them. If a practical conflict arises as a consequence of the fact that one personally values two conflicting things (e.g. one's job and family life), one could argue that it is worse to risk losing or damaging those things than it is to experience a conflict that originates from them. In other words, if any conflicts are permissible, one could argue it is those that stem from the objects one values most, because nothing is worse that compromising an object of personal valuation. (This is consistent with thinking that were conflicts or ambivalence to arise, they would be not unwarranted, because of how values are objectively structured.)

The fact that one can run both of these arguments from the same premise is not in itself sufficient to suggest that the avoidance strategy is defunct. Rather, one must conclude that the good of integration is orthogonal to both the debate between monists and pluralists, and to the distinction between forms of personal and non-personal valuing. The latter distinction is important to notice, however, because it allows one to capture the sense in which one might have a particular interest in some value-bearers but not others (a conclusion that even some monists will want to retain), and that one can be interested in ideals of mental organisation insofar as they bear on those privileged value-bearers. However, although attention to different kinds of human valuing can motivate an interest in integration as an ideal, one cannot argue for the ideal on the basis of these distinctions alone. Thus I have shown that the integration ideal does not follow as a direct consequence of one's background premises about the topology of value, or the kinds of relationship to value that people can bear.

Conclusion

I have argued that the standing of the integration ideal does not depend simply on the correct account of the structure of value, and so is an issue of independent philosophical significance.

If value monism is true, I argued monists have reason to reject integration as an ideal despite the apparent affinity between the thesis about value topology and the ideal of mental organisation: namely, that not all mental states are oriented to value, and that one's concern with rationality need not be pervasive.

Then I argued that value pluralists, who one might think are amenable to the existence of mental conflicts or ambivalence due to their view of value topology, have reason to be interested in integration: namely, it may help one avoid justified yet painful conflicts, conflicts which might undermine important commitments.

Finally, I pointed out that there are different ways one might relate to valuable objects in one's life. However, this premise can either bring pressure to bear on the scope of the integration ideal, or actively motivate it. Thus the issue of the standing of the integration ideal thus does not reduce to issues about the nature or topology of value. I have thus rejected the Platonic premise that informed this chapter; namely, that mental organisation must reflect the organisation of value.

Chapter Three

Organising Desires

> neuroses tend to express some form of structure—an idiosyncratic 'ethics' (Lear, 2001, p.118)

Introduction

As I described in chapter one, advocates of the integration ideal laud unified mind. On this ideal, one's mental states ought to be organized so as to avoid immediate and future conflicts and ambivalence. This ideal is motivated by the thought that good mental organization underpins effective agency and helps to secure well-being.

In this chapter, I shall examine one way in which the integration ideal has taken shape in recent philosophy, namely Michael Smith's ideal of unity and coherence among desires. As with Plato's conception of the harmonious soul, Smith's ideal of unified and coherent desires is motivated by a concern with rationality, though it could also be motivated by a concern with effective agency and with well-being.

Although Smith's ideal concerns desires alone, my critical objections to it have wider force, in that they resemble some aspects of my critical engagement with ambivalence in the next chapter, and also set the stage for my discussion of ethical sensibility in later chapters.

Desires

There are many accounts of desire. I will not provide a new one here. In this section I describe several relationships between desires and other aspects of mental life and describe some of the different guises of desire.

We appeal to desires when describing motivations and explaining behaviour. Desires seem connected to action, pleasure, and to the good. In assessing what a person desires, we look to these features. For example, if I desire to read *Moby Dick*, I try to find a copy ("the primitive sign of wanting is trying to get"

Anscombe, 2000, p.68). I am pleased when I do. And I read *Moby Dick* because of its literary quality, i.e. because it instantiates or seems to instantiate some good.

Different theorists of desire have foregrounded one of more of these elements at the expense of the others.[29] I want to remain uncommitted to any of these rival theories. Indeed, pluralism about the "primitive signs" of desiring seems sensible.[30] This is especially so because there seem to be counter-examples to each point of theoretical emphasis. For example, Simon may desire an extra-marital affair but avoid having one; or embark on an affair whilst experiencing anxiety which deprives him of pleasure in it; or whilst judging his affair to be valueless.[31]

Instead of trying to define 'the' mark of desire, it is helpful to set down some features of desires that will inform my subsequent discussion in this chapter, and in my later examination of ambivalence.

First, the objects of desires can be specified more or less precisely. When tired one evening I may desire wine, *simpliciter*, whereas Sigmund Freud may desire Barolo in particular (Gay, 1988, p.100).

Secondly, people generally offer reasons to explain why they desire things. Desires generally seem to be "judgment sensitive attitudes":

> It is the normal expectation of the person, as well as a rational demand made on him, that the question of what he actually does desire should be dependent…on his assessment of the desire and the grounds he has for it. For the person himself, then, his motivated desire is not a brute empirical phenomenon he must simply accommodate…for this sort of desire, as a

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[29] For examples of theories where action is emphasized see Anscombe, Op. cit.; Smith, 1987, and Smith, 1994. For examples where pleasure is emphasized, see Schueler, 1995 and Vadas, 1984. For examples where a focus on the good is emphasized, see Stampe, 1987 and Oddie, 2005.

[30] We could sloganize the primitive signs of wanting as "trying to get, pleasure at having got, and getting because good." For a passionate defence of pluralism in ethical thinking, cf. Chappell, 2014.

[31] These possibilities are not equally convincing (i.e. does it make sense to think Simon sees no value, however fleeting, in the affair he thinks is 'sordid' or 'worthless'?) and often the descriptions of these situations mask the complexity of both the object of the desire and the temporal dynamic of the place of that desire in Simon mental life.

> "judgment-sensitive" attitude, owes its existence (as an empirical psychological fact) to his own deliberations and overall assessment of his situation. (Moran, 2001, pp.115-16)

However, as Plato recognised, some desires are not directly responsive to practical reason. These desires can be explained causally – they do not arise out of nowhere - but neither are they had for a reason. For example, hunger is related to pleasure in eating, and to trying to get food, but unlike the desire to read *Moby Dick*, or enjoy a glass of Barolo, does not expect a specification of the goodness of its object (and does not go away (as Plato also pointed out) if one believes that its object – eating, presumably – is bad for one). Indeed mere hunger seems not to require one to have *any* specific conceptual ability.[32]

Maria Alvarez, drawing upon this Platonic conception of appetite, and echoing contemporary conceptions of desire,[33] labels the two kinds of desires "rational" and "non-rational" (2010, p.73). This distinction reflects the continuity between human and non-human animal desire:

> The having of [non-rational] desires can be explained by reasons related to biological needs; to chemical states and changes in us; to genetic factors, to evolution, etc. But these are all *reasons why* we have those desires and not our *reasons for* having them…they are not the reasons that motivate us to have the desires. (Ibid. p.78)

Although non-rational desires are not directly connected to the exercise of rational capacities, they are not "altogether outside the domain of reason" in two ways (Ibid, p.79). First, one can reason about the appropriateness of seeking to satisfy a non-rational desire at a given time. Secondly, one can reason instrumentally about how to satisfy a non-rational desire. When I am hungry, for example, I can think about *when* to eat, and *what* to eat. However, one is limited in one's ability to

[32] "…what one desires through bodily appetites is also appealing to one, but the difference is that in order to feel a bodily appetite it is not necessary to have the capacity to *conceive* of what one wants at all and, a fortiori, not necessary to conceive of it as good or worthwhile, and to be able to want it for that reason." (Alvarez, 2010, p.83).

[33] cf. Hampshire, 1965. (See the chapter entitled 'Desire', in which Hampshire writes: "When I am starving, my desire to eat does not depend for its existence on any particular conception that I have of this activity: it depends solely on my stomach." p.47).

reason about these desires, because they originate from one's biological constitution. For example, one cannot indefinitely postpone one's desire for sleep.

Thirdly, standing desires should be distinguished from episodic desires. Standing desires persist even when they are not experienced (although episodic desires may also be unexperienced). I may desire food whilst I write this paragraph, for instance. Most non-rational desires are standing desires.

Finally, desires can differ in strength, a notion occasionally explained in terms of the extent to which they command attention, or contribute to motivation (for discussion, cf. McInerney, 2004).

Michael Smith on Desire

Michael Smith argues that rationality requires one to have unified and organised desires (1994). He thus shares Platonic motivations, as described in chapter one. Smith's conception of mind is parsimonious, focusing on beliefs and desires in a neo-Humean vein (cf. Smith, 1987). But one can consider his argument largely in isolation from these further theoretical commitments.

For Smith, some standing desires lack any particular phenomenology, akin to David Hume's "calm passions" (Hume, 1978, p.276, cf. Fieser, 1992). This point is worth noting for two reasons. First, it resonates with psychoanalytic conceptions of motivation, making room for unconscious desires (cf. Harcourt, 2010). Thus one is justified in drawing resources from those discourses when evaluating the ideal of unified and coherent desires. Secondly, the point helpfully broadens the scope of the integration ideal (or indeed any ideal of mental organization). Smith is not simply concerned about desires that grab one's immediate attention. Instead, rational considerations motivate a deeper examination of mental structure.

Here is Smith's argument:

> ...by far the most important way in which we create new and destroy old underived desires when we deliberate is by trying to find out whether our desires are *systematically justifiable* [...] [W]e do this in a certain characteristic way: namely, by trying to integrate the object of that desire into a more coherent and unified desiderative profile and evaluative outlook [...] in so far

> as the new set of desires – the set we imagine ourselves having if we add a more general desire to the more specific desires we in fact have – exhibits more in the way of, say, unity, we may properly think that the new imaginary set of desires is rationally preferable to the old. For we may properly regard the unity of a set of desires as a virtue; a virtue that in turn makes for the rationality of the set as a whole. For exhibiting unity is partially constitutive of having a systematically justified, and so rationally preferable, set of desires, just as unity is partially constitutive of having a systematically justified, and so rationally preferable, set of beliefs. (1994, pp.158-9)[34]

Smith's focus is on underived desires, and thus the organisation he is concerned with is not simply that of instrumental rationality, where one's desires for means must harmonise with one's desires for a specific end if action is to be successful. His emphasis on systematic justification also resonates with the idea that one's evaluations are comparative, and do not always reference foundational concerns (Smith cites Rawls, 1951). Smith proposes one think of the unity and coherence of desires by analogy with the unity and coherence of beliefs. He uses "coherence" in a way that indicates a much richer concept than consistency, which in the case of belief holds of beliefs that can merely be true together. For Smith, desires may be consistent but not coherent, but if they are coherent and consistent, they must be unified.

A mark of rationality, according to Smith, is that one can justify one's desires taken as a whole. One may think this is an idealized exercise, for there are epistemic constraints on knowing what one's desires are, especially if some desires lack clear phenomenology (and could thus conflict without being experienced as being in conflict), but Smith characterizes this process as part of deliberation, and thus as part of ordinary practical agency.

Smith supposes that one's evaluative outlook on one's desires shapes the organisation of one's desires themselves via the addition of desires. For example, Herman may desire a holiday, only to realize this desire is unrelated to his desire to

[34] This passage occurs in the context of a discussion of Smith's conception of full rationality. The latter precludes the affects of "psychological compulsions, physical addictions, emotional disturbances, depression, spiritual tiredness, accidie, illness and the like" (p.154) which may lead to desires to do things people think are not normatively desirable. Smith agrees with much of Bernard Williams' conception of practical rationality but downplays the role of the imagination in creating or destroying desires (Williams, 1981(a)).

complete his novel. His inability to give a systematic justification to his desires may lead him to abandon his desire for a holiday. Alternatively, Herman could approach his desires differently, and reason that a holiday may help him recuperate and thus write better. Thus he may acquire a new desire, namely, the desire to complete his novel to a high standard (not merely to finish it), which subordinates both his desire to finish the novel and his desire for a holiday. On Smith's view, Herman is more rational in the second instance because he has organised his two desires into a whole.[35]

Smith's argument rests on a tentative analogy with belief. Here is how I think we can reconstruct the argument. Beliefs are rarely logically isolated from one another, and we have many beliefs. Generally beliefs 'aim' after truth (Wedgwood, 2002). Coherentists about belief justification have a holisitic view of how beliefs are justified (cf. Quine & Ullian, 1970). No beliefs are privileged, and justification is a feature of a set of beliefs, understood in terms of coherence (Davidson, 1986). In broad terms, coherence is a supporting or corroborating relation between beliefs, which goes beyond mere logical consistency. For example, one may believe that Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, that Truman Capote was of dubious character, and that the *New Yorker* is a fine publication, but one's beliefs do not cohere into a settled view about American *belles-lettres.*

Coherence is a matter of degree. One feature of coherence is that the beliefs in question stand in inferential relationships. An ideal lawyerly account of a crime in a closing speech, for instance, expresses an example of a coherent group of beliefs. The account would lack contradictions and inconsistencies; every expressed belief would have the same focus, namely a crime and those involved; these beliefs would be inferentially related; and the narrative would lack extraneous detail, no matter how true or interesting. With this example in mind, coherence clearly appears to be a desirable property of a set of beliefs, at least for juries, because it intimates that any individual belief expressed about the crime is likely to be true.

[35] I am not clear what Smith would say about the difference between one who desires objects that could be given a unified evaluative assessment, but are not, and one whose desires are actually unified (or one whose desires apparently cannot be unified altogether). The first person may appear more rational than the last, because their desires are at least *in principle* subject to a coherent evaluation. Yet it is hard to identify desires that cannot be organized together in principle. Even initially plausible candidates, like a desire for forgiveness coupled with a desire for revenge, can be rendered intelligible.

Smith thinks desires can be justified by a structural property akin to the property of coherence of belief. Justification is relative to an aim. With belief, the normative aim is truth. An intuitive candidate for desire is their likely satisfaction. One might think desires that are coherent or unified are more likely to be satisfied. Smith suggests that as we attempt to order and unify our desires, "wholesale shifts in our desiderative profile" will occur (1994, p.160). One such shift could be that our profile is more likely to generate satisfaction. *Prima facie*, a person with ordered desires will find it easier to construct a life around them, in contrast to the person with disparate desires.

Smith's comparison between belief and desire underpins his suggestion that disunified desires are in tension with rationality. But one may doubt his argument has personal practical relevance. However, in reconstructing Smith's analogy to suggest that likely satisfaction is the aim served by having systematically justified desires, I have thereby also related his ideal of mental organization to well-being, one of the motivating concerns behind the integration ideal, because well-being plausibly depends, in part, on having satisfied desires.

Smith's conception of desire also aligns with the avoidance strategy I described in chapter two. An advocate of such avoidance thinks integration is good because it enables one to avoid conflicts even when they arise because values can conflict irreconcilably. Smith's emphasis on the systematic justification of desire is a natural ally of those who value the avoidance of potentially destabilizing or painful conflicts, and try to achieve this end by ordering their minds.

It is important to note the strength of Smith's claim. He does not merely argue that a rational person ought to avoid conflicts between desires. A person whose desires are consistent could satisfy that goal, even if their desires were not coherently unified together. Instead, one's desires ought to be related to each other and unified under more general desires.

Critique

Smith's conception of organized desires is not plausible for reasons spanning both (1.) the possibility of one organizing one's desires, and (2.) the normative desirability of the mental organization that results. I will raise a few brief reasons to be wary of Smith's approach as a conception of how desires should be organized. Then I will turn to more substantive concerns that raise general issues for the integration ideal more generally.

Smith's Analogy with Belief

Smith's ideal for desires draws upon coherentist considerations regarding beliefs. However, Niko Kolodny has powerfully argued against the importance of being concerned with the coherence of beliefs as such. He does not deny that coherence among beliefs may arise as a result of people's focus on the relationships between their individual beliefs and the evidence underpinning each such belief, but he denies that coherence is important in its own right: individual relationships between beliefs and evidence are what matter, rationally (Kolodny, 2008). As other critics of belief coherentism note, coherent beliefs may all be false. Thus, because one's basic rational requirement is to maintain a tight relationship between one's mental states and the world, one is not – Kolodny thinks - rationally required to be disposed to try and organise those states. Moreover, one might think one's relationship towards one's beliefs ought to be fairly transparent.[36]

On this view, one's beliefs align like a flock of starlings. The flock manifests remarkable structure, but each individual bird is only concerned with its relation to its neighbours, and not with 'the flock' as a whole. Similarly, one's beliefs should reflect the evidence one have for them; the structure of the whole arises as a consequence. Moreover, trying to relate beliefs with other distant beliefs, may, as with the analogy of the flying starlings, prove distracting and impede a healthy epistemic outlook.

If one should not be disposed to seek coherence in respect of belief, the analogy with belief provides no support for Smith's view as to what rationality requires with regard to desire. Of course that view may be supported by independent

[36] By "transparency" I have in mind Richard Moran's notion in his discussion of first-personal knowledge, namely the idea that claims about states which purport to represent the world are answered by attending to the world, not the state itself: "'Transparency' stands for the claim that a person answers the question whether he *believes* that P in the same way he would address himself to the question whether P itself. From the first-person point of view, the one question is treated as 'transparent' to the other." Moran, 2004, p.457

reasons. However, the possibility arises that the reasons to reject coherence as an ideal for belief can inform a related argument about desire.[37]

Satisfaction

I suggested that satisfaction could be a candidate for an analogue of the relation between beliefs and truth, for the case of desire. David Enoch argues that by the lights of Smith's broader rationalism, he cannot successfully argue that coherence of desire is important:

> On Smith's theory there is no independent standard for the correctness of desires, and without such a standard one cannot rely on the analogy with beliefs to establish the normative significance of coherence. (Enoch, 2007, p.104)

I am sympathetic to this view, but I want to examine an external critique of Smith's claim that, ideally, one ought to organise one's desires. Are coherent desires normatively better than incoherent ones?

Let me begin with a point about the relationship between the evaluative outlook one adopts towards one's desires, and the structure of those desires themselves. Smith thinks there is a direct connection between the former and the latter. Yet he elides the difference between sets of desires that are coherent and unified, and sets of desires that are amenable to a coherent and unified justification. The latter may exist in isolation from the former. To use a literary analogy, an author may coherently depict a chaotic character, and they may chaotically depict a coherent character. The properties of the depiction needn't be shared by what's depicted, or vice versa. Moreover, the coherent depiction of a chaotic character may help explain their nature. So surely the fact that some desires can be given a systematic

[37] Patricia Marino has examined Smith's later attempts to suggest that desires ought to be coherent for rational reasons. She argued that desire coherence is valuable because of "desiderative or pragmatic reasons" an agent may have; but these reasons can be overridden. Her arguments complement my suggestion in this section that Smith's analogy between beliefs and desires is unworkable, and also my argument in the next section, about the contingent relationship between desire satisfaction and coherence. My argument in this chapter extends beyond Marino's when I ask whether having coherent desires can be harmful. See Marino, 2010.

justification does not imply that they are themselves coherent or likely to be coherent.[38]

Smith's view is weakened because of his asymmetrical treatment of the organisation of desires, a treatment that receives no justification. For one can render one's desires more coherent by reducing their number. Indeed, the fewer desires one has, the easier it is to secure coherence. Yet Smith's view emphasizes, without explaining why, cases of coherence that generate greater complexity, perhaps due to the implicit awareness of how reducing the number of one's desires can be impoverishing, i.e. that one should avoid becoming F. H. Bradley's oyster:

> Is a *harmonious* life all that we want in practice? Certainly not […] It is no human ideal to lead 'the life of an oyster'. We have no right first to find out just what we happen to be and to have, and then to contract our wants to that limit. (Bradley, 2012, p.68)

If having coherent desires matters to being rational, the life of an oyster is a rational option, and many people will reject that consequence, as it is impoverishing. This last point indicates that conceptions of organised desires are in tension with other ideals, such as the avoidance of impoverishment in life, one must remain vigilant not to assume that organisation always involves increased complexity, for that assumption may appear to motivate the ideal of integration through the implicit connection between having an organised mind and having a complex, and thus perhaps superficially appealing, mind.

Even if one's desires are not coherently organized, the very preoccupation with desire structure can evidence that one is oriented to one's desires in a harmful way. In considering whether generalizability can ground the justification of certain desires, Patricia Marino asks:

> If I want to have a baby, will my desire set be improved by the addition of a

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[38] Another worry: if desire satisfaction is the end served by having coherent desires, then the addition of organizing desires produces more desires to be potentially satisfied. Thus if coherence is meant to ensure that *more* desires are satisfied, such an end could be achieved simply by coming to have more desires. This conclusion seems to miss the point, for rendering one's desires more coherent is a process that ought to impact upon the desires one *already* has. I will return to this line of thought below.

> general desire to have children? If I want to have sex with Adam, will I be more rational if I also want to have sex with John, James, and Charlie? (2010, p.241)

Like Marino, I think these are very particular desires. Moreover, they matter to us precisely because of their particularity. This example brings pressure to bear on the idea that structural considerations – in this case, considerations of generality, which are naturally allied to Smith's focus on coherence and the systematic justification of desire – can *always* play a justificatory role when thinking about our relationship to desire. These cases suggest that increased systematicity might not improve one's situation; indeed, being able to desire in this way may decrease the organisation of one's desires, but enrich one's life.

This example reduces to absurdity the idea that a personal focus on the structure of one's desires is always a rational good. In these cases, it is reasonable to withhold systematic concerns. Were one to exhibit reticence about a particular intrinsic desire they have, because one questions whether it can be generalized, we may struggle to understand them. The desire for sex with Adam, or the desire to have a child, can exist independently of any systematic justification.

Finally, neither the addition nor the removal of desires is something one can do by fiat. Often the acquisition of desires just is a process of exposing oneself to situations in which one can experience forms of value. The extent to which one can do this, and one's likely chances of success, are both contingent matters. Recognition of this point will temper the weight of considerations about the organisation of one's desires in general, for it brings pressure to bear on the possibility of actively undergoing organisational processes in many cases.

Contingent Satisfaction and Stability

One might think that the contraction of one's desires is a worthy end if it renders them more coherent, and press the point that such coherence will help one to satisfy one's desires. One might add that coherent desires are more stable. These are claims about the structure of one's desires, not their content. However, there is reason to think the relation between the coherence of desires and the likelihood of their satisfaction is contingent.

It is only instrumentally valuable to have desires that are unified, and unopposed by potentially conflicting desires, if they are desires for accessible objects. But coherent desires may be in tension with an uncooperative environment. One may have integrated desires for objects none of which can be easily obtained, for instance as a result of a sudden change in social circumstances, as when someone with well-organised expensive tastes goes bankrupt, or when someone whose life is unified around care for their child suffers a tragic bereavement. Conversely, one may have unintegrated desires for objects each of which is easily available, and so easy to satisfy. (Indeed in the sudden change of circumstances envisaged above, one's few unintegrated desires may be the only ones that can be satisfied.) Having unintegrated desires might be seen as a kind of insurance policy, since the less integrated they are, the less likely they are *all* to be rendered unsatisfiable by sudden environmental change (like evacuating one's children to different locations during air raids).

One might object that contingencies are ever present, and that one's awareness of possible contingencies is not sufficient to enable one to think the organisation of one's desires is bad. If one's desire are organised, one might think they are more likely to be stable, and this contributes to their likely satisfaction. However, one may actually expose oneself to harmful contingencies by rendering one's desires *more* coherent. If one's desires are highly organized, they are liable to be greatly impacted by a single change in life circumstances. The more one's desires approximate the idealized coherent web sought after by coherentists of belief justification, the easier it is to thwart their satisfaction. A tightly woven web can be damaged by a single tear.

Of course, if circumstances do not change, then coherent desires pose no problems if they are satisfiable to begin with (as opposed to being founded on fantasy, or incorrect information). These considerations point towards a distinction between two kinds of stability: *internal* stability, where one's desires are not liable to be in tension with each other, and *external* stability, where one's desires are insulated from environmental damage.

One can draw an analogy with two businesses to explain the difference. The first business focuses on one product, and is highly organized in an established hierarchy. The second business creates many products, is organized in a less rigid fashion, and innovates frequently. Whilst the second business is exposed to internal conflicts, between the demands of the different products, departments, etc. it is able to adapt to changing markets; if demand for one product falls, employees and resources can be redirected towards a new product. The first business, in contrast, may be free of internal tensions, but it is highly exposed to changes in the market. If demand for its single product falls, it lacks the resources and ability to respond quickly. External stability, as I have called it, is the stability of diversification: being insulated against shock and change. This stability is visible everywhere, from Cold War spy cells and ant colonies to Hedge Fund balance sheets.

Note that external stability *may* coexist with the total absence of internal conflict. If a business is diversified to the point that its separate departments are fully distinct, there may be no tensions between them. Analogously, one's mind might – though this possibility is remote - contain completely isolated states, which never interact with other states. If this is right, one's mind could lack coherence, but not manifest conflicts between its constituent states. However, the business analogy illustrates a premise I should make explicit: most of the time, external stability comes at the price of some internal tension. A diversified business may suffer inefficiencies or be slow to allocate resources. Similarly, one with a range of desires, for instance, may encounter situations where practical reflection is difficult, or conflicts emerge. It is plausible to think that, practically speaking, internal and external stability are traded off against each other, and that to secure the latter is to run the risk of internal conflict.

In heeding the value of external stability, I am challenging those, like John Cottingham, who only emphasize internal stability:

> the person who pursues his projects and desires in a piecemeal way may, let us grant, manage to live quite well, for weeks or months or even years — seemingly just as well as someone whose projects are integrated into a harmonious whole. But his life, I suggest, will be less stable. He gets along all right by accident, as it were. Either the parts of his life fit together by pure chance, or, more likely, they are potentially liable to clash, but it just so happens that they have not, so far, come into conflict. So although the way he lives has not so far been such as to threaten his happiness and security (or those of others), there are, in the very nature of the case, various tensions in his way of living *that are always waiting to surface*, and which, in moments of crisis, may erupt to damaging effect. (2010, p.5)

Cottingham emphasizes internal stability in suggesting that tensions are "waiting to surface." Although he concedes that one who is unstable may live well by accident, Cottingham assumes that one's environment is always conducive to the eventual emergence of these internal clashes, such as conflicts between desires. But this additional assumption requires argument. As it stands, one would have to know more about how likely it is that the lack of internal coherence would ever lead to the direct experience of conflicts. If one can live well like that for a year, what is to stop one's environment from remaining cooperative indefinitely?

One should separate the distinction between accidental and non-accidental forms of practically organizing a life, implicit in Cottingham's thought above, from the distinction between different kinds of stability. Furthermore, once one has distinguished between two kinds of stability, it is clear that the ends served by efforts to become stable in both senses can arise by accident. Just as one who is internally conflicted may live well due to a cooperative environment, one who is internally stable may also live well by accident because of no major external shocks to their circumstances. My distinction between external and internal stability rests on the obvious point (overlooked by Cottingham) that there are different forms of crisis in life.

Of course Smith may argue that one's mind needs to be stable internally and externally: to be coherently diversified. This thought is naturally accompanied by wariness about accidental stability. But to accept this point is already to accept potential trade-offs between both forms of stability. It also involves limiting the extent to which it is desirable, let along rationally required, for one's desires to be unified. Finally, it gives one grounds to argue that one is not necessarily irrational if one's desires are not fully unified in the sense Smith initially advocated. His considerations about the structure of one's desires, on their own, tell one little about one's relationship to one's environment – and what one knows about one's environment; considerations which have to feature into a plausible evaluation of whether a particular attempt to organise one's desires is rationally warranted.

Coherent Desires can be Harmful

My argument up to this point has assumed that the point of coherence among desires is that it is conducive to their satisfaction (compare truth and coherence among beliefs), the point being that one is not (*pace* Smith) rationally required to pursue coherence among one's desires because the relationship between coherence and satisfaction is highly contingent. Those ideas can be pushed further, however, because there are times when highly organized desires are harmful. I want to make three points: first, that some forms of coherently organised and stable desires are bad; secondly, that focusing on the coherence or organization of desires can detract from a more important focus on *which* desires we have, and our relations to them; and thirdly, that not all desires are equally amenable to systematic justification to begin with. In addition, it is useful to distinguish between (a.) the claim that some coherent sets of desires will be harmful and (b.) the claim that the *coherence* of a set of desires can be harmful.[39] The former claim is unsurprising because one can have desires for harmful things. People can organize their lives around many predominant desires: love, success, fear of death, and so on. Not all of these desires relate in the same way to a good life. Some organizing desires may be for immoral ends, or involve such ends. So the content of one's organizing desire, or desires, is important. I am not claiming Smith denies this, but it is important to point out how some unified sets of desires can be harmful for a person, even if the desires in question are not for an immoral end, for example, desires organised around a fantasy (desires which, if satisfied or partly satisfied, may be bad for someone).

I want to focus on claim (b), from above, which suggests that it is the property of coherence itself, in some cases, which is harmful. Smith appeals to systematic justification when thinking about apparently irrational desires, such as impulsive desires to cause harm. He suggests that these desires cannot be justified from the deliberative perspective of one who is fully rational. The latter notion is a summary one, but it includes (at least) a systematic perspective on one's desires, with a view to securing and preserving their unity. From such a perspective, deviant cases can easily be dispatched, for they are (almost by definition?) desires that do not fit the systematic perspective. But if there are desires which generate coherence from a systematic perspective, but a coherence that is harmful, then the adoption of a systematic perspective cannot be a requirement of rationality.

We find an example of such a desire in Jonathan Lear's writing (both in Lear 2001 and 2014) He discusses 'Ms A', one of his psychoanalytic patients. Ms A:

> lived with an unconscious core fantasy that organized the world in terms of disappointment. Every event in life was interpreted in such a way that she was

[39] Patricia Marino pressed me to emphasize this difference.

> somehow being let down. The significant people in her life didn't *really* love her; they lacked the interest, the resources, or the sensitivity to give her what she really needed. In every promotion at work, the boss didn't really value or understand her; he was just doing it to avoid the embarrassment of leaving her alone without a raise; on every date, her partner didn't really like her, but was just trying to find something to do on a Saturday night…and so on. (2001, pp.64-5)

Lear gives a systematic evaluation of Ms A's mental life:

> If we try to capture the structure of Ms A's subjectivity, each of these individual disappointments is derivative. Each is there to sustain a large-scale structure: *that life shall be disappointing.* (2014, p.87)
>
> Ms A's desires were not disorganized—indeed, that was part of her problem. Her non-rational desires were all too organized, around a principle of disappointment. (Ibid, p.93)

Ms A's life is neurotically organized, but in a rigid and systematic way. Ms A's desires meet a Smith-style requirement for systematic organization, but clearly that is not sufficient for them to contribute to her well-being. Indeed they are all the worse for her *because* they are systematic: one might think that Ms A's structure of desires was fragile because rigid, but on the contrary, their organization makes any given one of them harder to change. As Lear argues,

> [A]ny analyst who actually thinks about his clinical practice will recognize that one of the most synthetic functions of the mind is neurosis. A high-functioning neurotic will "heal over" all sorts of breaks in neurotic structure by further elaborating the neurosis. Some neuroses have remarkable integrative powers—and that is why they are so stable. (2001, pp.119-20)

Lear's remark is instructive in suggesting that underlying desires, in collaboration with phantasy,[40] can organize one's mind in a highly unified and structured way. Moreover, this neurotic organization can have the external stability I mentioned

[40] Phantasy is unconscious imagining, a fundamental mental activity, one related to various impulses, defences, bodily experiences, and perceptions of the world. Sebastian Gardner describes phantasy as "a non-accidentally inaccessible state, in which the world is represented in conformity with the demands of motivational states, and which receives expression in behaviour" (Gardner, 1996, p.141).

above. In other words, Ms A's core desire to be disappointed manifests in various ways which are aimed at insulating her from disconfirming evidence, and which drive her evaluative attempts to read disappointment into her actions.[41] As Lear says, "there is a widespread assumption among psychotherapists [and not just among them] that 'psychic synthesis' is good, that 'integration' is good" (2001, p.119). But Ms A's desires are nonetheless bad for her to have, so they are hardly an advertisement for integration and stability. Ms A's neurosis is bad for her in a variety of ways. She fails to track reality, which is an epistemic vice. Her actions and interpretations of her world generate disappointment, which is experienced in a negative way. This negativity is also compatible with comfort, however: "in some strange way, she found such disappointments satisfying. There was something comforting and pleasurable about having her core fantasy—her unconscious worldview—reinforced" (2001, p.66). Ms A is inhibited from leading a flourishing life.

One might object that though Ms A's life is indeed inhibited, this is solely to do with the nature of her organizing desire - the drive for disappointment - and that if this desire was replaced with an organizing desire for success, say, that Ms A's life would be going well. This objection misses the mark, however. For Ms A's life is not bad only because it contains disappointment, it is not bad in the way that other disappointed people's lives go wrong for them (although it may be worse for that reason). Many people have good reason to be disappointed. The coherence of her desires, their organized structure, itself impoverishes her life. This coherence, like the lawyer's summation in a trial, leaves no room for disconfirming experiences, for a flash of optimism amidst a mundane life, say. Although a different desire, for a contingently socially acceptable end, such as 'success', may be harder to identify as generating harm, it is not hard to imagine Ms A being similarly burdened by such a desire if it gathers around it a coherent structure of other desires, and influences her reflective thinking about her mental life. Blithe and inflexible optimism that

[41] "No matter what happened, [Ms A] would experience it in a disappointing way. Real-life disappointments were of course disappointing, but even when something she wanted came to pass, there quickly followed a disappointing interpretative frame. 'My boss told me he is going to seek a promotion for me ... But he probably felt he *had* to ... He was too embarrassed just to promote X, who he *really* wanted to promote, and not promote me as well.' We can thus give sense to Ms A living in a disappointing world in the sense that whether *P* happened or not-*P* happened, she would experience the world as letting her down." (Lear, 2014, p.87)

pastes over any legitimate setback or disappointment can also be impoverishing (e.g. if one fails to sympathize with a friend in need because knowing suffering people is imagined as inconsistent with 'success'?)

Lear suggests that Ms A's underlying desire for disappointment gave structure to her other desires. Her desire for disappointment resembles non-rational desires in that it is inaccessible to reason and can only be approached, if at all, in an instrumental fashion.[42] However, unlike non-rational desires, the desire for disappointment does appear to have a complex content, a content in which one might expect to judge some good (or at least raise the question as to whether it is good).[43]

If one can only be normatively responsible for organizing the desires one has the ability to organize, Smith cannot fault one for failing to unify one's desires that have a quasi-non-rational character, because they elude direct rational governance (non-rational desires, and desires like them, exacerbate my worry that we cannot structure desires by fiat). The problem with some quasi-non-rational desires is not that they sit outside a coherent nexus of other desires, but that they exist in the first place. Smith can argue that coherence is not all that matters about desire, but what cases like Ms A show, is coherence can itself generate problems.

Ms A would be in a better position if her mind were not so tightly oriented around one dominating desire for disappointment; a desire which shapes her other desires, and which lies outside of her rational purview. Smith may argue that what Ms A requires is more deliberation and reflection about her desires and how they are organized, in order to try and get rid of the desire, via systematic justification, but

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[42] Alvarez extends the domain of non-rational desires, beyond the familiar ones of hunger or the desire for sleep, "There are other non-rational desires that we share with animals but which do not have characteristic sensations associated with them. For instance, the desire to play, to do things that feel good, to avoid what is painful, or to take action to diminish pain or remove the cause of pain" (Alvarez, 2010, p. 74). Non-rational desires, like these, structure other rational desires people have, and often in a radical way. For example, consider how a life may be oriented around a non-rational desire to avoid pain in all its forms.

[43] I lack the space to consider the complex relationships between unconscious and non-rational desires, and the connections between such desires and what I have provisionally called quasi-non-rational desires. cf. MacIntyre, 2004, Introduction.

Lear argues, plausibly, that the contrary is required:

> [Ms A's] capacity of reason, for its part, had itself been infiltrated and shaped by her non-rational soul. Ms A was adept at stepping back in reflection and judging that her experience was disappointing. It was in this very act of stepping back in purportedly rational deliberation that she unwittingly manifested her unfreedom. What Ms A needed to move in the direction of psychic freedom and rationality was a *break* in the structure she experienced as reason, a break in her familiar activity of stepping back and reflecting, a break in the ordinary exercise of her capacity to judge. (2014, pp.93-4)

In the next chapter, I will return to something akin to Lear's notion of a break in one's familiar reflective activity when discussing kinds of ambivalence. At the present, the conclusion to draw is that highly organized desires can be harmful, but in a way that increased deliberation cannot directly address because the organising desire has a non-rational character (not all of Ms A's desires are non-rational). To put this conclusion differently: Smith's description of a person with highly unified desires could be a description of a neurotic.

Desires and Identity

Finally, any argument for integration as an ideal for desires should remain sensitive to a distinct motivating thought: that coherence has to aid one in serving the desires one already has. One's existing desires take various forms, and as the previous discussion pointed out, may not be under one's rational control.

I have already argued that Smith overlooks the fact that the coherent organisation of desire could just as easily be served through the reduction of desires, and this brings pressure to bear on his view. This is a familiar thought: internal stability is not itself so desirable that many are willing to lead an ascetic life (the life of an oyster).

Yet in a different vein, it is also important to note that most people have desires that shape their sense of identity. An athlete who no longer wants to win competitive fixtures, or a novelist who loses the desire for critical, as opposed to popular, acclaim, may look back on this change as an identity-defining moment. Thus when people try to actively shape their lives, even under strain, as Ms A does in psychoanalysis, they do so against an implicit background understanding of what would constitute a loss of identity.

This brings practical pressure to bear on the ideal of having unified desires if that ideal is only motivated in general terms. A more realistic ideal would laud coherence *around* the core desires that shape a person's identity. It is likely that most people would willingly eschew coherence in order to continue to desire some of the things they want, even if those desires were particularly difficult to satisfy together ("the things that make us happy often fit together at best uncomfortably" Marino, 2010 p.241).

If coherence of desires were directed at desire-satisfaction alone, then one could make the argument that it is rational for people to cultivate desires that are easy to satisfy. Some people are attracted to this thought. Iris Murdoch's character Charles Arrowby, in *The Sea, The Sea*, poses the question: "why wantonly destroy one's palate for cheap wine?", forgoing expensive wine he could easily afford (Murdoch, 1999, p.9). Irrespective of the question whether Murdoch is posing a *reductio ad absurdum* here, Arrowby's attitude seems out of place when generalized, because it replaces the overriding concern to desire things of value, with the goal of desiring things which are easy to satisfy, irrespective of their value. If rationality required this, many would be happy to be irrational.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented Smith's view, that coherence is an ideal for desires, as a contemporary manifestation of the more general integration ideal, and then showed that this view is implausible. Most significantly, I argued that coherence can itself generate harm, and that structuring one's desires in a unified way is not good per se but contingent on other factors. In the next chapter I approach forms of ambivalence in a similar way.

Chapter Four

Deliberative Ambivalence

Introduction

In the previous chapter I contested Michael Smith's ideal of coherence among desires, viewed as one articulation of the broader integration ideal. In this chapter I turn my attention to ambivalence. Many advocates of the integration ideal think the integrated mind must exclude ambivalence. First, I do some preliminary work designed to show that there are different kinds of ambivalence, and in particular that we need to distinguish between deliberative and affective ambivalence. This groundwork sets the scene for my arguments in this and the two subsequent chapters. My main task in this chapter is to argue that deliberative ambivalence does not directly impair agency or compromise well-being. I shall address Harry Frankfurt's reasons to hold a contrary point of view and conclude that they are insufficient to motivate any serious concerns about the normative status of ambivalence. However, I do not deny that some instances of ambivalence can impair agency or threaten well-being. But on closer examination, I will argue that most of these situations arise due to aggravating factors in the one's social or subjective environment, or because the ambivalence in question is a complex manifestation of a more global failure of mental functioning (which I call "obstructive ambivalence").

Varieties of Ambivalence

Eugen Bleuler coined the term "Ambivalenz" to describe one feature of schizophrenia (cf. Corradi, 2013, p.42). Sigmund Freud used the term to describe mixed emotions, particularly those of love and hate.[44] This initial emphasis on ambivalent affects was subsequently broadened to include deliberative ambivalence. Today, the term remains descriptively and normatively contested.

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[44] "I have often had occasion to point out that emotional ambivalence in the proper sense of the term—…is, the simultaneous existence of love and hate towards the same object." Freud, 2001(c), p.182 Freud also described the prevalence of ambivalence in transference. cf. Freud, S. 2001(b), p.106

For example, some people argue that ambivalence is a substantial problem in mental life. Harry Frankfurt thinks ambivalence is a "disease of the will" (1992, p.9). Others, such as the Kleinian psychoanalyst Hanna Segal, think that "ambivalence is not psychopathological; it is part of human nature" (1992, p.92) and that "the capacity to experience ambivalence is a fundamental achievement, a major step in development" (Ibid. p.95).

This ambivalence about ambivalence itself is revealing in two ways. First, it is likely that the single term describes distinct phenomena. Secondly, the fact that people have different normative conceptions of ambivalence may depend on their presuppositions about mental structure. Even once its meaning is specified, ambivalence is a problem only relative to one's theory of mental organisation.[45]

A preliminary suggestion is that one is ambivalent just if one's mind contains conflicting attitudes. Yet this definition appears inadequately broad. It would include easy choices between incompatible desires e.g. selecting from a restaurant menu, and conflicts between attitudes one of which is irrational e.g. not wanting to fly because one is convinced the plane will crash. Ordinarily, people do not characterise these situations as instances of ambivalence.

Instead, ambivalence appears to involve attitudes that interact with one another in a particular way. Harry Frankfurt's definition reflects this idea:

> Insofar as someone is ambivalent, he is moved by incompatible preferences or attitudes regarding his affects or his desires or regarding other elements of his psychic life. This volitional division keeps him from settling upon or from tolerating any coherent affective or motivational identity. It means that he does not know what he really wants. (1992, p.8)

Frankfurt's nicely ambiguous thought that an ambivalent person is "moved" reflects the dual relation of ambivalent attitudes to action and emotional life. His definition also expresses the idea that ambivalent attitudes result in an unsettled

[45] This point is made by Jerome Neu when considering the normative status of mixed feelings: "mixed feeling are by themselves puzzling only if one has some special theory suggesting they should cancel each other out, as in a chemical reaction in which acid and base neutralize each other." (Neu, 2000, p.82)

state of a person. One's unsettled state is characterised in epistemic terms, but in an ambiguous way. Does one struggle to know what it is that one wants, or does one fail to want anything at all? I will return to this kind of difference at the end of the chapter.

Frankfurt's definition does not specify the kinds of attitudes that feature in ambivalence. One might think, like Julie Sincoff, that ambivalence must involve positive and negative attitudes:

> Ambivalence is not equivalent to conflict. Rather, ambivalence is a subset of conflict, distinguishable from conflict primarily by the presence of both positive and negative poles. Thus approach-avoidance conflicts…involving one or more objects are indeed ambivalent conflicts. (1990, p.46)

This approach excludes situations where one is ambivalently torn between two positive or two negative things. For example, Agamemnon's plight at Aulis is a form of ambivalence between two terrible futures, whereas a restaurant reviewer may be torn between different delights on a menu. Sincoff anticipates this thought and responds that:

> approach-approach conflicts, in which a person contemplates two or more desirable experiences or activities, are ambivalent only if latent or hidden avoidance is also aroused. This avoidance may be aroused by the realization that neither object is perfect or from the choice situation itself, which demands that the individual denounce one object to accept the other. (Ibid.)

This definition is overly broad because all choices involve "denunciation". It is important to distinguish the process of making any choice, which requires one to forgo an alternative, from the specific situation of choosing to reject something one does not desire, all things considered.

It is also important to notice a strange feature of Frankfurt's definition: when ambivalent, one is purportedly "moved by incompatible preferences or attitudes *regarding [one's]* affects or his desires". Typically, however, we think ambivalence simply involves incompatible preferences or desires, whatever their objects. One's response to one's ambivalence is a separate matter.

Frankfurt has two subtly different examples of ambivalent love which (unintentionally) illustrate this contrast, first:

> It may happen that a person truly loves something but that, at the same time, it is also true that he does not want to love it. Part of him loves it, as we might say, and part of him does not. There is a part of him that is opposed to his loving it, and that wishes he did not love it at all. (2004, p.91)

Secondly:

> Suppose, for example, that he is ambivalent with respect to loving a certain woman. Part of him loves her, but part of him is opposed to loving her; and he himself is undecided concerning which of his two inconstant tendencies he wants to prevail. (Ibid. pp.92-3)

Described simply, only the second example captures ambivalence, as we typically understand it: one partly loves another, but has an opposed attitude, and is uncertain about which attitude should win.[46] There are two components: first-order opposed attitudes, and second-order indecision.

The first example, in contrast, concerns a person who loves another, but does not want to love them (perhaps their love is unreciprocated). This does not seem like ambivalence. The person concerned is not indecisive, nor do they have conflicting first-order attitudes about the person they love, nor are they unsettled by their attitudes. They just love another person and wish they did not. The opposite situation is also familiar. One may want to like people one cannot abide, such as an annoying friend of one's friends. (Because it would lubricate social gatherings, or because one wants one's judgements to harmonise with those of one's friends.) In these situations, one is clear about one's first-order attitude towards this other person.

Furthermore, one need not experience the tensions in these situations as painful. Examples of love may be prejudicial to our thinking about ambivalence because they are often associated with anguish, but exclamations like, "I want to like him,

[46] Described more complexly, we might wonder how to interpret the notion of "partly loving" a person. Is this simply to have a range of positive attitudes toward them, akin to love but not full love? (An answer will depend on how one understands love).

but I just find him intolerable", or "that was such a stupid joke, but I just find it funny" have the same structure as Frankfurt's first example, without any accompanying sense of mental strain.[47] Because of this, one has to be careful not to identify ambivalence with the mere non-alignment of a higher-order attitude and lower-order one.

It is perhaps mistaken to hazard a clear definition of ambivalence as it appears to take many forms. Frankfurt's first definition bundled together desires, affects, and "other elements of…psychic life." But it is useful to distinguish these features with some care, and set them against a wider nexus of relevant differences which help one characterise ambivalence in mental life. I think six distinctions are particularly relevant. They are somewhat artificial, and in describing them I do not intend to capture every aspect of the phenomenology of ambivalence.

First, one can distinguish deliberative from affective ambivalence.[48] The former describes ambivalence when one is trying to decide what to do. The latter describes ambivalence between one's emotions or other attitudes.[49]

One is deliberatively ambivalent when one is unable to reach a settled evaluation of various considerations that pertain to action.[50] One may have multiple desires, or a single desire that is partially supported by some reasons, yet not by others. In Act 1 Scene 7 of *Macbeth,* Macbeth famously deliberates about whether to act on his

[47] Frankfurt confuses these cases because of his emphasis on volition. He regards ambivalence as a volitional problem that inhibits action. This approach to ambivalence arises, in part, because Frankfurt has a broadly Humean conception of mind, and thus places great emphasis on the role of desire in connection to action. More importantly, he is aware of the potential tensions between desire-like attitudes of different order. Thus for his account of human motivation to work, he needs to secure harmony between first and higher-order attitudes, hence his focus on examples where this harmony is absent.

[48] Roger Crisp suggested I use the terminology of an Aristotelian distinction between prohairetic and pathetic ambivalence, but I want to avoid exegetical controversy about the notion of prohairesis.

[49] This distinction maps onto two strands of Bleuler's tripartite division of ambivalence into three categories: that of the "will", that concerned with choices, the "intellectual", that concerned with reasoning and cognitive interpretation of experiences, and the "emotional", that concerned with affects (cf. Corradi, 2013, p.42, and Bleuler, 1950.)

[50] It is a separate question as to whether one is deliberatively ambivalent in an actual context of action, that is, a context where one would be able to act on the basis of one's reasoning.

desire to kill King Duncan. Macbeth initially contemplates murder, imagining Duncan dying swiftly with no lasting implications, and thinking, “this blow/ Might be the be-all and the end-all – here” (4-5).[51] But his reasoning then shifts as countervailing considerations flood his mind. For example, he reasons that he is Duncan’s “kinsman and his subject” who “should against his murder shut the door/ Not bear the knife” (13-16). Lady Macbeth then interrupts him, and he signals that, “we will proceed no further in this business” (31). She castigates him in response, berates his masculinity, and asks: “Art thou afeard/ To be the same in thine own act and valour,/ As thou art in desire?” Macbeth reconsiders, but is hesitant and worried about potential failure, yet with Lady Macbeth’s reassurance, the scene ends as Macbeth ignores his prior deliberations:

> I am settled and bend up
> Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
> Away, and mock the time with fairest show,
> False face must hide what the false heart doth know. [79-82]

This is an example of very complex ambivalence. Macbeth’s deliberations take place over time, involve many considerations, are motivated by multiple fears and desires, and intersect with the influence of another person. His intrapersonal ambivalence has an interpersonal aspect.

In contrast to deliberative ambivalence, affective ambivalence need not concern a decision at all. One can have mixed feelings about a vast array of objects, from a thrilling but anxiety-inducing thought, a person, past decision, or future hope. Affective ambivalence is common in relationships with other people, but can arise towards many things. A famous example of affective ambivalence is captured in Catullus’ poem about his feelings towards his lover, Lesbia:

> I hate and love. Why I do so, perhaps you ask./ I know not, but I feel it, and I am in torment. (Cited in Neu, 2000, p.81)

One may be simultaneously ambivalent in one’s emotions about a choice one has to make, which renders one deliberatively ambivalent. This may happen when one has ambivalent motivational attitudes, or emotions that shadow an anticipated action that one subsequently enacts. For example, a person may want to marry a

[51] References are to the text by line number in Braunmuller, 1997.

long-term partner but also desire freedom from commitment. Their anticipated married life makes them feel joyous but also anxious. These desires and emotions may persist whilst they also evaluate various considerations that bear upon their decision, such as whether they value the social institution of marriage, and whether they can afford a wedding.

My distinction between deliberative and affective ambivalence means that there are multiple contraries to ambivalence. One may be affectively unified, or deliberatively unified, and these states can interact or follow on from each other in different combinations.[52] Notice that one can be deliberatively ambivalent *about* aspects of one's affective life (as in Frankfurt's second example), or affectively ambivalent about one's deliberative life. Both forms of ambivalence may take many objects.

Secondly, both kinds of ambivalence can assume either a diachronic or synchronic form. Confronted with a frail lady on a packed train, Dora Greenfield, a character in Iris Murdoch's *The Bell*, is (*prima facie* enkratically) ambivalent about what to do:

> She ought to give up her seat. She rejected the thought, but it came back. There was no doubt about it. The elderly lady who was standing looked very frail indeed, and it was only proper that Dora, who was young and healthy should give her seat to the lady who could then sit next to her friend. Dora felt the blood rushing to her face. She sat still and considered the matter. There was no point in being hasty. It was possible of course that while clearly admitting that she ought to give up her seat she might nevertheless simply not do so out of pure selfishness. This would in some ways be a better situation than what would have been the case if it had simply not occurred to her at all that she ought to give up her seat. […] There was another aspect to the matter. She had taken the trouble to arrive early, and surely ought to be rewarded for this. Though perhaps the two ladies had arrived as early as they could? There was no knowing. But in any case there was an elementary justice in the first comers having the seats. The old lady would be perfectly all right in the corridor. The corridor was full of old ladies anyway, and no one else seemed bothered by this, least of all the old ladies themselves! Dora hated pointless sacrifices. She was tired after her recent emotions and deserved a rest. Besides, it would never do to arrive at her destination exhausted. She regarded her state of distress as completely neurotic. She decided not to give

[52] A point that will prove important in chapter six.

> up her seat.
>
> She got up and said to the standing lady 'Do sit down here, please. I'm not going very far, and I'd much rather stand anyway.' (Murdoch, 2001, pp.9-10)

On the train, Dora is ambivalent about her seat both affectively and deliberatively, but her ambivalence is momentary. Yet ambivalence can also unfold over time. Dora's opposed decisions, separated by months, also manifest ambivalence towards her relationship with her husband:

> Dora Greenfield left her husband because she was afraid of him. She decided six months later to return to him for the same reason. The absent Paul, haunting her with letters and telephone bells and imagined footsteps on the stairs had begun to be the greater torment. Dora suffered from guilt, and with guilt came fear. She decided at last that the persecution of his presence was to be preferred to the persecution of his absence. (Ibid. p.1)

This example is noteworthy because Dora is arguably diachronically deliberatively ambivalent *in virtue of* her being diachronically affectively unified in her fear. Affective ambivalence is more likely to assume a diachronic form than deliberative ambivalence because one's affective attitudes can remain focused on past objects of choice or foregone alternatives, and because these affects can resist being tempered by one's reflective rational thinking (the persistence of guilt and regret are visceral reminders of this).

Thirdly, diachronic ambivalence, of either a deliberative or affective kind, should be distinguished from the orthogonal difference between episodic ambivalence and ambivalence that manifests itself as a character trait.[53] One may be ambivalent over time but in an episodic manner because the object of one's ambivalence persists in a way that commands one's attention, or because one's emotions remain sensitive to a past opportunity (as when one's feelings oscillate between two old lovers, or in response to a major decision). In contrast to this, ambivalence can ossify into a character trait.[54]

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[53] "ambivalence may be tied to specific situations in some individuals, whereas it may represent a dispositional feature of other individuals" (Sincoff, 1990, p.44)

[54] I lack space to consider whether one could have the character trait but in such a way that it does not manifest in episodic ambivalence. One possibility is that one is only ever diachronically ambivalent.

There is a spectrum of ambivalence as a character trait, with ordinary and pathological extremes. One may be habitually ambivalent because of one's sensitivity to rational considerations, objects of value, or due to the shape of one's emotional development. One may also develop such a character because of a reluctance to experience the forms of loss involved in resolving ambivalences; whether they are aspects of one's affective life, rational considerations, or personal identity (a matter I shall return to below).[55] Finally, habitual ambivalence may arise because one has developed other traits of character that interact in a given social context in a manner that produces cognitive tensions. On a certain conception of virtuous traits, for example, possessing different virtues can lead to ambivalence in response to complicated situations. Amélie Rorty articulates this thought:

> The cognitive components of the virtues carry the whole range of combinatorial logical and psychological properties [...] Psychologically, their associations can be law-like; the development of the cognitive components of one virtue can presuppose, enhance, or block another, they can reinforce or inhibit each other, they can combine in new virtues and form cyclical patterns of vacillation and ambivalence. (1988, p.138)

In extreme cases, ambivalence may accompany, or comprise, a pathological syndrome of its own. Here is just one example, that of claustro-agoraphobia, which radically shapes one's behaviour, thoughts, and feelings:

> In the claustro-agoraphobic syndrome…several other phenomena often appeared together with claustrophobia to form a 'syndrome': oscillating, somatically-experienced, panicky flight into enclosed spaces, followed by flight out into open, unconfined spaces; the tendency to experience internal states of mind as concrete, material spaces; oscillating longing for and phobic avoidance of both enclosed and open spaces; and the seeking of liminal situations as a respite from claustro-agoraphobic panic. (Catan, 2011, p.254)

Fourthly, felt ambivalence should be distinguished from unfelt ambivalence. Dora, for example, may be unaware of her deliberative ambivalence towards her husband

[55] "The psychoanalytic, sociological, cognitive, and developmental literatures suggest that the acknowledgement and resolution of ambivalence may be viewed as a process of learning to tolerate one or more forms of perceived loss." (Ibid. p.62) Thus one may become habitually ambivalent if one is unable, or unwilling, to confront these losses.

even if its main motivating emotion, fear, was certainly felt. One may be utterly surprised to realize that one's deliberations, desires, or affective attitudes, have been structured ambivalently. Felt ambivalence is not simply identical to episodic ambivalence, for one's momentary ambivalence about a specific object or choice situation may not be felt as such.

Fifthly, even felt affective ambivalence need not comprise emotions that are painful or tumultuous. One can be ambivalent about whether one likes a certain combination of flavours or colours without finding the combination to be disgusting, for instance, or in one's response to a funny yet puerile joke.

Sixthly, a person's ambivalence can be articulated in narrative, whether self- or other-directed, or left unarticulated. This distinction is orthogonal to the difference between felt and unfelt ambivalence because felt ambivalence may not be articulated. For example, one may be uneasy around a new acquaintance, judging them to be funny but feeling hostile towards them, without situating those emotions in an explanatory or justificatory narrative. In contrast, one might situate one's feelings in a broader context: providing reasons for one's hostility and reticence, excusing one's negative judgement to a mutual friend, and locating one's ambivalence in a history of one's interaction with the person concerned. The ability to articulate one's ambivalence in narrative requires one to be able to acknowledge that mixed feelings, or deliberative tensions, are possible. The possibility of this acknowledgement is a developmental milestone.[56] It is an ability people possess in varying degrees, and one that influences their capacity to become aware of their diachronic ambivalence. Narrative thinking also aids one to distinguish between past or future directed ambivalence, and self- or other-directed ambivalence.

These six distinctions circumscribe the common guises of ambivalence. They provide a framework to examine various normative arguments to the conclusion

[56] "young children…tend to deny that a person can feel more than one way at one time when the co-existing emotions include positive and negative feelings… young children may experience ambivalence but may not be able to comprehend the possibility of multiple emotions. Thus, they may deny mixed feelings… The recognition in early and middle childhood that conflicting feelings can occur in close temporal succession represents a developmental advance over the sharp denial of conflicting feelings." (Sincoff, 1990, pp.55-6)

that ambivalence is bad. However, one may wonder whether there are any commonalities to these different forms of ambivalence.

Frankfurt's definition of ambivalence had two components: opposed first-order attitudes, and second-order indecision with regard to those attitudes. Are these sufficient as marks of ambivalence? My distinctions above caution us against a definitive positive answer. One can be affectively ambivalent, for instance, without being indecisive. In such a case, one's ambivalence has subjective force, i.e. one experiences it as an issue, because one is uncertain about which affective attitudes are warranted, given their context, or which should prevail, given certain practical considerations,[57] and *not* because one is uncertain about how to act.

Furthermore, it also seems possible for one to lack indecisiveness about one's opposed attitudes. Catullus' exclamation that he loves and hates Lesbia, for example, is a resigned one. He does not pose the question of which attitude should prevail (Catullus may have no opinion about which he wants to prevail). The idea that one *has* to be indecisive about one's mind is overly intellectualist, and is to make an assumption that is implicitly in favour of the integration ideal. A person can be ambivalent without reflectively challenging their conflicting mental attitudes. This is not to deny that someone like Catullus may have other higher-order attitudes. He may desire that either his hate or love becomes his predominant attitude towards Lesbia. Yet he can want this in isolation from any reflective engagement with the tension between his love and hate itself.

Ambivalence resembles, but differs from, conflicts of desire or other forms of conflict between mental attitudes. I have suggested this does not have to be explained in terms of higher-order indecisiveness. Because ambivalence assumes many forms, it is difficult to give necessary and sufficient conditions to define it.

That said, most ambivalences appear to have two features: first, they involve attitudes with alternating subjective force. Secondly, ambivalence often serves to inhibit one's practical reflectiveness.

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[57] I presuppose that the question as to whether an emotion is useful or obstructing, in a context is orthogonal to the question of whether it is justified. One might acknowledge that one's anger is warranted, for instance, whilst denying that it is useful. There are contexts where episodic anger is distracting.

Responding to Ambivalence

In this section I will introduce Harry Frankfurt's reasons for thinking ambivalence is normatively troubling, before asking whether his arguments are plausible. In concluding that they are not, I will then ask why ambivalence is typically thought to impair agency and diminish well-being, and examine the role of one's response to one's ambivalence.

Frankfurt thinks ambivalence impairs one's agency and diminishes one's well-being:

> A person is ambivalent, then, only if he is indecisive concerning whether to be for or against a certain psychic position. Now this kind of indifference is as irrational, in its own way, as holding contradictory beliefs. The disunity of an ambivalent person's will prevents him from effectively pursuing and satisfactorily attaining his goals. Like conflict within reason, volitional conflict leads to self-betrayal and self-defeat. The trouble is in each case the same: a sort of incoherent greed - trying to have things both ways - which naturally makes it impossible to get anywhere. The flow of volitional or of intellectual activity is interrupted and reversed; movement in any direction is truncated and turned back. (1992, p.9)

First, Frankfurt regards ambivalence as a form of irrationality. Thus insofar as irrationality is something to be avoided, ambivalence should be avoided. Secondly, ambivalence is taken to undermine effective action. This also seems to be what Frankfurt means by "self-defeat": ambivalence stops one from pursuing and attaining one's goals. Thirdly, ambivalence leads one to betray oneself. Finally, it constitutes a form of greed, and is thus a vice of character.

Frankfurt contrasts ambivalence with his conception of its contrary: wholeheartedness. Wholeheartedness is a form of integration, and describes an ideal of mental structure. For Frankfurt, an ambivalent person is not integrated. Frankfurt describes wholeheartedness when discussing Freud's case study of the Rat Man (Freud, 1955). This man suffered from obsessional neurosis, and Freud thought he had unacknowledged ambivalent attitudes of love and hate towards his father. In respect of this case, considered as a philosophical example, Frankfurt argues:

> In order for the Rat Man to be wholeheartedly on the side of his benign attitudes, it would not have been necessary for him to conceal his hostile feelings from himself. Nor would he have had to refrain from making a conscious effort to deal with those feelings in whatever ways might be effective and helpful. *It would have required only that, in the struggle between his hatred and his love for his father, he himself came to stand decisively against the hatred and behind the love.* (Frankfurt, 2002, p.126 my italics)

In later work, Frankfurt retains this view. He stresses, "it is not necessary that either of [several] conflicting impulses disappear" or that "either of them increase or diminish in strength." Instead, overcoming ambivalence "requires only that the person become finally and unequivocally clear as to which side of the conflict *he* is on" (Frankfurt, 2004, p.91).

Understood in this way, one who is wholehearted in his deliberations is clear about which of several options to pursue, even if the contrary option remains salient. This view seems initially reasonable. In deciding between two holidays, for example, both options are likely to be desirable and valuable, thus making up one's mind need not entail that one neglects the value of the foregone choice, or even that one does not think about the foregone holiday (cf. Raz, 1988, p.304).

Frankfurt thinks one becomes wholehearted by endorsing one of several opposed attitudes. This attitude may not be purely desiderative, but for Frankfurt, ambivalence ends when one endorses a facet of one's motivational life. The avoidance of ambivalence enables one to attain "health of the mind" (2004, p.95). However, unlike a more demanding ideal of mental unity, Frankfurt's conception of wholeheartedness is fully compatible with one's continued *experience* of various forms of ambivalence.[58]

Frankfurt's Humean outlook excludes forms of ambivalence which leave no prominent place for desires. Many forms of deliberative ambivalence may involve judgements and other states of mind. Furthermore, Frankfurt's appeal to the example of the Rat Man may be misleading because it is not clear that his emotional attitudes are candidates for voluntary organisation. The Rat Man seems gripped by at least partly non-rational attitudes. Since this is a contentious issue, I shall leave it to one side here.

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[58] For instance, compare Frankfurt's view with Watson, 1975.

More generally, it is important to note that Frankfurt focuses on synchronic ambivalences that are strongly felt. This fact may be a residuum of his suggestion that ambivalence differs from other conflicts in virtue of its object; namely, things one cares about. Clearly, Frankfurt's view is shaped in virtue of his focus on the ambivalences that seem naturally tumultuous, such as an ambivalent lover, or someone like the Rat Man who struggles to confront their father.

However, my distinctions between different kinds of ambivalence bring pressure to bear on Frankfurt's focus, even within the narrow purview of his Humean outlook. For there is room for unfelt ambivalence, or forms of ambivalence that unfold across time rather than being experienced at a moment. Of course, Frankfurt's strictures against ambivalence may be right, within his narrow purview, and so we need to examine them independently. I will consider his arguments in turn.

First, without knowing the specific object of a person's ambivalence, we cannot judge whether they are greedy, just as knowing that one desires an object in general is not sufficient to determine whether one is intemperate. There are good reasons, however, to doubt that ambivalence is always a form of greed. In chapter six I will argue that ambivalence can manifest an ethically valuable sensibility. Unlike Macbeth, people can be ambivalent because they are sensitive to several actually valuable objects at the same time. I will argue this can be the case even if one is decisive and acts without hesitation. (Although it is also true that ambivalence in decision making can also manifest one's sensitivity to what matters). This gives us reason to think ambivalence can manifest one's sensitivity to value, which subsequently brings pressure to bear on the idea that ambivalence is always a form of greed.

Secondly, it also seems implausible to claim there is a direct link between ambivalence and self-betrayal. Ambivalence may actually prevent one from forming hasty commitments, or making rash decisions. Thus occasional ambivalence in one's decision-making could prompt one to make better decisions, or refrain from acting without sufficient information. Better choices are more likely to result in action, and not require one to change one's mind. Thus in the round ambivalence can prevent self-betrayal. Such deliberative hesitation may have particular value if one's social world is awash with norms of decisiveness (norms which are often gendered). Frankfurt thinks we always wholeheartedly desire to be wholehearted. If so, any ambivalence would conflict with this desire. But this pseudo-axiom seems implausible. A habitually slapdash person who rushes into commitments they subsequently break can wholeheartedly desire to be deliberatively ambivalent in certain contexts.

Even if one agrees with my suggestion that ambivalence is not a form of self-betrayal, one may still think that ambivalence always prevents people from acting. To examine this claim, let's consider particularly intractable ambivalences involving what Patricia Marino calls "valuational inconsistencies" (2011). These are situations where one affectively wants non-contingently inconsistent things.[59] If action is possible in these situations, then this brings pressure to bear on the idea that ambivalence poses a general threat to one's agency.

Marino considers a woman who wants to be a parent at home and also to pursue a career outside the home. This woman is not ambivalent because of contingent circumstances. Instead, her desires are structured such that, "under any arrangement [of the world] something has been lost."[60] Those desires may be deeply important to her, and connect to facets of her identity.[61] Marino argues we are mistaken to think this woman will necessarily suffer from impaired agency or diminished well-being. Her argument is simple: whilst ambivalent people may have occasional difficulties acting (a fact we should not deny),

> the *reasons* for these problems do not concern the distinction between mere conflicts and inconsistency at all. *Whatever the difficulty is, it is not a difficulty with inconsistency or ambivalence*, and thus it does not concern the…unity of the agent's volitional outlook. (2011, p.51 second italics added)

Marino's insight is that there is no major difference between one who is ambivalent between two non-contingently inconsistent options, and one who faces conflicts that arise for contingent reasons. In both cases, one needs to act and

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[59] Affective valuing resembles Frankfurt's notion of caring for something: not mere wanting, nor mere judgement. (Marino, 2011, p.43)

[60] Marino, 2011, p.46

[61] "those valuations may reflect what the agent takes to be parts of her self she approves of: she cares about a certain kind of motherhood and a certain kind of work, regarding each as worthy of her attention." (Marino, 2011, p.47)

can only do one thing at a time. Contingent conflicts between things one values are so common that if merely confronting them meant one's agency was impaired then one's agency would be permanently impaired. Subjectively, one's agential perspective in either case seems similar. The modal relationship between the alternatives involved in one's ambivalence plays only a minor role in determining whether it is going to impair one's agency.

There are many other relevant factors that bear upon the woman in Marino's example. For example, one might ask whether she articulates her ambivalence to herself in a clear way. Is she aware that the options she desires cannot be satisfied together, or does she believe they only conflict contingently? Does she describe herself as a failure because she is wedded to social norms that encourage women to try and 'have it all', or does she regard her ambivalence as itself evidence to reject those social norms and reconcile herself to a life that is good enough? Is her desire for a child, and to stay at home raising it, related to a socio-historical context that she can openly endorse, or is her desire a residuum of an oppressive familial environment that she reflectively rejects?

Frankfurt may insist that if one is ambivalent, one is bound to vacillate, and struggle to avoid sliding between one valuation and another. Marino would respond by suggesting that compromises help one avoid vacillation, and that one can reason in similar ways in both the agential contexts she describes. Compromise involves prioritization but

> the woman who values her career and her family life in a way that is "inconsistent," because there is no possible world in which she will be satisfied, and the woman who values them in a way that is consistent, may each form priority rankings in the same ways. (Marino, 2011, p.58)

In other words, the kinds of reasoning undertaken by both women will not differ much. Ultimately, people have to make decisions about which of several desires to act upon. Yet they also face various options about how to respect the desires they do not act on. A life may be built around one of a pair of ambivalent desires without the other desire being rejected completely. Vacillation is a risk in any life, but it arguably flows from one's response to agential constraint, and not from the specific character of the source of the constraint.

A third concern Frankfurt may retain is that one is liable to be harmed by one's ambivalence, even if one's agency is not impaired. It is plausible to think that having a divided mind is frustrating and that this frustration will be intense or lasting. Yet once again Marino has an instructive response to this kind of worry. She inverts the line of thinking:

> The person who regards his own valuations as inconsistent rather than merely conflicting will experience his conflict in a special way. To be knowingly inconsistent is to believe that there is no perfect way things can be; *if dissatisfaction is inevitable, its presence will be less frustrating.* Indeed, any regret or sorrow an agent feels after acting may be less for the agent who is inconsistent, since this agent knows that there was no way to avoid the difficulty: it is not due to a cruel twist of fate that she is dissatisfied, it is inevitable. (Marino, 2011, p.67)

This argument is attractive, but it will not work for everyone because some people may continue to be frustrated by inescapable features of their life. The subjective force of this kind of reasoning will depend on one's response to one's ambivalence. Yet Marino is right that coming to recognise that one's ambivalence is fundamentally unresolvable *may* actually be a source of comfort. Just as ambivalence seems impossible only against a background conception of mind which rules out opposed states, so ambivalence may seem inescapably frustrating only against a view that suggests every mental tension can be resolved without remainder. This is sufficient to unsettle the thought that ambivalence must always diminish one's well-being.

In chapter six, I shall develop a version of Marino's thought by arguing that deliberative ambivalence can morph into affective ambivalence whilst one acts decisively. In the present context, however, it is important to note the similarity between Frankfurt's recognition that overcoming ambivalence need not alter one's subjective experience, and Marino's thought that the subjective perspective of different kinds of conflicts and ambivalence remain remarkably similar irrespective of their differing modal characters.

Aggravating Factors

In general, Frankfurt's reasons to be wary of deliberative ambivalence are not sufficiently robust to allow one to conclude that all ambivalence will impair one's agency or diminish one's well-being. The main problem with Frankfurt's approach is his failure to distinguish the normative status of ambivalence from the status of one's responses to ambivalence.[62]

David Velleman has argued that this distinction is vital when thinking about ambivalence (2006). Velleman's point becomes clear in his disagreement with Frankfurt over the predicament of the Rat Man. Frankfurt thinks the Rat Man needs to "stand behind" his love.[63] In contrast, Velleman claims:

> The Rat Man suffered, not from the disease of ambivalence, but from something like Frankfurt's cure. What made him ill was his effort to dissociate himself from one of his emotions, which is just what Frankfurt prescribes for cases of ambivalence. (2006, p.344)

In other words, the Rat Man's diminished well-being and impaired agency stems from a botched attempt, however indirect, to reject his hate (and *a fortiori*, his ambivalence). The attempt to remove his hate led to its symptomatic re-manifestation; his suffering constituted the continuation of his ambivalence by other means.

I shall develop Velleman's important suggestion. Whilst I have argued that Frankfurt's claim that ambivalence *always* impairs agency or diminishes well-being is unsupported by his arguments, it is clear that some instances of ambivalence do have these consequences. In response to this platitude, however, I shall argue first, that in most cases where ambivalence has these bad consequences, other factors are to blame. Secondly, that some cases of ambivalence can be intimately related to one's sense of self in a manner that cements their importance. Thirdly, in a separate section, I shall draw a broad distinction between common forms of ambivalence, and a distinctive kind of ambivalence that evidences a wider motivational failure.

Velleman's general idea, that one's response to ambivalence bears more importantly on one's well-being than one's ambivalence itself, is shared by psychoanalytic and

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[62] For an example of a person who is mindful of this distinction see Kristjánsson, 2010, p.486

[63] Note that Frankfurt implicitly presupposes that the Rat Man's hatred is inappropriate or unwarranted in this situation, which may not be true.

psychological theorists.[64] But this suggestion also resembles a commonplace attitude that people take towards conflicts; namely, the thought that sustained aversion to conflict is a negative character trait. People who cannot bear to face up to disagreement or to divergent emotions, especially in interpersonal contexts, are disadvantaged even if one thinks that, ideally, interpersonal situations should lack conflicts.

The extent to which one can respond well to one's ambivalence is shaped by several factors. In discussing the relationship between ambivalence and autonomy (a matter I leave aside here) Jacqui Poltera argues that "our assessments [of ambivalence] need to be informed by attention to: the [agent's] contingent circumstances, the agent's first-personal experience of ambivalence and the link between his ambivalence and his social world" (2010, p.294). When approached with my distinctions between the kinds of ambivalence in mind, these features provide a useful focal point when assessing whether ambivalence is likely to impair agency or diminish well-being.

One's experience of one's own ambivalence is finely structured by one's social contexts, in particular, by the social acceptability of ambivalence (whether that is understood in terms of the lack of affective or deliberative unity). Social ideals of decisiveness or resoluteness are hostile to ambivalence (as we shall see in chapter six, these ideals have also influenced philosophical theorising). Furthermore, one's subjective experiences of ambivalence will be shaped by the social roles one occupies, and the norms that structure one's conduct as a role occupier. For example, a mother may experience ambivalence towards her child, and experience it in a negative way, because

> much of the ubiquitous guilt mothers endure stems from difficulties in weathering the painful feelings evoked by experiencing maternal ambivalence in a culture that shies away from the very existence of something it has helped to produce. (Parker, 1997, p.17)

[64] "It is clearly important to distinguish between those persons capable of tolerating ambivalence and those persons capable of finding only pathological solutions to their mixed feelings" (Sincoff, 1990, p.48). Sincoff focuses on mixed feelings, but her point applies to all forms of ambivalence.

A politician or military officer may also struggle to articulate their ambivalence, as such, because of prevailing norms about the behaviour and affective life of people who occupy those roles. The inability to articulate one's ambivalence to oneself can shape its subjective force, especially insofar as one is prevented from being able to take a rational stance towards one's state of mind, and consider whether it is warranted. Even if one is able to articulate one's ambivalence to oneself, if this state of mind is in tension with social ideals, then one is likely to experience additional pressures that may colour one's wider experience of the tension between one's mental attitudes.

One's ambivalence is also shaped by the character of the objects of one's mental attitudes, and the relationship between those objects, one's actions, and one's wider sense of self. Different people may experience the same object of ambivalence, such as vacillation over whether to relinquish a train seat, in different ways. For Dora, this was a contingent and episodic instance of ambivalence. Yet for another person, the same ambivalence may arise as the regular manifestation on a long-term deliberative tension when travelling by train. Even if it is the latter, however, this ambivalence is unlikely to ramify more widely into the person's sense of identity. Yet there are cases where the objects of one's ambivalence do ramify more widely. They might directly concern aspects of one's sense of self or, in a less self-focused way, the central commitments one has in life. For instance, Agamemnon's commitment to his daughter and to his army mean his deliberative ambivalence in the face of a potential choice between them, at Aulis, ramifies widely into his sense of self and his life in a way that ambivalence about a train seat typically does not (I discuss Agamemnon again in chapter six).

Another important subjective feature is the extent to which an attempt to resolve or engage with ambivalence is experienced as a form of loss. This will evidently depend on one's emotional constitution, a matter I will consider in the next chapter. However, one's response to deliberative ambivalence typically involves a loss of some kind. A vacillating diner has to forego one option to enjoy another. Even simple choices may precipitate affective ambivalences or negative emotions, but this is rare and often thought to evidence a more global failure in one's practical capacities if it is sustained. More usually, ambivalence involves loss because the objects of one's ambivalence are truly of value, as in Agamemnon's case.

However, there are situations where ambivalence concerns things one values in a deeper way. Poltera argues that ambivalence can be constitutionally important to one's identity. Her example is of a Latina lesbian where

> each aspect of her identity is *necessarily* at odds with the other because of the social stigmas and social roles that each involves. The nature of this case is that lesbianism is dishonourable among Latinas and the traditional Hispanic norms have little place within a lesbian community. (2010, p.297)

Poltera's example is contentious because one can argue the two identities can be reconciled. They are certainly not inconsistent like the ambitions of the woman Marino envisages, who both wants to stay at home and work away from home. However, these identities can certainly be experienced as in tension, and may often issue in practical conflicts. Moreover, Poltera's claim does not rest on this example alone. Abstractly expressed, her idea is simple: one may feel that both polarities of one's ambivalence are important:

> It is not exceptional for agents to find themselves defined by ambivalence or to identify themselves in terms of the conflicting features of their identity. (2010, p.298)

Ambivalences can focus on identity-constituting aspects of mental life, such as one's commitments, long-held desires, or values. These forms of identity are consistent with other kinds of episodic conflicts, or ambivalences that are not connected to one's identity. Underpinning Poltera's idea is the recognition that being free of ambivalence may be experienced as the loss of a part of oneself.[65]

Michael Warner makes the presence of constitutional ambivalences, and other mental tensions, seem both inescapable, even valuable:

> Imagine having no discarded personalities, no vestigial selves, no visible ruptures with yourself, no gulf of self-forgetfulness, nothing that requires explanation, no alien version of yourself that requires humour and accommodation. What kind of life is that? (1997, p.224)

[65] "although ambivalence or indecision may be distressful, the subjective experience of relinquishing one's feelings or choices may be more distressful or even intolerable." (Sincoff, 1990, p.53) cf. also Sincoff (1990, p.64)

Whilst one may disagree with the force of Warner's suggestion, he captures the broader point that there often facets of oneself that sit uneasily within one's life, but that such unease actually evidences that one is living well because one's life is rich and diverse.

The persistence of ambivalence can be an alternative to the experience of loss. The idea of identity-constituting ambivalence captures the fact that the resolution of ambivalence may ramify widely into one's sense of self, and not always in a positive way. More generally, in thinking about the relationship between ambivalence and mental structure, it is important to heed the distinction between unified self-conceptions, and self-conceptions of unity. One may have a perfectly unified sense of self but one that is unified around the recognition of one's ambivalences. In later chapters this thought forms the basis of my attempts to salvage an alternative understanding of integration as an ideal.

I have described some features that shape how one experiences ambivalence. Typically, if one experiences one's ambivalence in a negative way, it is because one has not acknowledged the inadequacy of one's response to the ambivalence. In many cases, this inadequacy flows from an underlying sense that one simply cannot be ambivalent: that it is socially impossible, or in tension with important ideals of the decisive agent. Once these ideals are called into question, one opens the possibility of accepting ambivalence as part of life. Taken further, one might even realise that one's sense of self is unified around intractable ambivalences between desires or identities.

Although I have outlined some features that structure one's response to ambivalence, we must also be cautious in drawing general conclusions about when ambivalence will impair agency or diminish well-being. Marino's arguments against those who think that valuational inconsistency is a particularly bad agential predicament, for instance, rely on the fact that one can invert such reasoning: often, the mere recognition that a mental tension is intractable can generate relief.

Obstructive Ambivalence

So far I have argued that in most situations where ambivalence impairs one's agency or diminishes one's well-being, other contingent factors are to blame (usually the shape of one's response to ambivalence). Frankfurt has over-exaggerated the intrinsic badness of being ambivalent. However, there is a grain of truth to Frankfurt's view because there is one form of ambivalence that is intrinsically bad, and which radically impacts upon one's life.

The epistemic ambiguity at the heart of Frankfurt's definition of ambivalence, about whether one "knows what one wants", points towards a final variety of ambivalence we need to distinguish, which I will term "obstructive ambivalence". Obstructive ambivalence differs from other, common varieties of ambivalence with regard to the role played by the emergence of the constitutive attitudes, of one's ambivalence, in one's mind.[66]

Ordinarily, one is ambivalent partly because one is sensitive to multiple features of a situation or object.[67] One's opposed attitudes arise because of this complex orientation towards the objects in one's life. Dora, for example, has a rich understanding of the ethical features of the situation in the crowded train carriage. If she were insensitive, she would not be ambivalent about whether to give up her seat.[68] Something similar could be said of Catullus: he loves and hates Lesbia because he is sensitive to multiple aspects of her and her conduct.

Obstructive ambivalence, by contrast, is not a consequence of sensitivity, but a result of its absence or breakdown. In common ambivalence, one thinks, feels, or desires too much; in obstructive ambivalence, one is unable to think, feel, or desire properly in the first place. The apparent abundance of attitudes in one's mind is a response to an underlying problem. Though this abundance may have the form of

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[66] This idea of a desire's alternative role is used productively by Steven Arknonovich (2012) he in turn, traces this idea back to Adam Morton's discussion of desire satisfaction: "It is not as if the desire says, 'I want *that*,' and then to satisfy it one has to produce just that. Rather, it says, 'I want something, and here's what is must do for me' and then one can search round offering it various things until something satisfies it." (Morton, 1980, p.139).

[67] This sensitivity is not sufficient for ambivalent attitudes to arise, as one can be aware of what makes a context ethically complicated whilst knowing exactly how one wants to act.

[68] An aside: Dora may be implicitly aware of what seems to be a tension between her right to the seat, and the viciousness that her exercise of that right would manifest, given her circumstances; tensions of this kind are explored by Rosalind Hursthouse who suggests such situations may bring pressure to bear on deontological ethics more broadly (Hursthouse, 1991). (Jonny Pugh helped me frame this idea in these terms.)

a deliberative or affective tension, so it may seem that one is being sensitive to multiple salient features of a situation or object, this is not in fact the case.

For example, Rory may expend vast efforts in trying to date 'the right women', only to constantly find fault with everyone he meets. Unbeknownst to him, his efforts, and the way he reasons with others about them, only serve to mask the fact he is not certain in his professed sexual orientation. Rory's focus on many different women, and his ability to ensure he meets 'unsuitable' people, prevents him from ever questioning whether he desires women at all, or questioning what form his desire takes.[69]

Like common ambivalence, obstructive ambivalence can take several forms. These forms are similar in that apparent outpourings of attitudes mask underlying inadequacies. Obstructive ambivalence is most often a habitual phenomenon, although it may arise as a consequence of a temporary breakdown of one's sensitivity and rational capacities, for example, when one is tired or under pressure. It can manifest both diachronically and synchronically, and may take deliberative and affective forms.

Here are some additional examples.

One source of such ambivalence may be the inability to tolerate the lack of desire, an experience often manifest in boredom.[70] This inability, whether momentary or more ingrained, could give rise to deliberation about 'what to do' that remains motivationally inert. For example, as children my sisters and I would struggle with boredom, and clamour to 'do something', yet when any number of concrete proposals were presented to us by our parents, nothing seemed attractive. Our problem was not that there was something, unbeknownst to us, that we wanted to do (boredom *de re*). Instead we were struggling with a more global motivational failure. In situations like this, one's deliberative ambivalence is itself a welcome distraction. Relative to the ostensible goal of deliberation – action - one's reasoning is futile; but deliberation is an activity, and engagement in this activity can be far preferable to the direct confrontation of the motivational vacancy of one's mind.

[69] cf. Lear, 2005, pp.14-17. Lear, (2003, p.126-7) also discusses how an expression of gratitude can itself mask an anger that could itself be articulated using the very same form of speech.

[70] cf. (Ekstrom 2010, p.376)

Finally, here is an example from Jonathan Lear:

> Consider…the obsessional [who] endlessly debates whether or not he is in love. Every facet of his lover's personality will be held up to the light, only to be taken to the light once again. To the obsessional, it looks as though his inquiry spans the universe of options – either he is in love or he is not – and in his never-ending pursuit of the answer, no stone is left unturned. *In fact the debate disguises the real issue, for it assumes that he is capable of love. That is the underlying assumption which his ambivalence hides and protects.* (1990, p.18 italics added)

Lear's example is perhaps the purest case of obstructive ambivalence. Like my example of the man who has never confronted his potential homosexuality, the obsessional's frenetic actions don't simply obscure his ability to engage with the question of his capacity, and readiness, for love, but actively ensure that question is never asked.

These examples describe people whose ambivalence manifests a distinct and underlying state of mind. They seem to fit Frankfurt's description of people who are impaired. They are not stably oriented towards action as their motivating attitudes change frequently.

One could reply that Rory's ambivalence, for instance, gives his life unconscious stability. For the sake of argument, assume he is afraid of confronting his sexual orientation, and what it may mean in the wider context of his life. In that situation, his ambivalence serves as an unconscious response to his fear by preventing him from directly engaging with his lack of desire for women. This is a form of external stability: he fears an exogenous change or realisation, and his ambivalence insulates him against that change. Moreover, one might even argue that Rory's situation differs from Lear's example of the obsessional, because his underlying fear of his sexual desire is not irrational, i.e. if he became aware of it, he might endorse his reticence to confront it (perhaps, sadly, due to intolerant social attitudes). Thus one might think that Rory's ambivalence could have instrumental value.

Despite this, there are reasons to think that obstructive ambivalence negatively influences one's agency, and may diminish one's well-being. The first reason concerns the link between one's surface mental attitudes and wider mental life. In many cases of obstructive ambivalence, and unlike common ambivalence, one's mental tension is not directly responsive to salient features of one's situation.

Secondly, obstructively ambivalent people often lack self-narratives of their ambivalence, especially when these tensions unfurl diachronically. One who is ambivalent in this way is often unaware of their ambivalence, because it serves another role in their mind. Thus, one has a restrictive focus on the objects of one's conflicting attitudes, not on what one's deliberative situation demands, or the nature of one's overall evaluations. Obstructive ambivalence makes it difficult for one to reflectively step back and evaluate one's situation as a whole because such reflection, if carried out well, would lead one to confront the motivational attitudes that one's surface conflict helps to obscure.

Thirdly, obstructive ambivalence is evidenced by continued dissatisfaction in the presence of the objects of the surface attitudes. Because those attitudes are unconsciously motivated, they are not responsive to the objects that would satisfy a desire in a normally ambivalent person. Nor are these desires accompanied by a conception of what may constitute their satisfaction. Normal ambivalence arises as a form of over-sensitivity, thus even if one cannot quell multiple desires, and make two choices in one context, one's single choice goes some way to satisfying them. When the ambivalence is performing another role, there is no direct connection between the opposed attitudes and satisfaction.

Indeed, because their surface conflict appears to be constrained and structured by an underlying attitude, the attitudes in obstructive ambivalence often appear to lock into cyclical patterns. Richard Wollheim calls such cases, when they concern desires, brute conflict of desires:

> …there are…desires that conflict and the very fact that they do explains why they both exist. At least one of the desires is there in order to conflict with the other: it is a counter-desire, whose role is just to produce conflict of desire. I call such cases brute conflict. (1984, p.182)

One can generalize Wollheim's idea to other kinds of mental attitudes that feature in obstructive ambivalence. In these obstructive situations, one finds that one experiences a counter-attitude. Thus even if one is sensitive to a salient feature of one's environment, e.g. when Rory desires a new acquaintance, a counter-attitude soon contests that desire, and he feels reticent.

Like all ambivalence, the subjective impact of obstructive ambivalence varies, and depends on a range of features. Some cases will be based on radically irrational desires, and will cause great unhappiness in one's life. Cases like those of Ms A. and her focus on disappointment, or people with claustro-agoraphobia, fit this description. Other episodic instances of this ambivalence, where vacillation prevents one from having to think about a difficult desire, or long term fear, will have a more limited impact on one's life.

From the perspective of the integration ideal, obstructive ambivalence is doubly bad. First, its constituent attitudes are not rationally responsive to good things in one's situation; they are playing an alternative role. Secondly, however, these conflicts resist direct rational redress. They cannot be resolved by deliberation about which of the several predominating attitudes ought to have sway, as in the case of ordinary ambivalences.

Instead, one has to come to see one's conflict in a broader context, by trying to understand the underlying mental attitudes that may be involved. That process may be difficult. The obstructively ambivalent person has to acknowledge the instrumental role that their conflicts play, and then engage with the underlying aspects of their mental life.

In some cases of obstructive ambivalence, the process of engaging with the origins of persistent ambivalences is itself a process of constructing the ability to desire things in a rational way. For Rory, the ability to be ordinarily ambivalent will be a developmental achievement. It will illustrate that his motivational attitudes relate, rationally, to features of his environment; that he is able to pursue various romantic options because he wants to, and not because the process of pursing them staves off a form of life that he is afraid to confront directly.

The ability to desire in an open and stable way has a central role in a good life. Insofar as obstructive ambivalence hampers that ability – either by preventing its development, or as a manifestation of its momentary inactivity – it will tend to prevent one from acting well, and to diminish one's well-being.

Conclusion

After a general discussion of ambivalence, I suggested that Frankfurt's arguments to think deliberative ambivalence is a substantial impairment are generally unsuccessful, and overlook the complex ways people can differ in their responses to ambivalence. Those responses are shaped by a range of contingent social factors, which frequently contribute to one's subjective experience of ambivalence as a harmful configuration of mental attitudes. That said, I also suggested there is a particular form of ambivalence which does impair one's actions and diminish one's well-being: obstructive ambivalence. Obstructive ambivalence has a particularly damaging character because it manifests an underlying inability to be stably oriented towards one's motivational life. Frankfurt's failure to distinguish between the varieties of common ambivalence may have contributed to his overly general approach, and his conclusion that all forms of ambivalence are intrinsically bad. Instead, I have argued that the normative status of ordinary ambivalence is typically neutral.

Chapter Five

Affective Ambivalence

Introduction

In this chapter I turn to affective ambivalence: that is, ambivalence of one's emotions and other affective states. In a way that parallels Frankfurt's hostility to deliberative ambivalence, David Pugmire argues that ambivalent emotions prevent one from acting, and that ambivalent emotions cannot be deep. Since well-being clearly is diminished if one's emotions cannot be deep, Pugmire's arguments, if cogent, would support the integration ideal. I will argue that Pugmire's case for the problematic nature of affective ambivalence fails. There is no direct connection between ambivalent emotions and impaired action or diminished well-being. In an analogous way to my argument at the end of chapter three, I turn to argue that there are situations in which people apparently lack affective conflicts, but who are harmed in virtue of having an apparently unified affective outlook. I focus on defensive projective identification: a mental mechanism that Kleinian psychoanalysts have described at length, and which abounds in ordinary life. In doing so, I illustrate how the absence of affective conflict can be harmful.

Emotions

Emotions are intentional states, usually with a characteristic phenomenology. Emotions may be associated with desires and beliefs, and involve thoughts. Emotional episodes, such as anger at a party, can be distinguished from emotions-as-dispositions, such as jealousy, a state which may manifest itself in various ways over time (and involve other emotions).[71]

There are many kinds of emotional conflicts. These include conflicts between emotions and judgements or desires (fearing something one judges to be harmless; desiring what one is repelled by); clashes between multiple emotions (one's fear at a person who causes anger); "serial dissonance" (Pugmire, 2005, p.175) where one is angry, then affectionate, then angry with somebody in turn; "layered conflict"

[71] For an extended treatment of this kind of difference, cf. Wollheim, 1999.

(Ibid) between an emotion and a meta-emotion, as when one feels guilty that one feels happy that someone died;[72] and forms of emotional colouring, where one emotion alters another (joy at receiving an award whilst grieving for a parent).

Pugmire on Emotional Ambivalence

Pugmire makes a variety of claims about the relationship between a particular kind of emotional experience and having an integrated mind. He thinks, first, that to have deep emotions, one's wider mind must be integrated together, that is, lack conflicts or ambivalence, and, secondly, that ambivalent emotions can never be deep, if they can arise at all. Pugmire also expresses scepticism about the very possibility of ambivalent emotions, but this aspect of his argument seems weakest, and thus I will not consider it here. If ambivalent emotions were not possible, why argue that they are normatively compromised? I shall examine Pugmire's arguments as a whole, insofar as they bear upon the integration ideal in their focus on well-being (understood as involving the presence of deep emotions) and agency.

Pugmire distinguishes between well-formed, deep, sound emotions and those that merely "feel good" (2005, introduction). Deep emotions are valuable, and an important constituent of one's relationships with other people and oneself. Moreover, the ability to have deep emotional experiences is plausibly thought of as vital aspect of being sensitive to one's ethical environment.[73]

It is a mistake, Pugmire thinks, to confuse deep emotions with visceral emotions, as many emotions are phenomenologically calm. A deep emotion must be felt in response to something one believes to be the case (Ibid. p.38) it must be relatively important both in a subjective sense (Ibid. p.45) and insofar as that subjective import reflects the actual importance of the focus of the emotion (Ibid. p.49).

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[72] These cases can have a complex structure, and it is not clear how many layers might realistically exist in a given case. For example, can one feel joy that one is anxious about the fact that one is glad that one is disappointed that some event occurred?

[73] "[affect] can be the *disclosure* of the appeal of other things and other people [and thus] it can have authority in the matter of what we should desire and do" (Johnston, 2001, p.189)

Pugmire then goes on to argue that deep emotions, in the sense explained, require mental integration. The crucial move is Pugmire's claim that the depth of an emotion depends on the extent to which an emotion's "proximate ground" is embedded in one's mental life:

> By pointing to the role of the degree of embedding of an emotion's proximate ground in the whole field of one's concerns, [Pugmire's] theory brings out the structural character of emotional depth, what passion resonates with. It is a picture that has important implications. It implies, for example, that the shallowness or depth to which a person's emotions are prone will depend heavily on the degree to which that person's personality and life are of a piece.[74] The more free-standing and dissociated a person's several concerns and beliefs are, and the more episodic and unintegrated narratively the events of his life are, the less affective pressure there will be on any one of the parts. (It was the possibility of such integration that made dispositional status a possible source of depth in an emotion.) Where a whole is not reflected in the parts, a bearable lightness of being is created. Everything is safely anodyne. In this way, the person is not in his responses and so will be found not to 'mean' them, as the saying goes. (Ibid. p.43)

As with Michael Smith's ideal of unified desire, Pugmire's conception of embeddedness rests on a coherentist analogy. He appeals to W. V. O. Quine's metaphor of a web of belief:

> Emotions could acquire depth from the person's concerns (e.g. desires, needs, valuations, other emotions) in the same way they draw upon the depth of belief. That is, the emotive gravity of a circumstance depends on how great a range of one's concerns it touches. (Ibid. p.40)

Consequently one cannot have deep emotions unless one's mind is integrated, so if one is to realize the value that resides in having such emotions one must ensure that one's mind is integrated in this way. This involves arranging life so that it is not episodic, or lacking narrative organisation.

Contesting Pugmire's Argument

[74] The organization of one's mind may differ from the structure of one's life. I cannot discuss these differences in more detail.

Pugmire tries to capture the fact that some emotional experiences have a depth and mental significance that is greater and wider-reaching than others. It would be a mistake to deny this fact, but it is not clear that one's mind needs to be integrated, that is, free of affective conflicts of ambivalence, for this to happen.

To begin with, deep emotions might arise in minds that are compartmentalised. In adult life, for instance, one may have social roles that remain distinct from each other. A barrister may have to compartmentalise the emotions that arise from his difficult line of work in defending people who are most likely guilty of terrible crimes. The complex meta-emotions that arise in these situations, such as pride at the successful defence of an immoral person, or the exuberant thrill in rhetorically embellishing a closing speech, may not ramify more widely into the barrister's life; that is, they may not feature as a part of other roles she has, or manifest in the other contexts of action. But it is not clear they are necessarily shallow as a consequence.

More strongly, there may be cases where deep emotion *requires* compartmentalisation or a lack of embedding. Imagine, for example, a person who as a consequence of a restrained and conservative upbringing is only able to experience excitement when outside the gaze, whether actual or internalised, of their parents. This person may actively seek out the ability to be excited in this way by seeking situations, insulated from the rest of their lives, which the parental gaze is not felt to reach. But it is not evident that their excitement is any less deep even though it does not ramify more widely into their emotional life because it only manifests under certain conditions.

In both cases, certain kinds of affective experience are shut off from one's wider mental life. The barrister only experiences the guilt-tinged joy at his skill in certain contexts. The repressed person only experiences excitement when free from the parental eye. In both cases, these people's emotions seem tightly bound to a nexus of desires, beliefs, thoughts, and emotions. They are embedded very intimately with other parts of their mind, but within limits. Yet that seems to give these experiences their depth. Were they to be more widely embedded within the mind, one might think these experiences would lack such depth. At the very least it has to be shown that this is not possible.

Pugmire's analogy with belief has its limits. A belief at the centre of one's web of beliefs is significant because of its relations with other beliefs. If a central belief is unfounded then many other beliefs have to change. Yet deep emotions need not be understood in the same way.

Pugmire might respond that affective integration is an ideal that one may deviate from to some extent. From the quotation above it is clear that he thinks that mental integration involves the ability to forge a unified narrative conception of one's life. Thus one line of response would be to argue that one's emotions could remain deep whilst compartmentalised, as long as they are afforded narrative unity within one's life.

One problem with this response is that narratives may inherit the compartmentalization of their subject matter. (An idea I introduced when thinking about the relationship between systematic justification and unified desires, in chapter three). More problematically, it is not clear that Pugmire could use this response without circularity. Ronald de Sousa argues that, "to make sense of the notion of coherent stories, we exercise our intuitive sense of what emotions are appropriately conjoined with provoking events and with one another" (De Sousa, 2007, p.332). Thus if one appeals to an intuitive sense of narrative unity, in order to specify an evaluative standard to appraise whether one's emotions are deep, and this sense of unity is itself partly an emotional sense, then those emotional responses would themselves need to be deep if the evaluative standard is to be viable and not just a superficial or sentimental reaction. This circularity may not be vicious, but one cannot blithely rely on notions of narrative coherence as Pugmire appears to be doing. In addition, one has to avoid confusing the unity of representation, in a narrative or related structure, with the unity of what that narrative represents. Even if Pugmire was right to think that some kind of narrative unity was sufficient to integrate one's mind – and thus provide a background against which emotions could be deep, or not – one would require additional argument to think that integration and ambivalence are inconsistent. The narrative unity could itself be a unity *of* or *around* one's ambivalent mental life. (A point I return to below).

In any case, there are further reasons to think that unembedded emotions can be deep. It's common to think that love or anxiety, especially when first experienced, can profoundly change what one values. Yet more significantly, a nascent emotion may actually change one's mental organization to make one's mind more integrated. For example, the dawning affective experience of one's situation as an oppressed person, or as one who as been abused, can give structure to a previously disordered, unfocused, or conflicting set of desires, feelings, goals, and values. But affective experiences that lead thus to integration need not be negative. Feeling oneself to be in love for the first time, or being drawn into a passionate activity, can give new impetus to a previously inert motivational outlook. In the previous chapter I introduced some examples of people suffering from obstructive ambivalence. Those people, whose indecision masked an underlying inability to desire in a stable fashion, are also the people who might benefit from transformative and reorganising emotional experiences. An unexpected love, or new passionate concern, could aid them in the restructuring of their desires, say, or the way they relate to their world in thought. Pugmire's view precludes one from thinking these transformative emotions are deep, for if one specifies the importance of an emotion in terms of the surrounding nexus of other aspects of one's mind then new emotional experiences cannot be important. Yet this seems counter-intuitive.

In reply, Pugmire claims that reorganizing experiences cannot occur without some

> …antecedent factors in the person's psychology, be they active or hitherto latent, which set the stage for it. That makes an emotion that seems new ('Where have you been all my life?') actually embedded. (2005, p.42 cf. Helm, 2001, p.87)

He goes on to claim that, "an emotion that is able to reconstitute its prevailing setting is, of course, deep; but it must be deep *in order* to effect its transformation" (Ibid.). On his coherentist-influenced view, this depth is accounted for in terms the extent to which an emotion is embedded in the wider nexus of one's mental life. There is some plausibility to this thought when one considers emotions that reshape existing concerns, but what about emotions that generate new concerns?

In both cases Pugmire is right to think that *some* pre-condition of a nascent emotion's efficacy must be present. If it were not, then the emotion would have no impact. However, Pugmire presupposes that this condition needs to be understood as a form of embedding. But other aspects of mental life may explain how nascent affects can have impact. One potential candidate is the extent to which one is able to tolerate affective experiences in general. This is a general ability, which people have in varying degrees and which can be impaired. One's emotional development may have been impoverished, for instance. Or one may struggle to articulate one's emotions in narrative terms; failing to give voice to one's experiences when they arise. Alternatively, one might be prone to manifest various mental defensive mechanisms to prevent one from facing emotions which may be accompanied by anxiety. One such mechanism of defence is projective identification, a mechanism much discussed by Kleinian psychoanalysts. I shall return to this mechanism and its relation to affective ambivalence towards the end of the chapter.

Moving on to Pugmire's first claim (above), Pugmire wants to show that "a person's current emotional state cannot actually be ambivalent if his or her emotions are to remain *whole*…that there is a sense, partly normative, in which the heart is indivisible" (2005, p.172). He also suggests "it is where my mind does not actually add up to a coherent whole but is confused or disharmonious in its beliefs, desires, and valuations, that my emotional susceptibilities are apt to be not only selective but antagonistic to each other" (Ibid. p.190).

These two claims conflict. The first suggests that ambivalence is not possible between multiple emotions that are well formed. The second appears to imply that a form of ambivalence can arise if one's mind is not coherent. Kristján Kristjánsson thinks Pugmire is advocating "two different empirical claims":

> The first is that an ambivalent emotion is likely to be less intense and profound than a non-ambivalent emotion (as the former will be constantly checked and qualified by the other conflicting emotion), and the second that the life of an emotionally ambivalent agent will be more susceptible to psychological dysfunction than that of a non-ambivalent one. (2010, p.495)

Kristjánsson's exegesis overlooks Pugmire's intention to argue that the very idea of emotional ambivalence *simpliciter* is problematic.[75] More importantly, considering the merit of Pugmire's arguments enables us to question whether emotional ambivalence impairs action or diminishes well-being.

Pugmire argues that if deep emotions could be ambivalent then, first, their affective character will be negatively affected in contrast to non-ambivalent

[75] In personal communication Pugmire reiterated his "doubt that emotional ambivalence in the strictest form is possible" (Email, 13th August, 2012).

emotions, secondly, one would be unable to act, and thirdly, the emotions would embroil one in conceptual tensions.

With respect to the latter point, he writes:

> it may be a condition of ambivalent emotions that they remain inchoate, unconsolidated. That is, they can't arise massively out of the rest of one's relevant mental life (the full body of one's beliefs, imaginings, and related emotions and desires) and survive intact. One reason for this concerns the composition of the discordant state; another concerns the functional properties of such a state. It is hard to understand how I could rejoice at the prospect of a friend's expected good fortune and in the midst of my rejoicing also hope he comes to grief…The difficulty here seems conceptual rather than psychological: On what basis can my emotion of anticipation count as *rejoicing* if I don't even hope then for what I am supposed to rejoice at? And how could my attitude to the possibility of his coming to grief be *hope* if I am filled with joy then at the prospect of his prevailing and not coming to grief? How could one and the same thing at once give joy and blight it? How could I hope for something that I am in a state to rue if it happens? It seems that a condition of something giving me joy is that at the time I give myself over to the joy in it, be that faint or great, and to joy whatever I suppose favours it. (2005, p.181)

Pugmire concedes that nascent emotions can be opposed, but "where ambivalent emotions remain poised in balance, neither can be as luminous as it can be when experienced univocally" (Ibid. p.176). Hence the "partly normative" aspect of his view: 'proper' emotions cannot be ambivalently experienced.

The reason why Pugmire thinks ambivalent emotions cannot be deep, i.e. embedded, is because they would introduce incoherence into one's mind. The object of their emotions would be placed in opposed domains of concern that would compromise one's ability to act. He mobilizes two considerations to support this, a claim about action, and the conceptual point made above.

Irrespective of one's judgments, Pugmire argues emotions can only do thing at a time. Emotions "galvanize" and motivate one to act.[76] Thus if it were possible to

[76] Moreover, the relationship between emotion and action appears implicitly *constitutive* of a state's being an emotion on Pugmire's view.

have "inimical" emotions, one would be motivated to act in contrary ways (Ibid. p.182). Such opposed motivations would make action incredibly difficult, he thinks, so one has to avoid having ambivalent emotions.

Pugmire indirectly supports this argument by discussing the ways people subvert their emotions. Glancing back at the example of Dora on the train, or Macbeth's deliberations, its evident that people "steel", "harden", or "blind" themselves, and undergo "self-management" in order to act. (Ibid.) If these fail, Pugmire suggests that

> the emotional condition of a person resolved on an act about which he is still disposed to be seriously ambivalent is apt to *polarise* in favour of that act… [W]here anything very much is at stake in a choice, ambivalence is too dysfunctional to be indulged by the psychic economy. (Ibid.)

It appears that Pugmire slides from astute observations about how one might manage one's emotions, to thinking that ambivalence cannot be sustained between multiple emotions that relate to action. He takes the existence of emotional self-management as evidence for the mind's inability to tolerate ambivalence.

Pugmire's conceptual argument develops a related idea about the cognitive aspects of emotions. Just as ambivalent emotions generate motivational knots, they also show how one might err conceptually. His example is a friendly rivalry: one claims to hope one's friend will win, but because of one's own desire to win one is happy if one's friend fails to win.

Supposedly, one cannot hope one's friend will win because hope commits people to disappointment if the hoped-for end does not arise. One is mistaken if one is not committed to the right patterns of emotions. What it is to hope, on this view, is to be committed to joy and disappointment in the right measure. The absence of the latter means one is not hoping. Ambivalence strikes at the nexus of various commitments projected by emotions.

Ambivalence purportedly undermines these connections by stopping the patterns constitutive of importance ('embedding') from becoming consolidated, although the resultant damage comes in degrees.

Pugmire's conceptual argument is aimed at showing emotions cannot be ambivalently organized. I doubt we can clearly define the conceptual relations between emotions, to determine which emotions exclude each other. The possibility of meta-emotions, emotions that take other emotions that their objects, illustrate how complex the conceptual relations between emotions can be.[77] Their structure presupposes an inclusionary, not exclusionary, character to affective life and should caution us not to dismiss the possibility of any given affective combination.

Moreover, Pugmire is wrong to say, "it seems that a condition of something giving me joy is that at the time I give myself over to the joy in it, be that faint or great, and to joy in whatever I suppose favours it." First, something can give one joy without one "giving [oneself] over to it", or without one doing that upon the joyful occasion. Pugmire should agree with this if he is right about the varieties of affective self-management. There can be many reasons why one does not give oneself over to joy; tiredness, grief, cultural norms, personal taste, etc. all impact upon how one manifests one's emotions.

Secondly, one's joy can be divorced from emotions towards the preconditions of joy. To deny this is possible is to fall foul of a genetic fallacy of emotion. One can feel joy that-X without any analogous feelings being directed to what causes or favours X. A gambler who sincerely wants his team to win, but bets against them, can feel joy when he wins money, without feeling joyful that his team lost.

Of course, one may question whether a person really does experience joy in a given context, and whether they hope their friend wins. Not all apparent hope is actual hope. But one does this by examining the way this person's purported emotions interact with the wider nexus of their beliefs, desires, thoughts and other affects. One examines the diachronic and synchronic facets of their purported conflict and the descriptions that mediate the objects of their emotions (e.g. whether they are happy that they won, or happy that they won at their friend's expense).

One's emotional development is also a relevant consideration. Pugmire's view of emotional ambivalence will seem most plausible to those who do not think

[77] Angstlust or "feeling guilty over having engaged in malicious joy" is an example of a meta-emotion. The definition is taken from Jäger and Bartsch, 2006, p.184.

emotions can be opposed. Some people may be disposed to think this way, but Sincoff suggested that that presupposition is mostly found in young children and those who cannot distinguish between episodic and diachronic patterns of emotion (1990, pp.55-6).

More generally, Pugmire's argument seems circular. Deep emotions are those that are embedded in one's mind in the right way. He argues that to truly have a certain emotion, one must be disposed to experience other emotions in the right way, towards the same object, were circumstances to change. But he understands what it is to experience emotions in the right way in a manner that already precludes ambivalence. In other words, ambivalent emotions cannot be deep because they would prevent one from having un-ambivalent emotions..

Furthermore, it is not hard to imagine a person whose emotional life is awash with ambivalent emotions. In the friendly rivalry example, for instance, a person's hope and joy might both be ambivalently tinged with other emotions, which reflect the structure of their situation. Or a person may experience a nexus of deeply ambivalent emotions in a more widespread way, as they grieve, say. In such a case, one's ambivalent states of mind are embedded in a wider nexus of ambivalent states. One's whole 'web' is riddled with ambivalence, but in a way that preserves the various conceptual connections that Pugmire admires. Such people are completely ambivalent, yet because of the embedded nature of each emotional state, their emotions seem deep. If this is possible, then it is hard to see why deep emotions cannot be ambivalent.

Pugmire's argument that ambivalence impedes action is also weak. Firstly, only some emotions motivate people to act. But even the paradigm candidates for motivating emotions, such as fear, manifest in numerous ways. One might run in fear, or stand paralyzed by fear. Secondly, conflicting actions may stem from the same singular emotion. For example, Dora's fear of her husband both drove her away from him and then back to him.

The scope of Pugmire's claim needs to be reduced. Emotions arise in numerous contexts; respond to past actions and future anticipations, not just as motives to actions (Ben-Ze'ev, 2010, p.43). Indeed, one is often emotional because one cannot act. These situations can arise either in response to one's past, which can serve as a touchstone for current emotions, or in response to a course of action which has to be foregone when one acts on the basis of stronger reasons.

Pugmire is also wrong to think that contrary emotions generate contrary actions. One may think that fear, say, leads one to withdraw from something, whereas attraction draws one closer, but it is crude to approach emotions like this. A single emotion can lie behind a vast array of intelligible actions. For example, a person galvanized by shyness may act with bravado, not the passivity that Pugmire's account may lead us to expect. No clear class of actions corresponds to any emotion. Thus there is no calculus of emotional and agential oppositions. Only if one makes these assumptions will one think that ambivalent motivations prevent action.

Pugmire is correct that one may use "self-management" to shape, suppress, and promote particular emotions when one needs to act (recall Macbeth's tumultuous deliberation). He seems to think that the existence of these mechanisms shows that ambivalence cannot be possible. But if people were never ambivalent these mechanisms would be superfluous.

The fact that one might use these mechanisms, even if unconsciously, reveals something only about the limits and character of how one ought to respond to one's ambivalence. Some coping mechanisms, such as Macbeth's attempts to overlook the reasons why he should not kill Duncan, may generate suffering. Other coping mechanisms may enable one to tolerate ambivalence in a positive way. Irony and humour can make ambivalent emotions tolerable, and even enlightening. Robert Solomon, for example, argues that "that the emotional integrity of some people who live the most fulfilling lives", as well as individuals "exemplary in emotional intelligence" is, "by its very nature segmented and divided in a dramatic way, and their integrity depends on —it is not in spite of— this radical separation" (2007, pp.267-8). Moreover, the mechanisms that Pugmire appeals to may themselves be harmful to people. Affective ambivalence may be preferable (a point I will develop in a moment).

At most, Pugmire is advancing a contingent psychological thesis about how people cope with ambivalence. His discussion neglects the ways one may cope positively with tensions between one's emotions; the ways in which narrative expression, creative accommodation, humour, and ironic understanding might reconcile one to difficult structures of emotion.

Pugmire's emphasis on action, his appeal to the conceptual opposition of emotions, and remarks about emotion management, do not entail that deep emotions cannot be ambivalently arranged. Emotions can be both deep and ambivalent. This conclusion is in harmony with my argument in the previous chapter. There, I argued that the connections between ambivalence and agency or well-being are complicated, and shaped by a range of factors, including one's contingent social context, practical abilities, and psychological development. Analogous points also apply in the case of affective ambivalence, because the subjective experience of a particular ambivalent clash of emotion can vary widely from person to person.

Projective Identification and the Absence of Ambivalence

Pugmire's 'galvanizing' processes are not the only way in which affective ambivalence may be overcome. Let us consider defence mechanisms. If one's mind is defensively organised, one may be unable to consciously experience some aspects of affective life, including the attitudes that constitute ambivalence. Now one might think that mechanisms that prevent one from experiencing such ambivalence in the first place are positive. Indeed from Pugmire's perspective, these mechanisms would seemingly enable one's affective life to retain depth. One could draw an analogy with Michael Smith's discussion of desire, and argue that any mechanism that prevents a tension between aspects of mind from arising is good, because coherence is good.

However, I argued that some forms of coherence among desires could actually diminish one's well-being. A similar argument can be made with respect to affective ambivalence. In the final section of this chapter I will consider how one defence mechanism, projective identification, may lead to one's being free of affective ambivalence, but in a manner that causes harm.

People often manifest behaviour that appears to obscure their affective states in virtue of their interactions with others. One way this happens is through what Kleinian psychoanalysts term "projective identification".[78]

As an example, I witnessed the following accident whilst drafting this chapter:

> A middle-aged man and a twelve-year-old boy cycle from different directions around a corner and collide. Neither solely caused the accident. The boy falls from his bicycle and is badly shaken. The man remains upright and unhurt. Before the boy can get to his feet the man has become enraged. He accuses the boy of carelessness and stupidity and demands his address so he can write to his school. The man then envisages what might have been. "Someone could have been killed, or badly hurt" he says, struggling to articulate himself, "I could have broken my neck…Imagine how my children would feel if their father didn't come home today." I talk to this man, and he eventually calms. He then recognizes the boy is in pain. His accusations segue into concern for the boy and the incident eventually ends without recrimination.

Here is another example from a psychoanalytic session:

> A narcissistic young man comes into the session and looks at me more closely than usual, staring intensely into my eyes in a way that feels uncomfortably intrusive. He lies on the couch and, with a rather superior tone of voice, tells me that he can clearly see that I must be quite shortsighted, I have that kind of unfocused look in my eyes. It is ridiculous that I do not wear glasses but I am obviously too vain to do so. I say rather hesitantly that perhaps there is a reason why he feels today that I cannot see him properly and I get an absolutely furious, indignant and self-righteous response: I want everything to be his problem, I don't want to admit my own failures, and I clearly suffer from an inferiority complex about my eyesight. He adds that he has had his eyes tested and has 100 per cent vision. (Sodré , 2012, pp.140-41)

Though it can be used very broadly, to label a mental process related to empathy (Richmond, 2004),[79] in the sense in which I am concerned with it here projective identification is a defence enabling one to cope with an unwanted experience, typically an emotional experience (cf. Spillus et al., 2011, pp. 305-09). Melanie

[78] Klein's first published mention of the term is in Klein, 1997 cf. Spillius & O'Shaughnessy, 2012

[79] cf. Braddock, Unpublished.

Klein focused on the way projective identification appears to protect the infantile ego against destructive anxiety (Klein, 1997). But a similar defensive process persists in adult life. Its core feature is the splitting off and evacuation of threatening aspects of mind from one's conscious experience. (For an analysis of what this may involve, see Gardner, 1995). Kleinians think projective identification often occurs when one experiences a vulnerable state of mind in which one is susceptible to anxiety (the "paranoid-schizoid position"). Unlike repression, the intolerable part of one's mind is typically experienced as located in the mental life of one's interlocutor.[80] Projective identification is not inherently negative, however. As Klein puts it, "the process of splitting off parts of the self and projecting them into objects are thus of vital importance for normal development as well as for abnormal object relations" (Klein, 1997, p.9 cf. Hinshelwood, 1997(b), pp.74-9).

Projective identification is visible in my two examples. The immediate response of the male cyclist, for instance, was to angrily admonish the boy because he seemed to regard the *boy's* actions as purposefully hostile. Revealingly, the man's anger manifested in the form of an examination of the potential harm he could have suffered. Even more revealingly, his anger focused on the possible wider consequences of this harm: the imagined impact on his own children. This response is surprising. After all, the man was unhurt, unlike the boy, and the situation could have transpired differently, with him expressing concern for the boy, or both of them expressing mutual shock at their accident.

This man's anger had a complex structure: it responded to imagined rather than actual harm, the 'aggressor' was the harmed party, the imagined harm was described from the perspective of a distant third party (the man's children), and this third party resembled the actually harmed boy. These features suggest the man's anger is actually self-directed. He responds to his perception of an aggressive agent, where in fact there is none (the other person is timid and hurt). This response suggests he is projecting an aggressive aspect of himself and his agency onto the boy, in order to respond to it second-personally.[81] He experiences a boy

[80] cf. Hinshelwood, 2008. For an excellent survey of the interpersonal aspects of projective identification see Hinshelwood, 1995. For another analysis of this process, which emphasises the receptive role of an interlocutor, see Odgen, 2012.

[81] Thoughts of the form: "You X!" such as "You could have hurt someone!" can have subtly shifting, or indeterminate, referents from oneself to another person.

as posing a (indirect) threat to his own children: something potentially devastating. Given the context, however, his experience manifests anxiety and redirects his conscious thinking away from the fact that *he* nearly caused serious harm to a child. His projection prevents him from immediately understanding the consequences of an event he was partially responsible for.

The second example portrays an entrenched form of projective identification. Ignes Sodré interprets the man's violent reaction in terms of her potential insights as his analyst.[82] He is most aggressive when she tries to interpret his insistence that she cannot see properly. In adamantly maintaining that Sodré's vision is poor, but that she is too vain to reveal this by wearing glasses, the patient appears to be projecting a fear of being seen: of being understood. This understanding would penetrate his pathologically defensive narcissism. Sodré's patient identifies his analyst with the 'blind' unwanted and despised aspects of his self, attacks them, and then responds to his adamant perception of her inadequacy with a statement of his own perfect vision.

In both examples, the men split off emotions to avoid confronting them. Projective identification is one defence mechanism amongst others. Yet it is interesting in the context of the present discussion because it can prevent one from experiencing and confronting affective ambivalence, and other forms of mental conflict. However, projective identification generates insensitivities with a negative cost for the people involved, and their interlocutors.

Moreover, a way of describing what is wrong in projective identification is that the parts of one's mind are not unified in a way that is accessible to the subject. Thus whilst one is integrated in one sense (that described in chapter one) because one is not conflicted or ambivalent, one might be disintegrated in another sense, a suggestion which motivates my discussion of a new ideal of integration in later chapters.

The two examples described men who were insensitive to reality – specifically, to other people - in virtue of being insensitive to their own minds. They were not simply poorly epistemically related to their environments. Their distorted grasp of their situation flows from unconscious motivations aimed at protecting them from

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[82] Aggressive defensiveness often accompanies third personal attempts at insight. For another clinical example, cf. Steyn, 2013, p.1096.

the emotions they could not tolerate. Their perceptions are distorted by unconscious phantasies that represent their anxiety as located in other people, not their own minds (Ogden, 2012, p.277 cf. Segal, 1985). These processes can be entrenched into traits of character.

This misrepresentation of one's mental life prevents one from attending to salient features of one's situation. Instead, one responds to one's mind as projected onto another. Thus one approaches practical contexts with inadequate knowledge. The cyclist misperceived culpable agency where there was none, for instance, and was wrong to attempt to hold the boy responsible. Mild projective identification can lead one to exaggerate or misunderstand the intentions or emotions of others, inhibits one's respect for the speech or authority of others, and impacts upon one's ability to describe situations well. These oversights and misperceptions have serious consequences if one's interlocutors are subjects of ethical concern, as the injured boy was in my first example.

Sodré argues "excessive use of projective identification can lead, on the one hand, to confusion and loss of a firm sense of self and, on the other, to an extreme rigidity in character." She also suggests that "arrogance as a character trait is…essentially a state of permanent projective identification" (2012, p.135). If projective identification is sustained, one may become alienated from regions of one's mental life. Obstructive ambivalence may be a consequence of projective identification if one splits off one's anxiety. Splitting impoverishes one's mind, yet unlike the ascetic diminution of desire one often remains responsive to the projected parts of the self. One's mind is impoverished not because one's mental life lacks certain features, but because one perceives them elsewhere.

Arrogance, which Sodré associated with some cases of entrenched projective identification, is a trait that distorts one's engagement with the world. It limits one's ability to learn, to attend to the mental life of others, and to accurately appraise one's character. The arrogant person has a misplaced confidence in their grasp of contexts.

However, as arrogance illustrates, projective identification may lead to insensitivities that prevent one from being affectively ambivalent (or deliberatively ambivalent for that matter). Peter, for example, might be ambivalent about his impending marriage, but he cannot consciously tolerate his ambivalence because it makes him anxious. He hopes his marriage will secure his faltering relationship, for example, and cannot imagine any alternative. He is not consciously aware of the role played by his anxiety, or of the fact that he projects it into his fiancé. The defensive posturing of his unconscious mind leads him to perceive her as being hesitant. In turn, his fiancé rejects Peter's unwarranted attack on her commitment. Thus they argue, "If you don't want to get married, why don't you just say so!" Peter confronts his anxiety by arguing with his fiancé, not through self-reflection on his emotions. Peter is not conflicted because he projected the negative attitude constitutive of his ambivalence. He unwittingly transformed an intrapersonal tension into an interpersonal argument. This situation is evidently a failure of sensitivity accompanied by reprehensibly unwarranted accusations and aggression towards his fiancé.

In contrast to Peter, Lucy may never experience conflicts at all. She is arrogant, and her arrogance is sustained through projective identification, which distorts her conception of her own abilities. She is confident that she is creative, intelligent, and funny but she is actually mediocre. Lucy's distorted self-evaluation prevents a conflict between her strong desire for acclaim as a writer, and her assessment of her writing ability from arising, as it would in one who was more realistic. This conflict does not arise because Lucy cannot sustain an accurate appraisal of her ability. She is similarly untroubled in other areas of her life. She is never torn as a result of confronting her inadequacies in her relationships, because her projection displaces her nascent perception of her defects onto her partners. Lucy's habitual projective identification enables her to avoid confronting her inadequacies as a person. This trait exacts a cost, and her life is impoverished by her insensitivities to herself and others.

Both Peter and Lucy would be better off if they were able to be ambivalent. Peter would experience his own reticent anxiety and thus be able to start confronting it, or begin re-evaluating whether he wants to marry. His ability to be ambivalent would have positive consequences in his relationships, e.g. he would not misunderstand the mental life of his fiancé, and make accusations on the basis of his errors. Similarly, Lucy's ability to be ambivalent would manifest a dawning realism about her own abilities. This realism would allow her to act in ways that were likely to be successful. She would also be in a position to reconstruct relationships with people by acknowledging her own faults or mistakes.

Projective identification can lead one to split off intolerable aspects of one's mind and project them into the minds of others. This process differs from repression, or ascetic attempts to rid one's mind of a desire or belief. Instead, projective identification is an unconsciously motivated attempt to displace an intolerable feature of one's mental landscape so it can be re-experienced from a distance. Projective identification generates insensitivity to reality. These insensitivities arise in virtue of one's attempt to defend a subset of one's mental life and have ethical consequences. Yet however, projective identification can rid one's mind of a conflict, or prevent a nascent conflict from developing.

Conclusion

I have argued that affective ambivalence, like deliberative ambivalence, does not necessarily impair agency or diminish well-being. On closer inspection, Pugmire's arguments to think otherwise are subject to multiple criticisms. There is no straightforward link between one's affective life and one's agency, and there are reasons to think one's emotions can be ambivalently organised whilst remaining deep. Indeed, that very thought motivates a focus on the ways people manage their emotions in the first place. One form of unconscious emotion management is projective identification. I argued that projective identification might lead one to be free of affective ambivalence, yet in a manner that is impoverishing and harmful.

Chapter Six

Disintegration and Ethical Sensitivity

> …if we would make one continued thing of all this succession of passions, we deceive ourselves. When Timoleon laments the murder he had committed upon so mature and generous deliberation, he does not lament the liberty restored to his country, he does not lament the tyrant; but he laments his brother: one part of his duty is performed; let us give him leave to perform the other. (Montaigne, 1877, "That We Laugh and Cry for the Same Thing")

Introduction

In previous chapters I argued that conflicts and ambivalence do not intrinsically impair agency or diminish well-being. When they do, it is most often other contingent factors that shape one's response to a conflict in a way that renders it harmful. In this chapter, I turn to question whether it can be of positive benefit for one to be conflicted or ambivalent.

It is important to distinguish this line of inquiry from the defensive impulse to fetishise the presence of conflicts (Kristjánsson, 2010, p.510). Being conflicted or ambivalent does not make one heroic or inherently interesting. People who think otherwise may fall foul of fictionalising tendencies whereby personal agency is evaluated in reference to fictional ideals (cf. Goldie, 2012). These ideals bear a tenuous connection to one's agential capacities and life situation, and so cannot meaningfully guide action.

When considering the potential good of conflicts and ambivalence, one must distinguish between particular mental occurrences and the capacities that underpin them. For example, one may be able to experience mental conflicts but lack the ability to tolerate them. These two abilities differ.

It is important that one be able to experience conflicts. Occasionally, one may infer that one is angry, or that one is attracted to another person, for example, without directly registering or experiencing the affective force of these states; a similar lack of experience can apply to one's conflicts or ambivalence.

The reason why it is important to experience conflicts or ambivalence is because that is a precondition of one's tolerance of them. Not every experience of a conflict leads to tolerance. The experience of a conflict may lead one to immediately attempt to remove it: an intolerant impulse. One may struggle to tolerate mental conflicts, even if they are responsive to important values or salient features of their situation.

Ethical Presuppositions

It may appear strange to claim that one can benefit ethically from being conflicted or ambivalent.[83] This intuition might stem from an impoverished conception of what ethics involves. My argument in this chapter is indebted to a tradition of ethical thought after Wittgenstein.[84] Iris Murdoch was a key developer of this view.[85] She challenged the "choice and argument" model of ethical thinking (1956, p.40). This model focuses on the judgements people make, and the actions that spring from these judgements. These judgements respond to facts that are narrowly circumscribed. The richness of human agency is abstracted away. An ideal agent proffers "solutions to specifiable practical problems" (Ibid. p.39).

Murdoch thinks this model originates in linguistic philosophy and behaviourism (1957).[86]

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[83] One may think conflicts have value because of their causal role in a person's mental history. That is, because of their developmental value, perhaps as opportunities for 'character building'. This reasoning commits the genetic fallacy. It takes the form, X caused (or features in the history of) Y, Y is valuable, so X is valuable. This is a mistaken inference. As Alec Hinshelwood put it to me, "the value of bandages does not speak in favour of being wounded."

[84] cf. Donatelli, 2013. Donatelli suggests "an entire family of views can be grouped together under [the following]… features: they are life-form arguments of the very general sort described by Holland and they want to learn and inherit from Wittgenstein. I'd like to mention here the views held by authors such as Anscombe, Iris Murdoch, Stanley Cavell and Cora Diamond. They criticize, in very different ways, a significant line in modern and contemporary moral philosophy that has depicted moral thought as the operation of a few concepts cut off from the life form where they have a place. Such authors have wanted to learn from the later Wittgenstein how to investigate the 'life with our concepts', to use Diamond's nice phrase." (Ibid, p.224)

[85] Timothy Chappell offers a recent incarnation (Chappell, 2014).

[86] Donatelli summarizes Murdoch's argument: "Murdoch elaborates an approach to ethics

> It has been readily assumed that in assembling the data…for the moral philosopher to work on, we can safely leave aside not only the inner monologue and its like, but also overt manifestations of personal attitudes, speculations, or visions of life such as might find expression in talk not immediately directed to the solution of specific moral problems. In short, the material which the philosopher is to work on is simply (under the heading of behaviour) acts and choices, and (under the heading of language) choice-guiding words together with the arguments which display the descriptive meaning of those words. (1956, p.38)

This model is seductive in emphasising aspects of action that are genuinely admirable. People frequently strive to be resolute, decisive, and efficient. But one must not limit one's focus to these qualities. Adherents to the choice and argument model do not think these richer aspects of human life are ethically important.[87]

When we examine ordinary patterns of praise and blame, we glimpse a more nuanced picture of judgment, choice, and action. Murdoch and others have drawn attention to aspects of this picture. In this chapter I will continue in this tradition and show how being conflicted or ambivalent can be beneficial, considered from an ethical point of view, not merely that these states are harmless. One's actions manifest good character. Murdoch suggests that, "the moral life…goes on continuously": it is not "switched off between the occurrence of explicit moral choices" (1999, p.329). Even the decisive person, who chooses well based on good reasons, can betray a morally imperfect character. One way this happens is if one is unable to take up the ethical task of describing one's environment and one's place in it, in the right way. Those who have been receptive to Murdoch's resistance to the choice and argument model think that one's descriptive abilities are also indicative of one's moral character (cf. Diamond, 1988).

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that she finds to be neglected in a significant line in modern and contemporary philosophy in her time (for example in authors such as R.M. Hare). She goes back to what she calls the linguistic method in philosophy and to Wittgenstein's lesson which she finds was taken in the wrong direction, with a fascination for a few words like 'good' and 'right' and a lack of interest for the whole framework which makes language something alive for us." (Donatelli, 2013, p.226)

[87] Adherents of this model are either not interested in these other aspects of life, or delegate them to other disciplines, such as literature, because they think they are not philosophically important.

Finally, Murdoch's view coheres with a certain conception of virtue, which it is important to make explicit here. From the outset one may disagree that conflicts and ambivalence can ever manifest true ethical sensitivity, because reasons other than those that bear on the right course of action (or the right affective response) are silent to one with a virtuous character. John McDowell has developed a 'silencing' conception of virtue:

> The view of a situation that [the virtuous person] arrives at by exercising his sensitivity is one in which some aspect of the situation is seen as constituting a reason for acting in some way; this reason is apprehended, not as outweighing or overriding any reasons for acting in other ways, which would otherwise be constituted by other aspects of the situation (the present danger, say), but as silencing them. Here and now the risk to life and limb is not seen as any reason for removing himself. (1998, pp.55-6)

Others argue that virtuous sensitivity is not only compatible with affective disunity, but that such disunity is important. Susan Stark develops this view against McDowell:

> One can register conflicting values in virtuous emotion without the worry of paralysis in action that often comes with conflicting emotions; without, that is, losing the valuable unity that is characteristic of virtuous motivation. (2001, p.440)

> …the virtuous person, by my account, is unified motivationally…she has one and only one reason for action. And regarding her emotions, she needn't be univocal: the courageous person can feel confidence and fear. Thus her emotions can reflect the many and varied values (both the goodness and the potential harm) contained within the virtuous path. (Ibid, p.453)

Broadly speaking, I side with Stark's view. The silencing view of virtuous character mischaracterises what is valuable about having "moral vision." A sensitive person is sensitive because their mental life reflects their vulnerability and exposure to loss within life. In contrast to this, I think our attitudes towards what remains when we are forced to act are highly important, and display moral character. That said, I do not deny that some silencing of reasons to act viciously also manifests one's good character. Instead, I shall only assume that the absence of silencing is sometimes good. Whilst resistance to the choice and argument model coheres with an anti-silencing view, this is a contingent association. Many advocates of a silencing conception of virtue can also reject the choice and argument model.

My argument has the following shape. I assume that being single-minded when choosing is frequently valuable. However, I argue that the deliberative ambivalence of good agents re-emerges in other guises; namely, as affective ambivalence and descriptive ambivalence. The latter describes the ability to regard a situation in different ways at once, and to remain uncertain about how to describe one's actions, even once one has acted. Affective and descriptive ambivalence are intimately linked because the ways one can 'see' and describe a situation, and one's place within it, bear upon the affects one experiences. One's failure to manifest affective and descriptive ambivalence indicates that one lacks a character that is appropriately oriented to the values that bear upon one's situation (even if tragic value pluralism is false), and to the fact that action often occurs in contexts of uncertainty. This failure thus indicates the absence of rich ethical sensitivity, or an impoverished form of what Murdoch calls "personal vision" (1956, p.40). Drawing attention to these failures supports my endorsement of a richer conception of ethical life.

Action, Adverbially Described

In chapter four I distinguished between deliberative and affective ambivalence. I suggested that one could experience both forms of ambivalence at once. In chapters four and five I argued that neither form of ambivalence *in itself* diminishes well-being nor impairs agency.

However, decisiveness is often important. One frequently has to survey reasons for action, evaluate them, and act on the basis of some reasons whilst ignoring others. Recognition of this fact is compatible with my prior arguments that failures to be decisive, because one is deliberatively ambivalent, are not necessarily bad. One would also be mistaken in thinking this concession supports the choice and argument attitude to ethical life, which emphasises the significance of acting decisively. It should actually prompt one to examine the diverse ways that decisiveness manifests itself in action, ways that are marked by the adverbial aspects of agency.

For example, Kate may, on the basis of good reasons, make a clear choice to end her marriage. Yet her decision can be emotionally complicated. Kate may end her marriage with remorse for her own failings, or in anger at her husband's intransigence, or with a resigned sense of frustration, and so on. Kate's decisiveness, on its own, tells us little about the character of her subsequent action to end her marriage (a complex action), but the character of her action reveals much about her character. Kate's emotional state, as it manifests both diachronically and synchronically, helps us evaluate the character of her action. Her emotional state is visible *in* her actions.

These evaluations are one aspect of our attempts to understand what Murdoch calls one's "total vision of life." This is:

> shown in their mode of speech or silence, their choice of words, their assessments of others, their conception of their own lives, what they think attractive or praise-worthy, what they think funny: in short the configurations of their thought which show continually in their reactions and conversation. These things, which may be overtly and comprehensively displayed or inwardly elaborated and guessed at, constitute what…one may call the texture of man's being or the nature of his personal vision. (1956, p.39)

Murdoch is describing how people grapple with the thinking of others, but this idea can be extended to affective life also, especially if one thinks emotions are ways in which aspects of the world are presented to people i.e. that emotions have cognitive content.[88] (As will perhaps be clear, I am sympathetic to this view).

One can be both decisive and emotionally single-minded. However, there are also situations where one acts decisively, but in ways that should be adverbially described as ambivalent or as conflicted, because they resist singular affective characterisation.[89] Kate's decision to end her marriage may have generated an array

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[88] "an emotion does more than orient the individual to the world: it comes packaged with its own *justification*. [A] little boy is angry *because* his father frustrates his wishes. This 'because' provides not only a cause of the hostility; is provides a reason for it… An emotion, for Aristotle, is a structure that makes a claim for its own rationality." (Lear, 1998, pp.49-50)

[89] Simply saying that Kate acts 'ambivalently' leaves too much unsaid, for we want to know which emotions are in tension.

of changing emotions as her trepidation gives way to righteous anger, and segues into lingering sadness. Her affective ambivalence may become visible in her forms of speech, as she attempts to lighten a serious conversation with a joke, only for it crash down again as her sadness becomes audible in her voice. Her body language may mirror the contortions of the conversation itself, the openness arising out of clear reasoning subsiding into the closed arms and tight fists of one who cannot avoid upsetting their partner. Kate is affectively ambivalent. She is affectively divided *in* how she acts, even though she acts decisively. (Both ambivalence and single-mindedness in deliberation are compatible with both ambivalence and single-mindedness in action.)

Moreover, one would both expect Kate to act in this way, and judge her reaction to manifest her good character. It would be peculiar if a big decision of this nature did not occasion some complex blend of relief, regret, sadness, hope and so forth; tumultuous emotions which one would typically expect to stabilise, to some extent, over time. We often talk of people "making up their minds" in deciding what to do. But the process of coming to a settled sense of "one's mind" extends far beyond making a decision. One's attitude towards the decision, and the way it sits within one's wider mental life, are also relevant factors. Often in making big decisions, one has to adopt a provisional, revisable, attitude towards a course of action that is affectively contentious and uncertain.

Deliberation takes primacy on the choice and argument conception of ethical life. On this view, one is tempted to think that it is the role of deliberation to terminate all forms of ambivalence. This view is compatible with the idea that affective unity, for instance, need not be tranquil; for example, one might be justifiably angry or ebullient.

I will challenge this view. Descriptively, it does not accommodate the way that one's deliberative ambivalence can re-emerge in the guise of affective ambivalence. Affective unity in action is not necessary for continued decisiveness. Yet more significantly, this view neglects the normative significance of affective ambivalence.

I will argue that being affectively ambivalent in some of one's actions can be good. I approach this thesis in two ways: by describing excellent actions that display affective ambivalence, and by describing actions that are morally defective because the agent fails to be ambivalent. Subsequently, I provide an account of what underlies this respective praise and blame.

Noble Ambivalence – *Captain Vere*

It can be fitting for a decisive person to have conflicting affective attitudes. Common examples include actions taken by people in positions of power, or situations in which loyalties are brought into tension. There is nobility in a judge who can sentence with magnanimity or regret; or in friends who compete against each other respectfully; or in conscientious objectors who evidence their patriotism reticently. In these cases it is also not unusual for the component emotions of the ambivalent pairs (or clusters) to be temporarily absorbing on their own.

Consider the bearing of Captain Vere in Herman Melville's intricate novella, *Billy Budd, Foretopman* (1998, subsequent page references are to this volume). Vere captains the warship *Bellipotent*. He is an intelligent, honest, and assured man, whose modesty resounds throughout his distinguished life:

> [his] unobtrusiveness of demeanour may have proceeded from a certain unaffected modesty of manhood sometimes accompanying a resolute nature, a modesty evinced at all times not calling for pronounced action, which shown in any rank of life suggests a virtue aristocratic in kind. (pp.295-6)

Captain Vere is unambiguously characterised as a person with "an exceptional character", whose "long and arduous service" had "not resulted in absorbing and *salting* the entire man" (p.297). But Melville emphasises that the Captain is not brilliant or heroic like Horatio Nelson, instead he is an instance of ordinary distinction.

Captain Vere is dramatically tested when the young, beautiful, and good-natured foretopman Billy Budd, is groundlessly accused of mutinous plotting by the ship's envious master-at-arms, John Claggart. In response to Claggart's claims, Captain Vere interrogates the master-at-arms and urges Billy to respond to the accusations. Billy is halted by his stutter, falters, and impulsively lashes out with his arm, killing Claggart instantly. Captain Vere is horrified, ("'Fated boy,' breathed Captain Vere in tone so low as to be almost a whisper, 'what have you done?'" p.332) but he decisively sequesters Billy, summons a naval court, and sentences Billy to hang.

Billy Budd, Sailor has been discussed in an ethical context (cf. Winch, 1965). My concern is with the portrayal of Captain Vere's reaction to Claggart's death. He manifests fatherliness towards Billy and conscientiousness in his role as Captain. A recent mutiny in the British fleet leaves little room for naval law to be leniently interpreted in this case, and the Captain urges a capital penalty:

> For the law and the rigor of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate in any instances, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it. (p.342)

Despite this, Captain Vere is deeply moved by the predicament of his role, and Billy's fate and well-being. During the trail, his demeanour manifests affective conflict in tension with resolute judgement:

> …he for the time stood – unconsciously with his back to them [the officers of the court], apparently in one of his absent fits" (p.340)
>
> …he to-and-fro paced the cabin athwart…without knowing it symbolising thus in his action a mind resolute to surmount difficulties even if against primitive instincts as strong as the wind and sea. (pp.340-1)
>
> When speak he did, something, both in the substance of what he said and his manner of saying it, showed the influence of unshared studies modifying and tempering the practical training of an active career. (p.341)
>
> [Captain Vere speaking] Hitherto I have been but the witness, little more; and I should hardly think now to take another tone, that of your coadjutor for the time, did I not perceive in you—at the crisis too— a troubled hesitancy, proceeding, I doubt not from the clash of military duty with moral scruple—scruple vitalized by compassion. For the compassion, how can I otherwise than share it? But mindful of paramount obligations, I strive against scruples that may tend to enervate decision. Not, gentlemen, that I hide from myself that the case is an exceptional one. (p.341)

After the trial, Captain Vere communicates the sentence to Billy personally and spends time with him. A senior officer was shocked to see the Captain's face was "expressive of the agony of the strong" (p.346). Years later as he lies dying, the former Captain murmurs Billy Budd's name, a name unrecognised to the other people present, but of evident personal resonance. Captain Vere is a decisive agent, in command of his situation, who is noble precisely because of his emotional conflict.

Ignoble Unity – *Agamemnon*

The value we place on the ability to manifest affective conflict in action is also visible in our appraisal of people who fail to do so. Martha Nussbaum portrays Aeschylus' Agamemnon as failing in this way. Like Captain Vere, Agamemnon finds himself faced with a situation beyond his choosing. His men discover that the north wind has "pinned down [their] hulls at Aulis" and they are slowly dying of starvation (Aeschylus, 1977, p.110, subsequent line references are to this volume). As their leader, Agamemnon must find means of securing safe passage beyond the island. He also has to uphold a broader military alliance. His soothsayer Calchas informs him that the Goddess Artemis demands sacrifice, and specifically the death of his daughter, Iphigenia. But as her father, Agamemnon must honour and safeguard her life, both for her sake, and "for the glory of [his] house" (209)). He is thus torn between two terrible alternatives.

Aware of this "pain both ways" (212), Agamemnon decides to proceed with the sacrifice:

> '…what is worse?
> Desert the fleets, fail the alliance?
> No, but stop the winds with a virgin's blood,
> feed their lust, their fury? – feed their fury! –
> Law is law! –
> Let all go well' (212-16)

The chorus informs us how this decision manifested in action:

> And once he slipped his neck in the strap of Fate,
> his spirit veering black, impure, unholy,
> once he turned he stopped at nothing,
> seized with the frenzy
> blinding driving to outrage –
> wretched frenzy, cause of all our grief! (216-22)

As Nussbaum mentions, Agamemnon urges Iphigenia to be handled like an animal ("Hoist her over the altar like a yearling" (230)) (1986, p.33). His actions are fierce and violently passionate. In his actions he is not emotionally attentive to the value of Iphigenia. Her once-elevated status, necessary if the sacrifice is to appease the God, is poignantly debased in her literal elevation to the altar.

Viewed from the perspective of the choice and argument model, Agamemnon has resolved his deliberative thinking in action precisely because, "his attitude towards the decision itself seems to have changed with the making of it" (Ibid, p. 35). He is affectively unified, albeit in a wretched and furious manner (as viewed from our perspective). Moreover, this unity persists over time, and does not breakdown in the subsequent reconsideration of his actions and their significance.

But his affective unity is the problem from an ethical perspective. The audience is urged to look upon his behaviour in a horrified and pitying way because Agamemnon does not act well. Below I shall consider whether he acts in an understandable way, given the constraints he encountered.

Ethical Sensitivity

I have contrasted Captain Vere and Agamemnon as two instances of decisive action conducted in a different manner. Although both examples come from nuanced and much interpreted works of literature, the nobility and debasement of their respective actions is clearly visible. One can readily imagine similar characteristics in more ordinary contexts of action where one acts well despite constraint, or fails to do so. What accounts for this difference? One's perception of good actions involves the perception of good character, but one needs a richer account of what this involves.

When expressed broadly, the difference between Captain Vere and Agamemnon appears to be one of ethical sensitivity. In Murdoch's terms, these men differ starkly in terms of their "personal vision" (cf. Nussbaum, 1986, p.39 where she writes of Agamemnon's deficiencies of "vision and response"). Although they both act in a decisive way when confronted with challenging and unexpected circumstances, the manner of their actions reveals underlying differences of character.

This may seem unfair. After all, Agamemnon was arguably sensitive prior to his terrible actions, as evidenced in the character of his deliberation, so perhaps he is just weak. But the notion of personal vision is precisely intended to capture the way moral character becomes visible over time. Momentary failures need not compromise one's entire character. Likewise, momentary sensitivity cannot on its own evidence good character.

This ethical sensitivity can be broken down into several components. First, the ethically sensitive person is cognitively and emotionally sensitive to relevant features of circumstances and subjects of their actions prior to action. Second, this sensitivity is not relinquished, or diminished, during action. Third, the person concerned remains appropriately sensitive to their actions, over time. As I have portrayed them, Agamemnon differs from Captain Vere in terms of the second and third components of sensitivity (and perhaps in terms of the first, although I shall not consider that in detail).

Sensitivity in Deliberation

Both Murdoch and Nussbaum are rightly wary of distinguishing too sharply between sensitivity in thought and the sensitivity of our emotions (Nussbaum, 1986, pp.46-7). One should not prioritise the former. Nussbaum has argued for a cognitive theory of emotions, in which they constitute a rationally evaluable response to the world (2001). Irrespective of one's theoretical view, ordinarily one expects people to manifest emotions that seem fitting to their circumstances, in addition to their recognition of what is at stake in reflection. This is evidenced by one's reactions to those, like the arrogant and narcissistic who are emotionally limited, this limitation is typically regarded as a loss.

Good agents are sensitive to relevant features of their deliberative context prior to action. It is important to emphasise the *relevant* features, as sensitivity is not a matter of being attentive to all minutiae irrespective of relevance (that would be a kind of vice). Agamemnon's companions would rightly be concerned if he failed to grasp the significance of his situation. On the one hand, he potentially risks the lives of his men, and thus his involvement in the wider political and military action. On the other hand, he risks losing his daughter, and the honour that accrues to him in virtue of his noble household. If he is to deliberate well, Agamemnon ought to grasp these facts, and understand them in terms of the predominant values that bear upon them, in the situation he faces.

Moreover, he ought to be emotionally receptive to these potential losses. This could be automatic, or involve empathetic and imaginative exertion. Either way, the sensitive agent will affectively grasp the meanings of each potential option. The possible sacrifice of one's daughter should invoke (for instance) horror and despair. The realisation that one's army may perish should invoke shame, self-reproach, and so on.

Captain Vere immediately grasped the situation he faced as Claggart tumbled to the floor of his cabin. This grasping is both reflective and affective. His sensitivity to what was at stake, and what could potentially be lost – that is, the effective command of his ship, and Billy's life – was not dispassionate.

Sensitive deliberation, and the understanding necessary to carry it out, has two objects that must be distinguished. First, one must be attentive to the values that relevantly bear on the circumstances and subjects of one's actions. Second, one must also be attentive to one's own epistemic position in relation to those circumstances.

These forms of attentiveness are connected, and involve the imagination. If several competing value considerations jostle in a situation, then one may be practically uncertain about what to do. But, crucially, even if one is decisive, one's actions can bear the trace of this uncertainty.

Captain Vere is sensitive to the values that inform his practical choice. There is some complexity about the object of that choice, as Captain Vere convened a court, which in theory could have acquitted Billy, or subjected him to a lesser penalty,[90] but he also advocated the death penalty directly in a context where his arguments would have great force because of his authority. Thus in one sense, the outcome of his action is akin to directly choosing for Billy to be executed, and it is clear that Captain Vere had a verdict already in mind:

[90] Although naval law was reasonably clear about the penalty for killing a superior officer.

> Captain Vere was again motionless, standing absorbed in thought. Again starting, he vehemently exclaimed, 'Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!' (p.333)

These complexities aside, Billy has killed a superior officer aboard a ship governed by British naval law in the aftermath of a recent mutiny. But Billy's action was unintentional, impulsive, and the consequence of a sequence of events which initially rested upon malicious and false accusations against him. In respect of his situation as Captain, Vere has to administer naval law and secure the command of his vessel. But in respect of his moral character, his position as an older responsible seaman, and the pastoral aspects of his role as Captain, Vere has a responsibility towards Billy; moreover, he has come to care about, or even love, him. These values are in tension insofar as Captain Vere's decision making goes because he cannot act on both.

One's sensitivity to relevant values prior to action can manifest in many ways. One might be able to reflectively appraise the issues at stake and the reasons underpinning prospective courses of action. Ideally, this reflective stance will have an affective shadow. In considering the implications of the naval penal code, for example, Captain Vere ought to feel affective pressure towards leniency, as indeed he appears to do. Similar tensions are visible in many ordinary situations. One may struggle with the task of delivering bad news, for example, or with the task of punishing a child for a relatively unimportant offence.

Sensitivity *in* Action

Sensitivity before action is important. But the contrast between Captain Vere and Agamemnon becomes most clear when one examines how this sensitivity undergoes transformation in action. Captain Vere's attitude towards his decision (and that of the naval court), that it is right that Billy Budd is executed, does not "seem to have changed with the making of it."

The fact that his view does not change is partly what lends his actions a noble cast. Both throughout the trial, its aftermath, and the circumstances of the pronounced sentence, Captain Vere is attentive to the tragic reality of Billy's fate. He deals personally with Billy, talking to him and conveying the decision of the court. He is compassionate, "fatherly", sanguine, and deeply affected by the emotional horror of what is happening. He does not try to downplay his own involvement in what is happening. His emotional attitudes are manifest through the entire "texture [of his] being" (Murdoch, 1956, p.39). We see them in his body language, the content of his speech, the manner of his speech, and his attempts at corrective self-control when strained by emotion. This is all the more striking when we consider Captain Vere's ardent lobbying for the death penalty. In other words, the confidence he places in his decision does not compromise or mute his ability to grasp the terrible situation itself, and Billy's horrible misfortune.

This example contrasts starkly with the way that Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigenia appears to transform his emotional attitudes in action. Nussbaum has articulated this change in a way that supports my argument. She attends to the judgement of Aeschylus' Chorus, and thinks first that their appraisal of Agamemnon's action tells us something about good action in many practical contexts, and second that this response "enact[s] a deep ethical response that would be intelligible in the absence of the divine" (1986, p.41).

Nussbaum draws an instructive contrast between Agamemnon's plight and that of Abraham who was commanded to sacrifice his son, Isaac:

> We might, then, expect to see next the delicate struggle between love and pious obligation that we sense in Abraham's equivocal words to Isaac, followed by a sacrifice executed with horror and reluctance. But something strange takes place. […] Voicing no blame of the prophet or his terrible message, Agamemnon now begins to cooperate inwardly with necessity, arranging his feelings to accord with his fortune. From the moment he makes his decision, itself the best he could have made, he strangely turns himself into a collaborator, a willing victim. (Ibid, p.35)

Agamemnon's frenetic response is notable for its single-mindedness. In his action, his awareness of the terrible options he initially faced is forgotten. His amnesia does not simply manifest in his unnuanced affective state, but also in his judgements about his situation. As Nussbaum expresses this:

> …the correctness of his decision is taken by him to justify not only action, but also passion: if it is right to obey the god, it is right to *want* to obey him, to have an appetite…for the crime, even to yearn for it with exceedingly impassioned passion. (Ibid, p.36)

Part of what underpins Agamemnon's change of attitude is his inability to retain, as he acts, an awareness of the reasons that were salient prior to action: reasons as to why the sacrifice of his daughter would be such a terrible act and reasons as to why his situation is itself direly structured by the gods. Nussbaum offers an alternative account of what Agamemnon ought to have done:

> If he is of good character, he will have brought to the situation a lively imagination and a complex set of responses that will enable him to see the conflict situation as a situation that forces him to act against his character. He will not inhibit these thoughts in the event. (Ibid, p.42)

I disagree that the situation is one that forces Agamemnon to act against his character, for like Captain Vere, there is a way of acting which manifests a sensitivity to value which is itself indicative of a stable ethical character that persists through difficult situations. This is the retention of a degree of conflictedness.

Captain Vere is a man whose decisiveness is accompanied by affective ambivalence during his actions. Agamemnon, in contrast, fails to be conflicted once he had decided what to do, and that is his problem. Clearly there are substantial questions about how to interpret the extent to which their respective actions are taken in response to genuinely tragic situations, as opposed to situations where a predominant reason for action is available. I'm only appealing to these cases in order to illustrate a wider point which is less contentious, namely, that at times we recognize the presence of affective conflictedness in action to be indicative of a good ethical character.

Psychological Constraints?

At this point one might raise an objection that will seem especially pertinent to those who endorse the choice and argument model of ethical action. One might think that retaining cognitive and emotional sensitivity in action when faced with terrible situations is psychologically impossible, or unreasonable to demand of a person. At times, one may argue, one has to act, and one cannot act if one's emotions are conflicted. This objection has some plausibility as we often excuse people who experience emotional volatility in genuinely tragic or constrained circumstances. Nonetheless this objection is not decisive.

First, claims about psychological impossibility do not justify the kind of affective posture we witness in Agamemnon. One may argue that his state of mind is better than practical paralysis, or intense suffering. But it is not obvious that this is correct. Some situations may be so terrible that practical paralysis, or even the breakdown of one's identity itself, is properly expressive of moral character. In talking about Agamemnon's situation, Nussbaum remarks that sometimes "the best the agent can do is to have his suffering, [for this is] the natural expression of his goodness of character" (Ibid, p.50). Agential paralysis may be one form of such suffering.

Secondly, I am describing an ideal. Thus even if the objection correctly describes what sometimes happens to people, the ideal itself may be unscathed. After all, some people do seem to be able to retain a complex array of emotional attitudes whilst being decisive, and we regard those actions to exhibit particular practical excellence.

Third, even if one is momentarily unable to be sensitive to a complex array of values, this is a separate matter from one's *ongoing* orientation to one's past actions and the contexts in which they occurred. Some actions cast long shadows through a life, thus even if one's character falters at a particular time, one's overall moral vision can become apparent in one's subsequent actions and wider reactions to one's past actions. We often look to how one relates to the very fact that one failed to be sensitive in a difficult situation: are they remorseful, embarrassed, or ashamed? This final response to the objection from practical paralysis feeds directly into the third criterion underpinning ethical sensitivity.

Continuing Sensitivity

So far I have argued that one manifests ethical sensitivity in one's receptiveness to multiple values in one's thinking and emotions both prior to and during action. This may involve experiencing, and tolerating, affective conflict as one acts. A third, and highly significant way in which this sensitivity is manifested is in one's continued manifestation of one's sensitivity to the values that bore on a past situation.

It is often hard to draw a clear boundary between what constitutes an action and its aftermath. One should also avoid becoming preoccupied with an overly discrete conception of what actions are, and heed Murdoch's point that one will "miss certain important aspects of morals" if one attaches too much importance to the fact that one "construct [one's life] into a series of situations" for the "purposes of getting on to the next thing" (1956, p.39). The very notion of a 'situation' is an unstable and pragmatic one.

What I have in mind by continuing sensitivity to an action is the ways in which someone like Agamemnon responds to his past decision to sacrifice his daughter in order to save his fleet. Even if Agamemnon is temporarily insensitive in the sacrificing of Iphigenia, he ought to be able to recover the reasons that were relevant then, and presently inhabit them in their full emotional force. As Nussbaum expresses this point:

> [The ethically sensitive agent] will not regard the fact of decision as licensing feelings of self-congratulation, much less feelings of unqualified enthusiasm for the act chosen. He will show in his emotive behavior, and also genuinely feel, that this is an act deeply repellent to him and to his character. [...] after the action he will remember, regret, and, where possible, make reparations. His emotion, moreover, will not be simply regret, which could be felt and expressed by an uninvolved spectator and does not imply that he himself has acted badly. It will be an emotion more like remorse, closely bound up with acknowledgement of the wrong that he has as an agent, however reluctantly, done. (1986, p.43)

In other words, Agamemnon ought to, but fails to, manifest sensitivity to ethical remainders.[91] Contrastingly, Captain Vere maintains an ongoing appreciation of values and reasons that surrounded his past choice to have Billy tried and executed, and also that he continues to be emotionally moved by what he was involved in. Even on his own deathbed Captain Vere is thinking about Billy Budd. His reasoning is left unarticulated, but it is clear that he could be attempting to express guilt, remorse, or equally significantly simply attempting to memorialize, through remembrance, the life of a man he had a duty to protect. Again, Captain Vere's continued relation to his past action is admirable. He does not simply decide what is right to do in the situation presented to him and then continue his life untroubled. He "has his suffering" over time.

[91] The notion of the ethical remainder is due to Bernard Williams (cf. See for instance, "Ethical Consistency" in 1973).

The range of interpretations of Captain Vere's last words point to the richness of the ways in which people manifest their ongoing recognition of values that they could not act on. Many emotional attitudes are oriented towards past actions in this way, and people are expected to have these attitudes even though they are not always directly practical. These include affects such as: guilt, regret, remorse, reminiscence, reverence, pride, relief, embarrassment, shame, disgrace, pity, revulsion, humiliation, resentment, scorn, disgust, disappointment, triumph, contempt, frustration, amongst others. Many ordinary emptions can also be oriented towards past actions, such as sadness, anxiety, joy, and happiness, and so on. All these affects are components of what Murdoch termed one's "total vision of life" or "personal vision." One expects these attitudes to be present, even in – perhaps, especially in – individuals who act decisively and who are able to resolve deliberative conflict or ambivalence.

One's personal ethical vision becomes visible over time. The lives of both Captain Vere and Agamemnon ought to be deeply marked by the tragic decisions they took. Captain Vere, for instance, will live out the rest of his life under the shadow of that fated incident upon the *Bellipotent.* We can imagine him questioning his choice; plumbing the depths of the situation he faced for confirmation or condemnation of his actions. Alternatively, he may remain resolutely confident in his decision, but nonetheless emotionally attentive to the great loss of Billy's life and thus affectively conflicted. His last words may symbolize an attempt to remember the man whose death he was involved in bringing about, simply because he was a good man: one worthy of memory. Alternatively, he may feel remorse, a lingering depression, or pity, or a host of other attitudes which manifest his care and concern for Billy; a care and concern that could not be actively accounted for in his actions at the time because of the overriding demand to uphold naval law.

Captain Vere's concern for Billy would manifest in many ways. When others invite him to reminisce about his time as Captain of the *Bellipotent*, for instance, he may struggle to generate hearty or embellished narratives typical of his fellow officers. Or he may try to avoid the subject altogether, weary of confronting a situation whose complexity is not easily communicated to people who were not there. Or he may find himself to be angry with Billy, for his role in bringing about a situation in which naval law could not be applied with any leniency. He may also try to make reparations for his involvement in Billy's death. Although he is confident that his decision was not a mistake, one can imagine him assuming an extra vigilance with future young members of his ship's company, or particular care and oversight of the new master-at-arms who replaces Claggart. Still further, we can imagine Captain Vere's relation to his own family undergoing a change as a consequence of his past actions. He might be more protective of his son, or see his son under the aspect of the young foretopman he was compelled to execute.

I have only painted a limited picture of the ways Captain Vere's life could be shaped by his response to Billy's paroxysmal act. However, it is certainly likely that this affective orientation to Billy's death is going to be conflicted and in flux over time. Many different patterns of thought and feeling will attach to his remembrances and reflections. Although this may be painful and unsettling for Captain Vere, it is precisely the kind of diachronic process we expect of one of good character.

Of course, both the intensity and nature of one's continued sensitivity to values that were relevant in a past situation will change. Most of the time, it is appropriate for emotional manifestations of care to undergo modification. Indeed, the more sensitive one is to past actions, the more likely these changes are to occur, because sensitive reflection over time leads to a more stable relationship with one's actions (the familiar process known psychoanalytically as 'working through' (Freud, 1958).

Ordinary moral thought reveals an implicit conception of a fine balance between repetition and remembrance. It is overly demanding to criticize Captain Vere for the failure to continually repeat, in his emotional or cognitive attitudes, the emotional attitudes that he had, at the time, towards a past action—to 'rake over' what was done. However, he should not forget what was done either.

One's grasp of the balance between these two extremes is complex and there may be disagreement about what is appropriate. However, even when one allows for modification over time, continuing patterns of thought and feeling about a meaningful past action appear indicative of a good ethical character. This is expressive of moral insight. As Murdoch writes,

> Moral insight as communicable vision or as quality of being, is something separable from definitive performance [in action], and we do not always, though doubtless we do usually, require performance as, or allow performance to be, the test of the vision or of the person who holds it. (1956,

p.42)

One can imagine two Captains who arrive at the same decision to execute Billy Budd, only one of whom sufficiently manifests good moral vision in his subsequent life, through his ability to retain a sensitive awareness of the opposing that values were at stake in that decision, and the different meanings and significance the action itself may have. Only the latter manifests an underlying good character.

In adopting this view, I am presupposing that much of our reflective and emotional life is able to manifest the fact that we value things, even in contexts where we cannot act on such valuing. Carla Bagnoli argues that our capacity to regret functions in this way (2000). Her general strategy is to invert Bernard Williams' emphasis on what regret tells us about the structure of value, and instead focus on this emotion from an agent's perspective (Ibid. p.175). This is a complex issue, but it is important to note that our appreciation of one's ethical sensitivity as it becomes visible in action is not meant to rest on any philosophical view about the topology of value. Instead, it is a more general point about what constitutes an excellence of character. If values are monistic we expect one to remain sensitive to what appeared relevant before one acted. If values are plural but never tragically conflict, we expect people to remain attentive to the values that do not predominate (such as the value of compassion towards Billy Budd), and not disregard them altogether.

Good Character and Ambivalence

I have argued, first, that people can manifest a range of affective attitudes in action as well as after it, second, that these manifestations may themselves be conflicted or ambivalent, and third, that we recognize this to be good. This goodness is intrinsic to a valuable character. It is not primarily good as a means for a further end.[92]

[92] A good sensitive character would be of value to others, especially insofar as it shapes positive interpersonal relationships. Moreover, other people benefit from being around those with stable characters.

Agamemnon lacks a good character. He shows a momentary grasp of what is at stake in his situation, but this is lost in action, and not reclaimed afterwards. He is blameworthy for his reaction, just as Captain Vere is contrastingly praiseworthy for his. It is good for Captain Vere that he is conflicted and ambivalent because that *just is* an aspect of having an ethically good character. Similarly, Agamemnon is liable to blame and condemnation insofar as he lacks such a character. His lack of continued affective and reflective sensitivity to the values that bore relevantly on his deliberative context before he decided to sacrifice his daughter is part of what it is for him to not have a good character.

If this is right, then having a good character may involve one experiencing conflict and ambivalence (when appropriate). This can be so even if one is decisive in one's actions. In claiming this, I have rejected the choice and argument model. Our ability to act is very important, and much praise and blame is attached to what we do. However, one's character is also manifested in the adverbial features of action, or inaction, and in one's subsequent reactions to that action throughout one's life. Most ordinary actions are unimportant in the context of a life. But I have attempted to show how we readily expect people to experience certain patterns of thought and feeling in significant or momentous situations. Every life will contain at least some of these situations. In evaluating one's ethical character and personal vision, we frequently look to those moments; to the way one mourns, to one's conduct in love, to one's attitudes towards adversity or circumstantial setbacks.

This is not to deny that people can *appear* to be sensitive in this way yet not be. Indeed, for some, affective complexity may actually mask their inability to engage with a distressing moral failure, or the possibility their reasoning was in error. My argument only involves the claim that a species of appropriate and even noble character becomes visible as a result of the fact that one is ambivalent or conflicted, and that this is compatible with decisive action.

Descriptive Ambivalence

The foregoing line of thought is interlinked with the Murdochian conception of what ethical agency involves. In several places I have appealed to an implicit awareness of what is 'relevant' in a situation, suggesting that one has to be sensitive to relevant values, not extraneous ones. But deciding what is relevant is frequently difficult.

This difficulty is partly epistemic. But it also arises because some contexts do not obviously present themselves as 'situations'. In seeing this, one can grasp another facet of what is involved in having an ethically good character. In turn, *that* involves the recognition of another way in which it can be good for one to be ambivalent or conflicted. I shall now explain this.

Sometimes, perhaps always, one has to act without a full grasp of the situation one faces. In those situations, it can be good for one to remain *descriptively* ambivalent even as one acts quickly or decisively. Descriptive ambivalence describes the state of a person who does not summarily suggest to themselves or others that they are clear exactly what 'situation' they face, or what its extended meaning and significance may be. Descriptive ambivalence is related to deliberative ambivalence because one's lack of a settled description of one's situation may make one's reasoning more difficult. However, the two notions do not collapse into each other, for deliberative ambivalence can also arise when one has settled on descriptions of the alternatives one faces (and their value), and is only uncertain about which alternative is more important all things considered.

Descriptive ambivalence may arise as a consequence of one's limited grasp of one's situation, or out of an active, empathetic and imaginative, attempt to retain various salient features in one's mind. For example, one is often unsure how to describe the behaviour of others, and the attribution of intentions and emotional states is difficult. Captain Vere may struggle to understand Billy's frame of mind, or Claggart's apparent malice.

A good response to such difficulty is to resist the temptation to make things "too simple" (Nussbaum, 1986, p.35). This will involve being aware of the various ways that these people could be described, and resistance to settling on a particular description. In an extreme case, Captain Vere may have to concede he can *never* settle on a fitting description of Billy or Claggart's mental life, or on a description of the significance of what took place on board the *Bellipotent*.

Murdoch captures the sense in which ambivalence of description, being able to see how something can be seen in different way, does not arise because one has not adequately specified the facts of the matter:

> There are…moments when situations are unclear and what is needed is not a renewed attempt to specify the facts, but a fresh version which may be derived from a "story" or from some sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure, and represents a "mode of understanding" of an alternative type. (1956, p.51)

Instead, what Murdoch suggests here, in the context of her discussion of how we should approach ethics more generally, is that much of what is valuable in an ethically sensitive character is the ability to engage with facts in a certain kind of way. Nussbaum expresses a related point in her discussion of the situation faced by Agamemnon:

> even if the agent comes to the dilemma with good general principles, the case does not present itself with labels written on it, indicating its salient features. To pick these out, he must interpret it; and since often the relevant features emerge distinctly only through memory and projection of a more complicated kind, he will have to use imagination as well as perception. (1986, p.42)

This kind of interpretative thought is richly imaginative. One has to work to see situations from different perspectives. If they do, one better understands the range of ways that situation is perceived by the other people it involves.

Consider Captain Vere once again. Claggart is dead, Billy struck him, and naval law appears to require death. These are the facts, but they can be assembled and approached in a variety of ways. Captain Vere can wonder whether to pity Billy, or is a degree of anger appropriate? Perhaps both are apt ways of approaching the striking of Claggart. More broadly, Captain Vere may describe his situation in different ways. Is he in a tragic context in which he is forced to end the life of someone he admires (even loves), or does the situation reveal that he actually was mistaken in his admiration of Billy from the beginning. Somewhat differently, perhaps Captain Vere can describe this event as presenting him with an opportunity, either to fastidiously honour the legal code which has governed his career, and which safeguards the entire fleet and – by extension – the British state it serves, or to *discover* what he regards as significantly a part of his role. He may discover he is less concerned with the strictures of naval law, than with his duty of care towards his men.

There are so many ways of assembling the 'facts' into various shapes, and in many cases another possible shape will be salient. One who is descriptively ambivalent is unable to, or actively refrains from, summarily settling on one kind of narrative in these situations.[93]

Murdoch expresses a related idea well:

> There are situations which are obscure and people who are incomprehensible, and the moral agent…may find himself unable to describe something which in some sense he apprehends. Language has limitations and there are moments when, if it is to serve us, it has to be used creatively, and the effort may fail […] It is very well to say that one should always attempt a full understanding and a precise description, but to say that one can always be confident that one has understood seems plainly unrealistic. There are even moments when understanding *ought* to be withheld. (1956, pp.49-50)

One may argue that this attitude cannot be good, that one needs to settle on a description of what happened if one is to avoid practical paralysis. Loss of confidence in the meanings of what one does, on this view, would be fatal, and to be avoided at all costs. My response to this objection is to concede that this is a risk in some situations. We have to concede that we do need to act, and often we need to do so quickly and on the basis of a single conception of what it is we are doing. However, this is compatible with thinking that some contexts call for descriptive ambivalence.

Recognition of this point is consistent with thinking there can be various divisions of labour with respect of retaining ambivalence in description. A person may be able to be decisive if others are focused towards the complexities of a shared situation. Alternatively, one individual might spread their reflective and agential labour over time, surveying complexities in one moment, only to act in a focused way at a later time. General Cummings, a character in Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, spends hours in meticulous study and preparation of his battleground in recognition of the need for decisiveness in times of immediate danger or crisis:

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[93] Descriptive ambivalence resembles and involves what John Keats famously called "negative capability" that is, "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'" (Keats, 2012, p.136).

> When he reached that telephone line, the decision would have to be almost immediate. He reviewed the personalities of his line officers, remembered the distinguishing characteristics, if there were any, of different companies, even individual platoons. His acute memory reissued a spate of incidents and strength figures; he knew effectively where every gun and man on Anopopei was placed, and all this knowledge passed in an undigested flow through his head. At this moment he was an extremely simple man. Everything in him was functioning for one purpose, and from experience, with a confident unstated certainty, he knew that when demanded of him all this information would crystalize into the proper reactions. (2006, p.113)

General Cummings has confidence in his decisiveness, when it is required, but he is also aware of the need to survey options and consider alternatives, in an open-minded, "undigested", way prior to contexts of action.

Descriptive ambivalence must be distinguished from purposeful attempts to attend to complexity in an unnecessary or obsfucatory manner. One must avoid:

> the praiseworthy attempt to see things in their wider context becomes so formalised that instead of applying that technique in particular, unique ways, appropriate to a given reality, it becomes a single and widely used model of thinking with a special capacity to dissolve—in the vagueness of all the possible wider contexts—everything particular in that reality. Thus what looks like an attempt to see something in a complex way in fact results in a complex form of blindness. For if we can't see individual specific things, we can't see anything at all. (Havel, 1992, p.13)

There are times when one's attempt to "see all sides of a situation" is a defensive way of avoiding action altogether, a form of agential squeamishness that manifests as apparent thoughtfulness, but which only serves to inhibit action when it is most required. Were General Cummings to think in this manner, he would be blind to the quickly unfolding context of battle, with drastic consequences.

It is hard to specify in advance when descriptive ambivalence is appropriate, but that is a predicament that is shared with the execution of all virtues: one can never clearly specify in advance which situations will call for courage, for instance, nor what courage may look like in those situations. Moreover, one can see the ability to be descriptively ambivalent as a good form of engagement with the world. Once again, Murdoch eloquently expresses this view:

> We do continually have to make choices—but why should we blot out as irrelevant the different background of these choices, whether they are made confidently on the basis of a clear specification of the situation, or tentatively, with no confidence of having sufficiently explored the details? Why should attention to detail, or belief in its inexhaustibility, necessarily bring paralysis, rather than, say, inducing humility and being an expression of love? (1956, p.48)

A way of manifesting attention to detail is to be descriptively ambivalent. In addition, because many aspects of affective life involve judgements about what one is confronting, descriptive ambivalence is also intimately linked with the range of affective experiences one can confront. The two notions are linked: one will be affectively ambivalent because something, or someone, presents itself to one in different ways, as hateful *and* pitiful, as shameful *and* as innocent, and so on. Thus one's descriptive ambivalence as, or after, one acts, reflects well on one in the same way that one's affective ambivalence does, because such a state of mind just is to have a good character.

This state of mind contrasts with one who only sees situations in a limited way, or in starkly opposed terms. If one describes a past action in a descriptively poor way, or cannot be led to adopt a more complex stance on the event, then one is subject to a failure analogous to Agamemnon's frenetic affective state once he decided Iphigenia must be sacrificed. Part of what it is to be sensitive to a situation, especially one in which various values are at stake, is to realise that it can be seen from a variety of human perspectives. Furthermore, sensitivity requires openness to the possibility, no matter how remote, that one will not be able to *settle* one's descriptive conception of what happened. One's grasp of actions in narrative, like one's emotions arising from those actions, is subject to change over time. Whether through new imaginings, or the processes of seeing an action under the aspect of a pattern of later behaviour, one frequently changes one's description of what an action involved, or what its significance was. It is a familiar occurrence to initially describe a person as disrespectful, and only later see that they were acting in our best interests, or out of love.

Being able to sustain descriptive ambivalence where appropriate can aid one to reason and act in a *creative* way. Creative action is not simply action that follows sustained reflection. One could reflect at length but never countenance unfamiliar avenues of action, or even consider the boundaries of what is possible at all. Instead, creative agents alter the parameters of what they considered it possible to do. They should be contrasted with agents who choose between a range of *familiar* options, irrespective of how expansive those options are, or how richly described and understood they are. It is arguable that Captain Vere fails to reflect in a sufficiently creative way. Perhaps a more sustained descriptive ambivalence towards his situation, particularly in respect of what naval law required in the context, could have provided him with a broader range of possible actions.

Conclusion

I have argued that the persistence of affective and descriptive ambivalence, even in a decisive person, can manifest an ethical sensibility we have reason to value. Consequently, the integration ideal, with its hostility to ambivalence, cannot accommodate these important forms of good character.

Chapter Seven

A Salvaged Ideal: The Depressive Position?

> Mental Life is a complicated mixture of self-manifestation and self-creation. The divided mind is a mind that has failed fully to re-create itself according to some idea of how it should be united. (Price, 1995, p.7)

Introduction

My arguments in the foregoing chapters have brought pressure to bear on the integration ideal, understood as the absence of mental conflict and ambivalence. To the extent that one finds these arguments compelling, one may be tempted to conclude that integration, on any understanding, is a false ideal. In this chapter, however, I shall argue that we can give an alternative interpretation of the notion of integration, which salvages it as an ideal of mental organization. This is to say: Plato and others were right to think that there is a valuable way for the aspects of one's mental life to fit together, but wrong in their specific conception of what this involves.

To support this claim, and drawing on the Kleinian psychoanalytic tradition briefly discussed at the end of chapter five, I will canvass alternative understandings of integration according to which integration is consistent with the presence of conflicts and ambivalence. In chapter five, I appealed to the concept of projective identification to argue that the absence of conflicts and ambivalence from one's mind can itself be evidence that one is in a problematic state. However, my appeal to Kleinian theory also contains the seeds of an alternative conception of integration, namely, integration understood as the state of mind in which one does not split off parts of one's mind from conscious experience. I build on this idea in this chapter, though I ultimately argue that this ideal too has shortcomings. My conclusion is that integration should be understood as a rich mental capacity, not simply a state to be achieved. In the next chapter, I explore the relationship between this capacity and virtue.

As a point of departure, note that integration can be understood in (at least) two divergent ways: (1) as a relation between one's mental states and (2) as a relation between one's mental states and one's self/character.[94] On the latter conception, one is concerned with the extent to which one's character forms a whole, and not necessarily the extent to which that whole is free of conflicts, ambivalence, or weakness. One might be interested in this kind of integration for a variety of reasons. Like Frankfurt, perhaps, one is interested in autonomy and freedom, and the kind of authenticity that flows from adopting various higher-order attitudes towards one's mental states. Or, like Friedrich Nietzsche, at least in certain moods, one might have an aesthetic conception of character, which values complex kinds of unity:

> One *thing is needful* – To "give style" to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fir them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weakness delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime…In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed everything large and small. Whether this taste was or good or bad was less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste! (2001, §290, cf. the examples in Harcourt, 2011, p.278)

I shall name the first general understanding of integration the '*Parts* Conception', and the second understanding the '*Character* Conception' (I intend 'Parts' to be broad enough to cover both the Platonic conception of a soul with integrated faculties and my own previous discussions of integrated mental states, which remained neutral about mental faculties). My previous arguments lead me to conclude that the Parts Conception of integration does not constitute a viable ideal of mental structure. Thus it is natural to turn towards the Character Conception of integration.

[94] This is a variant of a distinction made by Edward Harcourt between "the integration of a person's ends (commitments, desires, passions, ideals, ambitions) *to their character*, and the integration of a person's ends (commitments etc.) *with one another*" (2007, p.103). It is different because I am concerned with the relations between a person's mental states and not just their ends in life.

Any new interpretation of integration must retain the generality possessed by the Parts Conception, where the absence of conflicts was deemed to be good, irrespective of their specific content. This generality ensures the resultant ideal is one of mental structure, and not a disguised moral ideal, although I will question how integration relates to such ideals, if at all, in the next chapter.

The Depressive Position

Kleinian psychoanalysts often appear to laud a version of the Character Conception of integration. (I construe character very broadly.) Consider Robert Hinshelwood's description of the goal of psychoanalysis:[95]

> The goal, in a psychoanalysis, will be that the individual can gradually regain for himself the lost parts of his personality, and through some help from the analyst, begin to link together conflicting parts of himself so that a new resolution of conflicts can take place. In this way we can think about an *integration* in the personality. The particular methods of the analyst are geared towards introducing the patient to his own conflicts and to the full richness of the diverse parts of himself. (1997, p.135)

Hinshelwood describes how psychoanalysis assists one in integrating one's mental states to one's character.[96] The integrated person does not split off or disown parts of their self, consciously or unconsciously, even though when they are integrated in this way, their mind may be conflicted, or contain difficult emotions, desires and other states.[97]

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[95] The ends of psychoanalysis, as an activity, may differ from psychoanalytically informed conceptions of the ends of life more generally. But the former can influence and shape a conception of the latter.

[96] In a manner similar to the thinking of Harry Frankfurt, who has argued people have to take responsibility for their mental states, through explicit higher-order attitudes towards them. cf. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person", "Identification and Externality", and "Identification and Wholeheartedness" in Frankfurt, 1988.

[97] One may split off a part of one's mind that is not part of one's character. A whimsical yet frightening desire to commit an act of violence may be split off without loss. Thus the *mere* absence of splitting or other typically defensive mechanisms does not entail that the split off part of mind is a potential candidate for the second kind of integration.

Despite his emphasis on securing access to the richness of one's mental life, however, Hinshelwood's view does not in the end offer an alternative to the Parts Conception of integration. On his account, integrating one's character is a means to the "new resolution of conflicts." At most, this is a richer version of the Parts Conception, in which various intermediate steps are required if one is to remove conflicts within one's minds. So I set Hinshelwood's view on one side.

Robert Caper offers a different understanding of the goals of psychoanalysis:

> If the aim of psychoanalysis is to help the patient integrate split-off parts of his personality, then working through would have to mean something like the patient's accepting his unconscious as a part of himself, mourning the attendant loss of self-idealization, and facing the depressive anxieties that follow from this. This contrasts with 'curing' oneself of the newly discovered piece of the unconscious by getting rid of it. Working something through means first facing the fact that one cannot get rid of it. (1999, pp.24-5)

As a consequence of this:

> No one can really predict beforehand what it will mean to the patient if one succeeds in one's interpretive attempts to help him integrate split-off parts of his personality […] [I]ntegration of split-off parts of the patient's personality helps the patient to deal with his difficulties by letting him know what they are, but it doesn't solve or abolish them for him. (Ibid, p.24)

Caper's account differs from Hinshelwood's. Caper does not think conflicts between parts of one's mind should be removed, because they *cannot* be removed. I shall not evaluate this empirical claim, but Caper's account rests on the application of 'ought implies can'. This view is compatible with a sanguine attitude towards conflicts. Caper could even judge them to be imperfections of character. However, his ideal of mental structure, articulated in terms of psychoanalytic aims, refers to the unity of one's character, so he describes a Character Conception of integration. Thus it is plausible to think that a view like Caper's provides one with a point of departure when constructing a more adequate understanding of integration as an ideal. For instance, on Caper's Character Conception of integration Catullus, who both loves and hates Lesbia, is not necessarily disintegrated, as both of these attitudes could form aspects of his character that he is reconciled towards, or not denying or 'splitting off'.

Caper's Character Conception of integration can be understood, like the Parts Conception, as a *state* conception. A state conception holds that one should aspire to be in an integrated state of mind (however that is defined). This goal contrasts with the goal of developing *capacities* that could result in multiple states of mind.

For Kleinians, the ideal state of mind to attain appears to be the "depressive position". A position – a Kleinian term of art - is a "fundamental form of patterning experience" (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p.93). Klein eventually thought that experience was patterned in two broad ways, which she labelled the "paranoid-schizoid" and the "depressive" positions after some of the characteristic features of both kinds of experience (Klein, 1997).

Projective identification, the process I described in chapter five, is common in the paranoid-schizoid position; there one is primarily gripped by primitive persecutory anxieties and aggression, and one's experience is fragmented into two radical polarities of The Good and The Bad (Steiner, 1988, p.320). This experience is viscerally felt in arguments with other people, who are perceived as mere aggressors, and in moments of vulnerability where one clings desperately to an idealised good in one's life, due to various anxieties (such as insecurities surrounding the nature of an intimate relationship).

Hanna Segal describes the depressive position in infancy:

> The infant begins to perceive his mother as a whole object, that is, not split into two or fragmented into parts, but one person both gratifying and frustrating. And the infant also realises that he is one person with conflicted feelings. This is the stage Klein called the depressive position because the realisation of ambivalence brings with it the threat of the loss of the object and depressive feelings of loss and guilt associated with it. (1992, p.95)

For adults, the depressive position is arguably where the experience of ambivalence becomes tolerable, and the black and white thinking of the paranoid-schizoid position subsides. One thinks in a less rigid way, relates to whole people, not just their positive or negative qualities, distinguishes one's mental life from others, is concerned for others, tolerates frustration and uncertainty (Levine, 2011, p.191). In this state of mind, destructive anxieties are often replaced with mourning for one's past idealised perceptions, guilt for past aggression, and a renewed responsibility for other people and one's own mind (Steiner, 1988, p.320). The depressive kind of patterning of experience is visible in the bicycle crash example described in chapter four: after a while the man involved was able to relate to the boy in a more even-handed and compassionate way, and his new understanding of the crash was more realistic.[98]

Even on parsimonious interpretations of the depressive position, Kleinians agree that this state of mind both confers benefits on a person and may require them to confront difficult features of mind. When one is in the depressive position, one is not splitting off hard to tolerate aspects of one's mind, which means the depressive position is not necessarily tranquil.

It is important to emphasise that the difficult experiences tolerated in the depressive position are not necessarily painful or bad *per se*. For example, excitement and boredom are two experiences that one needs to be able to tolerate. Adam Phillips, describes boredom as an experience in which a child encounters the absence of desire, an experience that needs to be contained by an adult:

> In the muffled, sometimes irritable confusion of boredom the child is reaching to a recurrent sense of emptiness out of which his real desire can crystallize. But to begin with, of course, the child needs the adult to hold, and hold to, the experience-that is, to recognize it as such, rather than to sabotage it by distraction. The child's boredom starts as a regular crisis in the child's developing capacity to be alone in the presence of the mother. In other words, *the capacity to be bored can be a developmental achievement for the child*. (1993, p.69, italics added)[99]

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[98] There is some disagreement about whether the positions are developmental stages. Melanie Klein was clear that the depressive position "is of the most crucial importance in development" (1998, p.288). But her concept of a position diverges from classical Freudian developmental stages: "Melanie Klein chose the term "position" to emphasise the fact that the phenomenon she was describing was not simply a passing "stage" or a "phase" such as, for example, the oral phase; her term implies a specific configuration of object relations, anxieties and defences which persist through life" (Segal, 1973, p.ix, italics added cf. Kristeva, 2001, p.63).

[99] Phillips' view accords with my notion of obstructive ambivalence, and why that ambivalence might require one to develop new capacities of response.

Normative Status

The depressive position has a complex status Kleinian thinking. On the one hand, Kleinians think the depressive position is a mental excellence, and an advance over the paranoid-schizoid position.[100] On the other hand, some think that occupying the depressive position will have unpredictable consequences.

Hanna Segal describes the depressive position in a manner that makes it seem like a moral state: "[the depressive position] brings about a fundamental reorientation to reality. With the withdrawal of projections the object is perceived more in accordance with the reality principle, and so is the self. *We begin to take responsibility for our own impulses*" (Segal, 1992, p.95, italics added).[101]

The depressive position may appear to constitute a moral state in two different ways: first, as an intrinsically good form of relatedness to others and oneself, and secondly, as a state that facilitates the emergence of other important moral emotions, such as gratitude, guilt, or remorse. Because the depressive position is not a developmental stage, this second argument must claim these latter emotions are made possible by one's mind being structured in the manner of the depressive position. One may have an underlying disposition to experience gratitude, say, but one only manifests this emotion when one's broader mental experiences have a particular structure.[102] On this view, there are significant instrumental linkages between certain emotions and forms of mental structure.

However, despite the (often implicit) claim that the depressive position is a moral state, or constitutes a moral advance, some Kleinians suggest that the effects of this

[100] "…the move from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position is envisaged not only as a normal maturational step but as a moral improvement" (Harcourt, Unpublished, p.12) See the rest of the paper for more evidence that the depressive position is regarded as an ethical achievement, and some discussion of the tensions between this claim and various claims about its status as a maturational stage. Cf. Holmes, 1996.

[101] Notice how this account of responsibility resembles Harry Frankfurt's conception of second-order desires. See, for example, "Freedom of the will and the concept of a person" in Frankfurt, 1988.

[102] Moreover, this underlying disposition may be linked to the causal features of a particular phase of development.

state, and potentially the implications for one's moral character, are not predictable. As Caper says,

> [If] the purpose of psychoanalysis is only to help the patient integrate split-off parts of his personality, … it is not the business of analysis to deliberately bring about the predominance of one or another part of the patient that the analyst regards as healthy. *Success in analysis is measured by the degree of integration, not by the degree to which the patient approximates a standard of normality*. (1999, p.28 italics added)

The normative concepts, here, are 'normality' and 'health' but the same could be said for ethical development (recall Caper's claim about integration, above, "no one can really predict beforehand what it will *mean* to the patient if one succeeds in one's interpretive attempts to help him integrate split-off parts of his personality"). On Caper's Character Conception, we can evaluate the extent to which the parts of one's mind are integrated into one's character, but that integration has an uncertain relationship to virtue and vice. Understood in this way, the Character Conception is morally neutral.

Thus we have two thoughts that are hard to reconcile: first, that the depressive position is ethically good, and secondly, that its consequences are ethically neutral.[103] One way of relating them is to weaken the first claim. One might conceive of the depressive position as a precondition for later moral development, whilst not being sufficient for virtue. This matter is redundant, however, if there are independent reasons to think the depressive position is not a viable interpretation of what integration involves. In the next chapter I will be discussing the moral status of integration, but before then it is important to consider objections which appear to undermine the status of the depressive position as a Character Conception interpretation of integration.

So is the depressive position a satisfactory alternative interpretation of integration as an ideal of mental structure? In the next section I present two sets of considerations designed to show that it is not, but which prove ineffective; in the following section I present what I hope is a better reason for the same conclusion.

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[103] The latter may be the product of psychoanalytical reluctance to articulate their views in explicitly ethical terms. cf. Harcourt, 2013.

First, the depressive position is too complex and fragile to be the direct object of one's efforts, or something one *aims* to bring about. Secondly, the depressive position is liable to occupy an inflexible position in mental life, with bad consequences.

To see the force of the first worry, compare the depressive position to other fragile states of mind. It is commonly thought that actively trying to be modest, magnanimous, or eccentric prevents one from truly possessing those properties.[104] Analogously, the depressive position, with its constituent sensitivity to emotional life and sense of responsibility, may be regarded in the same way: practical activity explicitly aimed at bringing this state about undermines one's ability to achieve the state, because people in the depressive position would not think in that way.

This objection, however, cannot show that the depressive position is not an ideal of mental organization, as the analogy with modesty or magnanimity shows. Even if explicit practical reflection under those descriptions is self-defeating, modesty or magnanimity are not thereby compromised as ideals. Though one cannot aim at them directly, there is a difference between *aiming* at an end, and *aspiring* to an end. One can legitimately aspire to be modest. This aspiration is not entwined with one's practical reflection and motivations to a degree that invalidates any resultant apparent modesty. One can think about the depressive position in a similar way: although it may be self-defeating to aim at it, one can still aspire to be in it.

The second worry is that if one thinks of the depressive position as an ideal of mental organisation, it may come to occupy an inflexible role in one's mind. The depressive position is a theoretical concept, thus if one tries to attain this state under the description 'the depressive position' one is already being influenced, and potentially seduced, by a body of theory. One could draw an analogy with the self-

[104] See, for example: "part of [someone's] magnanimity consists in the fact that he does not ["think of his action in this way at all"]. He might think of his actions as perfectly ordinary, or not think of his action in any laudatory way. He simply acts magnanimously, that is all" (Phillips, 1992, p.275 as cited in Skillen, 1995, p.152.) Also see the debate about whether modesty requires a person to be ignorant of their abilities, including: Brennan, 2007; Driver, 1989; Driver, 1999; and Flanagan, 1990.

undermining resistances that are often visible in psychoanalytic patients who engage with psychoanalysis in a theoretical way. Freud was wary of this issue:

> One must be especially unyielding about obedience to that [fundamental rule of psychoanalysis to communicate what comes to mind without selection, hesitation, or logical thought] with patients who practice the art of sheering off into intellectual discussion during their treatment, who speculate a great deal and often very wisely about their condition *and in that way avoid doing anything to overcome it.* (Freud, 2001(a), p.119, italics added)

In these analyses, a patient's propositional knowledge prevents them from experiencing their own resistances to treatment, and their inhibited free-associations. Similarly, one might argue that the theoretical character of the depressive position means it cannot feature in one's motivational reasoning without similar practical inhibitions.

But as with the first worry, this second set of concerns does not displace the depressive position as a potential interpretation of integration as an ideal of mental structure. They merely caution us about the pitfalls of relating to an ideal in the wrong way, and the need to carefully distinguish between aiming after an ideal, and aspiring to be described in terms of one.

Leaving the Depressive Position

Though the concerns I described in the last section are not sufficient to reject the depressive position as an alternative interpretation of integration, there are nonetheless several reasons to think the depressive position falters in this respect.

Any revised conception of what integration involves must remain sufficiently general in describing an ideal of mental structure. In this section I argue that the depressive position is not sufficiently general ideal. My argument draws on the idea that, "paranoid schizoid pleasures can be considerable, and productive" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p.280). Not only is leaving the depressive position desirable and useful in some contexts: these departures can be appropriate insofar as one who is in such a state is sensitive to the values that bear on their agential context (compare the appropriateness of ambivalence in the face of a difficult decision).

First, let's focus on the pleasures of leaving the depressive position. 'Going to bits' or 'losing oneself' can be fun. People actively desire these experiences in certain contexts. For example, occasional insensitivity features at the heart of many human activities, from the immersion in a crowd, watching a sentimental film, reading a horror story, to more localised forms of singleminded focus, whether in consensual sexual activity, comedic contexts, or simple silliness. Often, people desire momentary relief from their realistic depressive anxieties, or from being attentive to the demands on action and attention presented by other people, or their life situation. They go out and get drunk, take drugs, go for a run, or get swept up in other forms of mindlessness. This desire for relief may be involuntary, and akin to ordinary non-pathological processes such as tiredness. Either way, I assume that such temporary forms of mindlessness – including simple fun - are a valuable component of a good life, and any mental ideal that remains in tension with this fact is thereby less plausible as a consequence.

Secondly, even if one does not enjoy departing the depressive position, there are contexts where this is useful. For example, difficult tasks may be easier to complete if one splits off painful emotions, or ignores the challenging aspects of one's actions. One's capacity to handle emergencies, or perform difficult emotional labour like caregiving, could be enhanced by not being in the depressive position (Foster, 2001). More complex goals, such as challenging patriarchal social norms, are well served by the momentary deployment of anger and frustration. Such anger is frequently an appropriate response to entrenched oppression, or has tactical value.[105] Thus 'going to bits' with rage, or the momentary refusal to seek 'balance' or 'be nice', can serve a vital role in confronting power and in jolting others into an awareness of their oppression.[106]

One might object that although deviating from the depressive position is

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[105] Even Martha Nussbaum, who argues anger is normatively bad, has space for the value of "transitional anger" which moves people to address perceived slights in a more positive way (Nussbaum, *John Locke Lectures*, Oxford, June 2014).

[106] "One way of grasping the basis for embittered community is to see it as the political solidarity of the paranoid schizoid. And that's not a bad thing. Regression to infantile intensities and demands can be vitalizing, can help us throw off the moribund maturities demanded by conventional social forms. Such regressions can operate as queer temporalities of anti-development and refusals of normative, Oedipal maturity." (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p.280)

pleasurable or instrumentally useful, these properties of such deviations do not mean they are ethically appropriate and that these deviations should (ideally) be avoided. This objection fails for several reasons.

First, it is important to note that one often leaves the depressive position when coping with threats to the things one values. One's relationships with other people and valued commitments would suffer if one were not permitted to cope in this way. Thus if leaving the depressive position aids one in coping, it is of instrumental value within one's life.

Secondly, the objection rests on the implicit thought that one has to be sensitive and tolerant all the time. But it is not clear this premise is correct. To see this, consider an analogy with an argument about ethical sensitivity. Saul Smilansky argues that there are ethical dangers involved in urging too much ethical sensitivity, and that "the normative, the psychological and the pragmatic pictures with respect to ethical sensitivity are all far more complex than is commonly realized" (1996, p.14).

One of Smilansky's reasons concerns ethical perception. He worries that "if one pays attention to too much that is wrong or bad, one's capacity for focusing on those wrong or bad things which are 'really important' can significantly diminish" (Ibid.). This claim can be understood causally: one's capacity to be ethically discriminating is limited, thus if one tries to be discriminating all the time, one will tire and be unable to exercise this capacity. I think this causal claim is somewhat exaggerated; it is also in tension those who emphasize the importance of description as an ethical task and an ongoing aspect of ethical life.

But one can also understand Smilansky's claim *qualitatively*: that one is mistaken to attend to everything, however minor its ethical importance; instead one should only attend to things that matter to a significant extent. Of course, both the causal and qualitative readings can be in play at once.

One can approach deviations from the depressive position in a similar way. There are two ways in which they are appropriate. First, these deviations may simply lack ethical consequences, in which case one should not think of them as a form of ethical failure. Secondly, such deviations may be forms of local ethical insensitivity, but if Smilansky is right, these insensitivities may be harmless, or even beneficial all things considered.

Moving away from the depressive position at times may refresh one's capacity to be tolerant, a thought that is akin to the causal reading of Smilansky's concern above. At the very least, these movements may lead one to notice and appreciate the distinctive characteristics of the depressive position. One learns to appreciate the nature of a state of mind, partly by experiencing its absence even if its absence is independently enjoyable or helpful, just as one's experience of adventure reinforces one's understanding and value of security, and vice versa.

Moreover, the ability to leave the depressive position, whilst recognizing one is doing this, indicates that one can track what is of value in one's life. Our reaction to the contrary state of affairs evidences this. Consider, a person who is habitually reluctant to get angry or to be silly, and who justifies their reluctance in reference to an ideal of unbroken sensitivity. This person, far from having a nuanced and ethically admirable conception of mental life, seems beholden to an impoverishing ideal which will negatively shape their life.

I have argued that deviations from the depressive position are often, but not always, desirable, useful, and ethically appropriate. This normative claim is supported by empirical observations that the depressive position is not a stable state that one can easily remain in. Margot Waddell, for example, stresses that:

> [the] idea of ever-shifting mental states, considered both by Klein and by Bion, offers an account of growth and development *in which a number of different kinds of oscillation are always present*. There is a constant interplay, for example, between the states of mind which generally characterise each developmental phase. But *within each phase there is also an interplay between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions*. (2002, pp.8-9, italics added)

More prosaically: one's state of mind changes; one moment one may be tolerant and sensitive, the next one may feel anxious, paranoid, or under attack. These changes are themselves subject to various patterns throughout life. A relationship may generate less tolerant thinking; one may struggle as one transitions through puberty; or as one confronts the death of a partner. Waddell's observation supports the idea is that it is a mistake to regard the depressive position as the kind of state that constitutes a stable goal to aspire to.

At this point, one might object that the above arguments combined with these empirical descriptions of mental life not only motivate the rejection of the depressive position as an alternative interpretation of integration as an ideal of mental organization, but also show that any hope of building a new Character Conception of integration is dead in the water.

But that is not so. The arguments above do not show the depressive position is not an ideal; it is just that, because it can be contextually appropriate to leave it, it is not a sufficiently general ideal to serve as an alternative interpretation of integration as an ideal of mental organization.

Despite this, the depressive position is clearly a good state of mind in many instances, and a localized ideal mental state to aspire towards. In many situations it is good to be tolerant, sensitive, and appreciative of both the good and bad properties of other people. This state of mind underpins important moral emotions, and helps one think complexly and creatively through symbolization, play, and association.

The depressive position is a state people can aspire to *tend* towards. It might be compared to a notion like 'being free of anger.' Broadly speaking, one desires to be free of anger, and good lives lack abundant anger, thus a life ideal is the absence of anger. However, it is also seems true that anger is often appropriate: being angry is a moral emotion that manifests one's good character.[107] One can reconcile these two claims by acknowledging that one tends towards the ideal. The absence of anger is an ideal which occupies a flexible place in one's mental life: *generally* speaking, one does not want to be angry, *particularly* speaking, one is aware that often one will have to be angry and that it is proper to be so.[108] Similarly, although it may be good to tend towards the depressive position, there will be times when it

[107] Martha Nussbaum, mentioned in a note above, would deny this view.

[108] One may question the suitability of this analogy. They may think its good to avoid anger because a life in which anger is not required is independently going to be better than one in which it is required as an appropriate moral emotion. On this line of thought, the absence of anger is an ideal because of its relation to other goods. Similar considerations may apply to the depressive position, that is, being able to be in the depressive position is itself conditional on one's life going reasonably well. Yet there are still open questions about both the value of being free of anger and of being in the depressive position, irrespective of their relationship to further goods.

is appropriate to enter other mental positions. As a consequence, the depressive position is subordinate to an ideal governing the *movement between* mental positions: a more general and distinct ideal that regulates one's bearing to the depressive position.

Integration as a Capacity

Waddell emphasised the extent to which one's mental life is subject to oscillating patterns of experience.[109] This reflects the character of ordinary life. It is not unusual to one day feel tolerant, capable, resilient and sensitive; and on another day feel polarised, pressured, and that the world seems black and white.

There is a complexity to mental life that shapes one's experience of one's environment and the people one encounters within it. These shifts differ in terms of their normative status. At times the absence of sensitivity is a gross failure of character, at other times, it is a permissible, even enjoyable, aspect of life.

Recognition of these facts motivates the thought that one requires a capacity to navigate one's way between the changes in one's mental life in the right way; that the shifting landscapes of mental life, and the potential changes to mental organisation, are not phenomena one ought to remain passive about.

My main contention is that integration can be interpreted as this capacity to navigate one's mental life. In broad outline, this thought has antecedents within the Kleinian tradition. Kleinian psychoanalysts have often understood mental development in terms of one's ability to develop a new capacity, or deepen an existing one. Howard Levine, for example, lists as a "developmental achievement":

[109] "*The depressive position never fully supersedes the paranoid-schizoid position*; the integration achieved is never complete and defences against the depressive conflict bring about regression to paranoid-schizoid phenomena, so that *the individual at all times may oscillate between the two*." (Segal, 1973, p.ix, italics added)

> *the capacity* to accept frustration, uncertainty, mortality, the fallibility of one's self and one's objects, and other stark limitations of reality. (2011, p.191 italics added)[110]

One might think that this notion of integration is just the capacity to get oneself into the depressive position. Waddell, for example, describes Klein's conception of maturity "as an increased capacity to live in the depressive position" (2002, p.196). If Waddell's suggestion is simply that the longer one remains in the depressive position, the better, then it should be rejected for the reasons outlined earlier; namely, it is blind to the appropriateness and desirability of being in other 'positions'. But even if she is not, even if she is describing the capacity to get into the depressive position as a remedial ability, I still reject this capacity as an interpretation of an ideal of integration, because it presents the depressive position as the default state of mind that one may deviate from, but which one ought to be able to get back to. But I've already argued that one's deviations from this state may be positively desirable and beneficial.

My own interpretation of integration as a capacity is informed by two features of the Kleinian understanding of mental life: first, the fact that tolerance is a vital component of the depressive position and secondly, the background acknowledgment that mental life is subject to sweeping oscillations in the way our experiences are patterned.

Thus, as I propose we understand it, the capacity for integration has two components. First, being integrated involves the ability to experience and tolerate difficult mental states (including emotions, but not only these). This ability, akin to Levine's "developmental achievement" above, also encompasses one's ability to experience and tolerate structurally difficult arrangements of mental states, as in the different forms of ambivalence I have distinguished. As I have already intimated, here 'difficult' should not be identified with 'painful'. Excitement, for example, may be a difficult state for one to experience and tolerate, even if such a state is typically thought of as positive. (Recall the example, in chapter five, of a person whose ability to experience excitement is inhibited when they are under the parental gaze.) This tolerance is in tension with the defensive impulses that

[110] Confusingly, some Kleinians like Levine also label this capacity, "the depressive position". I have surpressed this aspect of their thinking to avoid confusion, and to stress the prevailing conception of the depressive position as a form of mental organisation at a time.

underpin phenomena like projective identification. It is akin to what Peter Fonagy and others call one's "reflective function" (cf. 2002), a notion that has been described as one's

> non-defensive willingness to engage emotionally, to make meaning of feelings and internal experiences without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down. The complex processing and integrating that is inherent in high reflective functioning bespeaks emotional richness and depth, and a capacity to appreciate and experience the dynamics of an internal and interpersonal emotional life. (Slade, 2005, p.271)

Secondly, a person who is integrated in the sense I am proposing has the ability to navigate the changes between ways their mind is organised in particular contexts. One ought not to be passive in the face of these potential changes. This second component distinguishes the integration capacity as I understand it from the claim that to be integrated just is to be in the depressive position, or that to be integrated is to have the ability to get into that position.

These two components may appear to be distinct abilities, but they relate like the components of skills. A skill like playing the piano will have separable components, but these components weave into single abilities (cf. Annas, 2011, chapter one). One can be better or worse at playing the piano even if this ability can be decomposed into separable elements. The components of integration, understood as a capacity, are woven together in a similar way.

The second component of the integration capacity is dependent on the first. If one cannot tolerate difficult aspects of one's mind, or directly experience difficult forms of mental organization like ambivalence to begin with, then one is not in a position to adopt an active stance towards one's broader structure of mind, in relation to one's situation. This inability is problematic insofar as one may fail to be sensitive to what kinds of mental organisation are permissible given one's context. One may remain uptight and unable to tolerate difficult, even conflicting, emotions, for example, in a context where such an experience is ordinary and expected. This may be a context like that of Captain Vere's, where affective conflict manifests his good character under duress, or that of Kate, whose decisiveness in ending her marriage was accompanied by a range of emotions over time.

However, one's experience may assume the opposite form: one languishes in a conflicted state of mind when one should be decisive, or where continuing to 'see all sides' of an issue that demands action is indicative of bad character. This explains the need for the second aspect of the capacity, that is, the ability to recognise when one can give in to the pressures and motivations that generate failures of sensitivity. There are many such forms of pressure in life, from the circumstantial features faced by Agamemnon, to the grip of social norms, through to non-rational desires (ranging from tiredness, through to the more distorted, neurotic, structures of desire witnessed in Ms A.), and a range of other issues. One whose life is shaped by a rigid ideal of tolerance or equanimity (perhaps a caricature of stoicism), or an over-theorised adherence to a psychoanalytic ideal like the depressive position, will be inhibited in one's experience of pleasurable states, and more troublingly, will live an impoverished and inflexible life; a life that lacks external stability, to use the term I coined in chapter three.

One might question the extent to which the integration capacity, as I have described it, falls under one's rational purview. In suggesting that one ought to avoid passivity in the face of one's mental life, and the changes to the organisation of that life, I may be read as denying, for example, the non-rational aspects of one's ability to tolerate emotions. Alternatively, one might think that the ability to tolerate difficult mental experiences is clearly non-rational, whereas the ability to navigate between states of mind, in accordance with a conception of what is contextually appropriate, is a rational ability – something like practical wisdom. Or, one might think that the whole capacity is non-rational, that one's thoughts about one's mind are irrelevant, and that what matters is simply that one's mind is organised in the right way over time; something that may arise without any developed rational abilities at all. This latter view is especially appealing to those who want to argue that integration, as I understand it, can thus be possessed by children.

My view is that these arguments would be mistaken. Both aspects of the integration capacity as I envisage it, have both rational and non-rational features. To a large extent, one's ability to tolerate difficult experiences and emotions, think unpleasant thoughts, and withstand conflicts and ambivalence, is a non-rational ability, one laid down throughout early development. However, it would also be a mistake to think one cannot rationally engage with one's mental life, in a manner that improves with practice. One's ability to withstand and confront anxiety, or tensions between points of view, is certainly something that improves and matures with reflective engagement, especially with regards to one's ability to give narrative voice to one's mental life (reflexive function).

Similarly, one would be mistaken in thinking that one's ability to navigate between states of mind, and the ways they are structured, is a purely rational ability. This thought commits one to an overly cognitive conception of one's relationship to one's mind. It is not hard to imagine people who are sensitive when that is required, and also able to let go in various ways (i.e. they are not beholden to a rigid ideal of sensitivity), without ever thinking explicitly about the character of the structure of their mental states. However, this does not negate the importance and value of having the capacity to engage in reflection of this sort for counter-factually it is possible that contingency may threaten the hitherto non-rational organisation of one's mind, and one will need the resources to confront that change. In this sense, then, the rational aspect of the ability to not remain passive with respect to how one's mind is structured has value in a way similar to that of many other rational capabilities; namely, in allowing one to reflectively intervene, to shape and guide one's practical action and mental attitudes, in situations where one's pre-reflective abilities are challenged or fail. In chapter five, for example, I canvassed instances where people are episodically affectively ambivalent, i.e. the man involved in a bicycle crash, or Peter the man whose ambivalence about getting married resulted in projective identification and arguments with his fiancé. It is easy to imagine that both of these projective failures resulted from an episodic breakdown of their normal resilient non-rational sensitivity to their context. In such situations, one requires the ability to rationally evaluate one's state of mind in order to understand the inappropriateness of one's insensitive response.

One might object that the two facets of the integration capacity as I have described it - the ability to tolerate difficult states of mind, and the ability to avoid passivity in the face of one's mental organization in reference to the kind of agential context one is in - conflict with each other. This is not so. Although the second facet allows one to be intolerant of certain emotions or states if the context is suitable, the first facet doesn't say difficult states of mind *must always* be tolerated, just that one has to be able to. So there is no contradiction. Thus the integration capacity, as I understand it, might be thought of as a more complex and better-developed version of the tolerance described by Jonathan Lear.

Finally, one might call into question the extent to which the capacity I have described is really one of *integration* at all. After all, this capacity is compatible with the presence and experience of conflicts and ambivalence. One may also argue that the two constituent aspects of this capacity, although valuable, bear no resemblance to the notion of integration with which we began, in chapter one. This point overlooks the extent to which the capacity ensures that one does not split off parts of one's mind because one cannot tolerate their presence. It is a Character Conception of integration in which one's mental life is unified, even if its constituent states are in tension.

Conclusion

I have salvaged integration as an ideal by considering it as a capacity. This capacity is legitimately called integration because, though it is (and is designed to be) consistent with conflict and ambivalence, it concerns the way that various aspects of one's mind relate to oneself. It is contrasted with disintegration, the condition of people who may not experience conflicts because they have projected away intolerable aspects of their mental life, for example, often manifesting insensitivity as a consequence. The normative status of this capacity is unclear, however, and one can rightly question its relationship to moral goodness, a question I turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

Integration and Virtue

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued for a reinterpretation of integration to salvage the notion as an ideal. Integration, I suggested, can be regarded as a complex capacity with two facets: first, an ability to tolerate difficult states of mind (which presupposes one can experience them), and secondly, an ability to navigate one's changing mental positions, in the sense I explained, in accordance with their contextual appropriateness. On this view, a disintegrated person remains passive in the face of their mental life, out of an inability to tolerate difficult states of mind, and to resist (when appropriate) mechanisms like projective identification. I termed this conception of integration a Character Conception of integration, to contrast it with the Parts Conception of integration outlined in chapter one.

Is Integration a Virtue?

Integration, according to this new conception, appears to be a valuable capacity. Since its absence, disintegration, undermines one's reflective sensitivity to one's mental life and impairs one's agency, in some sense it is surely a personal excellence. Moreover, since it is closely related to one's ability to experience certain emotions, to one's motivational outlook, and to sensitivity to relevant features of one's context, it is at least *connected* to one's moral character. Since virtues are a familiar kind of personal excellence, it is therefore natural to ask whether integration is simply a virtue.

Over the course of my argument so far, I have drawn on Kleinian thought in several places. This influence has informed a moral psychology which contrasts with both a Platonic and an Aristotelian one. Both Plato and Aristotle arrive at ideals of mental organisation as a result of their views about the disharmonious mind, i.e. in broad terms, both think conflict or divisions between rational and affective life (broadly construed), are harmful in all cases. Aristotle, for instance, articulates this idea in vivid terms, describing "bad people" as "in internal conflict" and the souls of "wicked people" as "in a state of civil strife" which will "tear them apart" (2002, 1166b, later references are to this volume by Bekker number). For both, a state of psychological harmony is necessary, and appears sufficient, for virtue.

Contrastingly, the Kleinian conception of mental life makes room for conflict and ambivalence. Such conflicts and ambivalence are thought to be pervasive, important for development, and only contingently harmful. This is a view I have developed in previous chapters, and which informed my reinterpretation of integration. Given such a moral psychology, one would expect there to be a much less straightforward relationship between one's account of ideal mental organization and one's account of virtue. For example, is ideal mental organization sufficient, or even necessary, for virtue? Perhaps one could have an ideally organized mind, or possess the integration capacity as I described it, and yet fail to live virtuously, like a car with a gleaming and well-functioning engine that cannot move.

One might think, however, that I have already argued that my newly interpreted capacity of integration is a moral virtue, as opposed to some other kind of personal excellence. In chapter six, I suggested that people who can tolerate ambivalence or conflicts could thereby manifest good character. My argument may appear to commit me to the view that integration is a moral virtue, once reinterpreted, because integration is compatible with ambivalence and conflict. Yet the mere recognition that occasional ambivalence or conflict manifests good character, in some sense, is neither sufficient to suggest that integration is a moral virtue or to specify what kind of virtue it is. One faces a range of options. First, is integration an Aristotelian virtue, like courage, under another name? Secondly, is integration a new virtue of an Aristotelian type? Thirdly, if one of the above two options does not capture the status of integration, one can question whether it relates to moral goodness in any straightforward way at all. Is integration a personal excellence with unclear relationships to moral goodness, such as creativity, or a more important necessary condition for the practice of virtue?

I shall start by questioning whether the integration capacity is a virtue of the Aristotelian type. For Aristotle, virtues of character are stable dispositions of character that are capable of heeding reason (1103a). One has the capacity to acquire virtues, but one must be habituated into having them. A person's actions are virtuous if they act "first, with knowledge, secondly, from rational choice, and rational choice of the actions for their own sake, and, thirdly, from a firm and unshakable character" (1105a). Virtuous dispositions range over emotions and action.[111] Virtuous actions are those that, in the context, are situated between contrasting extremes of vice, as judged by reason (1107a). All the virtues of character "involve practical wisdom" (not simply states that are, contingently "in accordance with" practical wisdom).[112] Thus as one's practical wisdom develops, so will one's virtuous dispositions. Finally, on Aristotle's conception of virtue, virtuous actions are undertaken for the sake of the fine or noble (*kalon*).

Let us suppose that integration is an Aristotelian-type virtue. (It clearly is not a virtue on Aristotle's own list, but it might fit his *concept* of a virtue nonetheless.) If it were, then one who is integrated would have a complex disposition to act, think, and feel in a patterned and stable manner, in accordance with reason, for the sake of the fine. In this specific case of integration, one would tolerate difficult states of mind and not defensively split them off, and one would resist languishing in inappropriate mental positions (to use the Kleinian term).

However, there are some initial reasons to doubt that integration is a virtue of an Aristotelian kind. One might wonder, for example, what the virtue of integration, supposing it is one, is for, i.e. what its characteristic end is. Many Aristotelian virtues are described in terms of a particular domain of concern, often known as the 'field' of a virtue. The notion of a virtue's field helps one distinguish the virtues and explain their value. Aristotle's contested virtue of magnificence, to take one example, governs the distribution of significant wealth.[113] Whereas the virtue of temperance ranges over one's appetites as they relate to one's agency (appetite, or non-rational desire, is a form of mental pressure that one must develop traits to resist).

[111] "For example, fear, confidence, appetite, anger, pity, and in general pleasure and pain can be experienced too much or too little, and in both ways not well. But to have them at the right time, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the mean and best; and this is the business of virtue." (1106b)
[112] See *Nicomachean Ethics,* VI, Chapter 13.
[113] cf. Christine Swanton, who emphasizes "the field of a virtue may also be outside the agent, for example friends and potential friends are the field of the virtue of friendship, dangerous situations and potentially dangerous situations at least part of the field of courage as a general virtue, and so on." (Swanton, 2011, pp.288-9)

Integration resembles virtues like temperance, insofar as it seems self-directed, but it also involves an other-directed awareness of one's agential context and the people within that context. It is hard to specify a clear domain that helps one describe integration. So one should hesitate to say that integration is an Aristotelian-type virtue. This is true even if one clearly distinguishes between virtues that respond to certain agential constraints, such as temperance, and those other Aristotelian virtues, like magnificence, which seem oriented towards the social task of distributing wealth. There is no clear social analogue in the case of integration.

Moreover, the integration capacity does not seem to motivate people in characteristic ways. Integrated people do not perform a range of characteristic actions, or manifest characteristic emotions. At most, possession of the capacity may give a meta-organisation to one's affective life that influences the adverbial nature of one's actions. Thus the lack of a clear field, and apparently weak relationship between integration and action, may seem sufficient to conclude that it is a not an Aristotelian-type virtue.

At this point, one might respond in several ways. First, one might look for other Aristotelian virtues that also lack a field, and seem loosely related to action, and question whether integration is akin to, or a variant of, such virtues. Secondly, one can ask whether there are other conceptions of virtue, other than that developed by Aristotle, which may make room for the integration capacity.

Integration and Courage

One might think that integration resembles a virtue that gets in to almost any catalogue: courage. There are several reasons why this comparison seems apt. First, the field of the virtue of courage is very diverse. Although courage is typically associated with the control and confrontation of fear, the emotion of fear manifests in many ways (as I made clear in discussing David Pugmire's arguments about ambivalence). Secondly, courage appears to bear a loose connection to motivation and action. Evidently people act courageously, but courageous people are rarely motivated by any explicit reflection about courage itself. If courage has these features, and remains an Aristotelian virtue, then perhaps integration can be considered in the same way.

There seems in any case to be a closer connection between the integration capacity and courage. This comparison is particularly strong if one heeds the contemporary ways courage is understood. Nowadays one might be described as courageous when confronting difficulties with one's health, or in regulating one's anxiety, or in confronting death. People ascribe the virtue to those whose actions may be limited or ordinary, in recognition of the manner in which they act under circumstances that are regarded as warranting recognition due to the forms of pressure they create: forms of pressure that may not have been recognized as such when Aristotle was writing, when courage was more of a martial virtue. The contemporary conception of courage often associates the virtue with truth, and the confrontation of impulses to evade truths. This association was explicit in Freud's conception of what psychoanalysis demands of a patient:

> …the great ethical element in psychoanalytic work is truth and again truth and this should suffice for most people. Courage and truth are of what they are [sic] mostly deficient. (As cited in Hale, 1971, p.171)

With this in mind, it is easy to think that integration might simply be a form of courage; namely the courage to face the pressures that may prevent one from undergoing one's own states of mind. Or, even if one does not identify integration and courage, one might think integration is a hitherto unrecognized courage-like virtue.

I will explore two facets of the potential relationship between integration and courage. Courage is often thought of as an executive virtue, i.e. a virtue that aids one in the exercise of one's other virtues. Thus I will consider the respects in which integration might function in a similar manner. But if integration is similar to an executive trait, one needs to understand why the trait is needed. What kinds of pressure generate the need for the trait to function as an executive capacity? Moreover, what kind of response to this pressure does the integration capacity provide?

In addressing these questions, I am able to develop my conception of what integration involves before I turn to ask whether integration is a moral virtue. It is possible that the trait plays an executive role in one's mind, but without it being a moral virtue. One key question to ask, then, is whether the integration capacity also enables one to act viciously.

Integration, Courage, and Executive Virtues

One might associate courage and integration because one thinks integration, like courage, plays an executive role in one's mind; that the capacity is required if one is to exercise other moral virtues. As Bernard Williams describes them,

> 'executive' virtues…do not themselves yield a characteristic motive, but are necessary for that relation to oneself and the world which enables one to act from desirable motives in desirable ways – the type that includes courage and self-control. (Williams, 1981(a), p.49)[114]

The general trend of my prior argument, especially in chapter six, suggested that integrated people can experience the states of mind required to manifest virtue in difficult contexts, perhaps contexts where conflicts or ambivalence are unavoidable if one is properly sensitive to the values that bear on one's situation (as in Captain Vere's case). Thus integration looks like it plays an executive function in one to manifest these states of mind, both during action and in response to past actions. In this sense, integration can seem analogous to courage, because it enables one to respond to pressures (as yet unspecified) that would otherwise interfere with being virtuous. If one possesses the capacity, one's actions are likely to be given a certain shape, even if there is no singular class of reasons for which one acts 'to be integrated'.

However, one might object that courage is the wrong analogue for integration. A key aspect of my revised understanding of what integration involved was that it is a Character Conception. Advocates of Character Conceptions of integration emphasise the importance of the relationship between one's states of mind and oneself, as opposed to the relationship between the states themselves. Thus one might argue that any account of the role played by the integration capacity in one's mind must heed its status as a Character Conception, and that the comparison with courage is blind to this, because it makes no reference to the relation between one's states and oneself, instead seeing the trait as a means to one's

[114] In this sense, virtues like courage might be thought of as a form of "secondary motive", which Phillip Stratton-Lake describes as "a regulative notion governing the type of acts the agent will do (from some primary motive)" (2000, p.54 Stratton-Lake draws on Baron, 1995 and Herman, 1993).

exercise of other traits, whatever they are, when afraid. Consequently, one might instead compare integration with integrity. Like courage, integrity is often thought to play an executive role in one's mind. Bernard Williams describes integrity in the following way:

> 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. (1981(b), p.49)

One might think integration functions like integrity by enabling one to act on the basis of features of one's mental life that are tolerated and so not split off, as well as ensuring one is not reflectively passive in the face of one's changing mental positions.

Remember, however, that the integration capacity not only enables one to act from motives that are 'deeply [one's own]', but also on motives which have not necessarily been rationally endorsed at all, because this is perfectly fine in situations where one is able to 'go to bits' or experience momentary mindlessness.[115] Thus the comparison with integrity also founders.

Perhaps one can address the initial concern with the comparison with courage, by attending to the latter in more detail. Christine Swanton distinguishes between the way one describes virtues in "basic" terms (courage) and the ways in which these virtues can be "differentiated" when they arise in particular societies or in relation to certain roles (courage in military life) (2011, p.289). One may think that integration is a differentiated version of courage, a form of the virtue that is specified in relation to a particular social or mental pressure.

This view will resonate with those who think that virtues are "corrective" - that virtues are called for "at a point at which there is some temptation to be resisted or deficiency of motivation to be made good" (Foot 1978, p.8). This thought can be developed in two directions. First, one might think that integration is a virtue for some people because of their specifically difficult life situations. Secondly, one

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[115] Incidentally, by appealing to integration one might be able to accommodate whims, which do seem to be part of one's own mind even if they are not rationally endorsed. (cf. Lippert-Rasmussen's discussion of whims in his 2003 article.)

might think integration is a virtue because of underlying difficulties in human life. I will set aside the former view, as it would lack the generality to suggest that integration is a virtue of interest to everyone, which is the conjecture I am entertaining.

The more plausible view is that all lives require integration as a corrective virtue in general, and that this is a differentiated form of courage in particular. The natural question to ask is what the integration capacity corrects. The underlying reason why integration is needed, as a trait, cannot be too devastating. If integration were impossible due to facts about human nature, for instance, then the capacity would have no traction as a personal excellence.[116] Moreover, one might think that integration must respond to a tension or deficiency that makes sense of the capacity understood as bearing on the structural organisation of one's mental states to oneself.

In a discussion of Nietzsche and virtue ethics, Christine Swanton suggests that an Aristotelian conception of virtue has room for a somewhat broader virtue than courage,

> …a virtue concerned with an excellent attitude towards suffering, and the excellent handling of suffering. Surprisingly we do not (I think) have a name for such a virtue—the nearest perhaps is stoicism. (2006, p.182)

Swanton's stoicism describes a virtue that confronts suffering. I have described the integration capacity as partly involving the toleration of difficult mental states, or the difficult organization of states in one's mind when one is conflicted or ambivalent. Because integration involves tolerance of this kind, one might argue that it is a virtue akin to, or even identical with, Swanton's hitherto unnamed virtue of stoicism. (Swanton would distinguish this individual virtue from ancient Stoic conceptions of moral character, but this need not concern us here.)

Yet this comparison between integration and Swanton's virtue of stoicism is also implausible. The aspect of the integration capacity which enables one to tolerate difficult states of mind is not necessary solely in order to confront suffering. In the

[116] Christine Swanton suggests that some people read Nietzsche as arguing humans are radically convalescent. Such a view may motivate the need for integration, but it also makes integration seem pointless. (Swanton, 2006, p.176).

course of an ordinary good life one has to come to tolerate many difficult and challenging states that are typically understood to be importantly pleasurable and fulfilling, such as excitement, love, sexual desire, and so on. On my reinterpreted conception of what integration involves, one might be disintegrated because one languishes in a pleasurable and exciting state of mindlessness. More prosaically, one also has to tolerate many neutral states, such as boredom and frustration, which it would be strained to describe as forms of suffering, even if one must learn to tolerate being bored.

One might modify the way one appeals to Swanton's virtue of stoicism, and describe the capacity of integration as an excellence in reflectively confronting, and trying to actively address mental states, whatever they are, that are hard to tolerate and reflectively confront. This virtue would have a similar character to what Swanton describes as stoicism, without the explicit focus on suffering. It would also appeal to those, like Freud, who thought that courage or a similar virtue is required if one is to confront one's mental life in an excellent way, and it resonates with Jonathan Lear's suggestion that:

> From a psychoanalytic perspective, human life is lived under conditions of tension. It is a condition of life that there is always too much tension for the mind fully to metabolize. This is a structural point: living with this "too much" is what life is. (2001, pp.134-5)

One this line of thought, the integration capacity responds, as a corrective virtue, to a general structural tension, one which often prevents one from tolerating states of mind (and thus exposes one to defence mechanisms like projective identification). On this view, integration responds to a more general pressure than the presence of fear.

In recognition of this fact, one might argue that integration is not best thought of as a differentiated form of courage at all, but that courage is better understood as a differentiated form of integration. In other words, courage is a trait which responds to *one* kind of pressure which might prevent one from tolerating states of mind that are required for virtuous action. If this were plausible, one would be able to conceive of integration as a virtue, albeit a hitherto unnamed one, without concern that it seems to respond to a broader kind of pressure than mere fear.

The prior suggestion leaves two questions unanswered. First, what is involved in saying that integration 'responds' to hard to tolerate states of mind? Secondly, if integration is thought of as a trait that plays an executive role in combatting pressures to be intolerant, is it a thereby a moral virtue? I turn to the first question in the next section, before proceeding to ask whether integration is compatible with viciousness. If it is compatible, then we have reason to doubt it is a moral virtue.

Integration, Stoicism, and Tolerance

It is important to distinguish between several ways one might understand the toleration internal to integration as I have defined the capacity. A person who possesses Swanton's virtue of stoicism, or something akin to it, is able to resist suffering or other pressures of which they are aware. This excellence contrasts with the situation of a person who is unable to tolerate their suffering. For example, one might be in pain but unable to tolerate the pain: one's experience infects one's life and impairs one's ability to concentrate, think, and act well.

Toleration can also be understood in a second way, however, which is required by the tolerance component of the integration capacity, as I described it in the previous chapter. On this understanding, one who is tolerant is able to experience their states of mind without impulsively seeking to reject them; they can recognize, and think about, their own mental life. For instance, one can confront one's jealousy over a trivial issue, or one's emotional conflict in grief, or become aware of one's rising anger in a context where one expected to be joyful, and so on. If one is intolerant, in this sense, then one may never come to consciously experience aspects of one's mental life even if they hold sway over one's motivations and shape one's actions. One might projectively identify intolerable features of one's mind onto other people, repress them from conscious experience altogether, or refrain from thinking about them and thus avoid having to give narrative expression to them.

Toleration understood in this second sense may occasionally require toleration in the first sense, as an instrumental component. But one would be mistaken in thinking that the ability to resist or brace oneself again pain, say, is necessary for one to tolerate in the second sense, that is, the ability to experience, and reflectively engage with, one's pain. Indeed, the attempt to brace oneself against a form of suffering often facilitates one's evasion of it in a more meaningful (and thus potentially devastating) form, as in the example of Agamemnon. If anything, toleration in the second sense is necessary for one to be well positioned to tolerate in the first sense.

This second kind of toleration is often discussed in psychoanalytic contexts, where one can closely observe those who struggle to tolerate aspects of their mind. Jonathan Lear writes of Freud's famous patients in connection to this second kind of toleration. First, he considers the Rat Man ('Mr R'):

> Mr R feels anxiety quickly and he tolerates it badly. As soon as he feels it, he rushes off in one direction or other. The hectic rushing from one task to the next expresses his anxiety – but it also keeps it at bay. It gives him something to do. The overall outcome of this rushing around is to inhibit the maturation of emotional life. (2005, p.39)

Mr R's actions allow him to manifest his anxiety and yet distance it from his conscious experience. If the excellence of tolerance was simply a matter of bearing one's anxiety, or bracing oneself against it, then Mr R's chaotic actions appear to constitute a successful response to his state of mind, because they prevent him from engaging with his anxiety directly. However, Mr R acts badly. His actions are unstable and subject to revision, he is not clearly oriented to practical ends, and he is unable to relate his actions to their motivational origins. Lear is right to think that the ability to merely *cope* with a state of mind like anxiety or jealousy, or a configuration of mind like ambivalence, can come to inhibit one's ability to address the sources of those experiences, and to further develop one's mental life. This thought does not require one to buy into vast amounts of theory, either. It is not uncommon to encounter people who have mastered the ability to not think about things. On the one hand, this ability allows them to brace themselves against many experiences, by simply blocking them from their reflective purview. On the other hand, however, such people are ultimately undone by their reflective inarticulateness.

In a different context, Lear considers Freud's discussion of a boy's invention of a game (described in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1969)) that involves the disappearance and re-appearance of objects. A theme in both Lear's and Freud's discussion is the way the objects in the boy's game facilitate his ability to cope with the absence and re-appearance of his mother, a new experience for the boy with a potentially traumatic and emotionally fraught character. Lear writes:

> [The boy] thus imagines her (as absent, as present) in her absence, and thus develops the capacity to tolerate her absence by reassuring himself imaginatively that she will return. This is the paradigm of the idea that it takes courage to face reality. In this sense, courage (or this prototype) seems to be a necessary constituent of mindedness itself. For we can think, in any realistic sense, only when we can think about absent objects. To be able to do this requires the emotional ability to tolerate absence [...] The child not only learns to tolerate his mother's absence; he learns that he *can* so tolerate her absence. Thus there forms a disposition to create such homeostatic systems through imaginative activity. This is an essential stage in the laying down of courage as a psychic disposition. (2001, pp.95-6)

In this passage Lear describes a rich kind of toleration, and he relates it to the virtue of courage. The rich notion of toleration is visible in the boy's imaginative and creative attempts to undergo his mother's absence, which – though the mother is indeed missed – need not involve much in the way of suffering. These attempts contrast with uncreative and static attempts to 'bear' his mothers absence (which do involve suffering, and the endurance of it), or to avoid thinking about this absence at all, perhaps through phantasy or distraction.

As Lear describes it, the boy's tolerance is an ability, not an episodic feature of his mental life. Presumably, this ability develops alongside his game, and can be successively deepened over time. This ability is regarded as a prototypical form of courage (an idea to which I return, below). The boy's tolerance eventually has a second-order aspect to it: he becomes aware of his ability to be tolerant. Finally, Lear suggests that the development of this ability is linked to the very emergence of other abilities to think about things in the world, especially absent objects. These features combine to characterize a rich capacity. As the boy becomes tolerant in this way, he is increasingly able to give expression to his anxiety in creative, imaginative, and symbolic ways. This is precisely what Mr R lacks. Mr R may be able to manage his anxiety, but he does so in a chaotic way, which impedes his relationships with others and obscures his ability to think about himself. However, Mr R cannot symbolically articulate his anxiety, he cannot think about it, talk about it, or locate it in a broader narrative. As such, any 'experience' he has of his anxiety is oblique, and not articulated under the description 'I am anxious' itself. Although the example of Mr R is a famous case, and is typically understood as an extreme, pathological, manifestation of this inability to tolerate aspects of mental life, the general capacity is visible in an array of more common situations, some of which, like the example of the bicycle crash, I have described in other chapters.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, toleration, understood in this second sense, has both rational and non-rational facets. One who tolerates in this way has to recognize and fully experience one's states of mind. This will involve the non-rational ability to manifest emotions in a non-defensive manner, but also various rational abilities which allow one to reflect and give narrative voice to one's mental states, as well as rationally resist, to the extent one can, various impulses to avoid confronting one's mental life. Both of Freud's studies, that of the boy and of the Rat Man, illustrate that the emergence of anxiety can be a severe barrier to toleration. Anxiety can be tolerated in the first sense, that is, endured. This helps us see how the two forms of toleration might relate. First, one becomes consciously aware of difficult aspects of one's mental life, in the face of pressures that render such awareness challenging; states like fear or jealousy. Secondly, this awareness may generate anxiety if one isn't already anxious. Thirdly, one is reflectively aware of this anxiety, one tolerates it, and one is able as a consequence to narrate one's anxiety in the context of the other difficult aspects of one's mind, such as an occurrent experience of jealousy. Fourthly, one may then endure one's anxiety, in the first sense of toleration, in order to enable one to further experience one's jealousy: to undergo the emotion and directly confront it and its origins.

I introduced the distinction between two kinds of tolerance, to suggest that the tolerance internal to integration is not that of mere endurance of suffering. Thus if integration is a corrective, executive virtue, it does not merely involve one's endurance of pressures that prevent one from confronting one's mind (and thus one's conflicts and ambivalence). Instead, the capacity involves a more sophisticated ability to metabolise and reflectively engage with one's mind, and one's changing mental positions. As my recourse to Lear's discussion of toleration suggests, the kind of toleration internal to the integration capacity is not solely a rational capacity. Instead, it underpins one's later ability to endure and reflectively process states of one's mind. This conclusion means that integration is not akin to Swanton's virtue of stoicism.

So far, I have argued that the integration capacity could be seen to play an executive role in one's mind, but that it responds to a broader pressure than the experience of fear, and the manner of this response is not toleration understood as mere endurance. This conclusion is compatible with thinking that integration is the more basic capacity, from which courage is a particularised specification. Yet one can still question whether this trait is a moral virtue. Even though I have argued that integration underpins one's ability to manifest states of mind required for virtuous conduct, it could also facilitate viciousness. If the capacity does facilitate viciousness, it is not a moral virtue. Already, one has reason to think integration will be compatible with viciousness in some way, because as specified so far, one's possession of the capacity does not appear to involve the reflective evaluation of one's ends.

Integration, Cruelty, and Moral Imperfection

In this section, I want to consider the most obvious reason to think integration is not a virtue: namely, the fact that it is compatible with, and might facilitate, moral imperfection just as much as it might facilitate (as in Vere's case) virtuous action.

As I described it, the integration capacity involves the tolerance of difficult mental states and the active confrontation of one's mental position. In some situations, one does not projectively identify in a harmful and aggressive way, but in contrasting situations, one is able to be angry or to 'let go'. In the previous section, I suggested that the tolerance that underpins integration is not fully under one's direct rational control. Instead, it underpins the ability to deal creatively with one's mental life and one's surroundings. However, it remains an open question as to how one subsequently engages with these things. The ability to experience difficult states that others may expel from their conscious experience does not, of itself, mean that one will put those experiences to use in a positive way.

Consequently, one might think that the integration capacity can underpin certain kinds of cruelty or ruthlessness which require one to relate to another, or to oneself, in a manner made possible because one is not evading the full extent of one's mental life. In chapter five, I outlined situations where people appear to be aggressive and cruel because they fail to undergo their own anxiety, and project it onto others in order to respond to it second-personally. But it seems plausible to think that not all cruelty depends on failures of sensitivity of this kind. There may be situations, e.g. in the context of intimate relationships, or parental interactions, where one's ability to resist defensive splitting, or the evasion of one's mental life, allows one to be cruel or ruthless. Underpinning this suggestion is the thought that the accurate perception of one's mind, or the mental lives of others (free of distorting projections), is required if one is able to exploit weaknesses, expose vulnerabilities, and generally harm another person on the basis of features of their mental life.

Bernard Williams distinguishes between malevolence and benevolence:

> It is not that benevolence has to do its work before malevolence has anything to go on, but rather that *each uses the same perceptions and moves from them in different directions*. (This is why, as Nietzsche remarked, cruelty needs to share the sensibility of the sympathetic, while brutality needs not to.) (2011, p.15, italics added)

Williams' claim, and his parenthetical appeal to Nietzsche, points towards a distinction between forms of moral imperfection which flow from non-rational aspects of instinctual life or impoverished forms of ethical perception, and those which flow from a sensibility to others that is already richly developed. Analogously, one can argue that the integration capacity is an ideal form of mental organisation akin to the perceptions that Williams thinks underpin both malevolence and benevolence, but that one may "move…in different directions" in virtue of having this capacity, i.e. one's integration allows one to be cruel or ruthless.

Williams is not the only advocate of this kind of thought. Troy Jollimore, in discussing the potential dangers of the particular intimacy internal to love suggests, plausibly:

> …the very emotional intimacy that is, during the good times, love's greatest glory makes possible especially damaging and painful forms of cruelty. (We are frequently in an especially good position to help, but also to hurt, the ones we love, *and the reasons why this is so are the same in each case*.) (2011, p.5, italics added)

On this view, certain configurations of emotion underpin both wonderful forms of intimacy and damning manifestations of cruelty. One need not deny that many kinds of egregious harm can arise without this kind of emotional connection: one need only argue that emotional intimacy is not sufficient for virtuous behaviour because it can support vicious behaviour too.

One might object that real cruelty always involves some form of projective defensiveness. Thus when one is cruel in the context of an intimate relationship, say, one is actually responding to the negative aspects of one's own self as projected onto another person. I think this view is implausible. One can distinguish between the motivations behind one's cruel behaviour and the mechanisms that make one's cruelty possible. One might be cruel out of anxiety or insecurity, and so might involve projective identification at some point in its motivational history; but cruelty can depend on the *accurate* perception of another's weakness, not just on projective identification (i.e. misperception of the other). Cruelty to oneself is a further counterexample: a certain kind of self-punishment is only possible if one is able to accurately experience and undergo one's mental states. A similar thought applies when considers the connection between integration and ruthlessness. Ruthlessness appears to bear a weaker relationship to projective identification. One who is ruthless, who is aware of one's ambitions, desires, and the instrumental means to achieve them, is not dependent on a projectively distorted engagement with another person, instead their accurate assessment of their mind is what enables to act in a ruthless manner: they have avoided capitulating to various prevailing views about kindness or what is morally acceptable.

Still, even if integration can underpin certain forms of cruelty or ruthlessness, is integration compatible with sustained viciousness? The forms of cruelty, which motivated my view that integration is compatible with moral imperfection, are predicated on a more general way of relating to people. This more general way of relating - awareness of the appropriate connections between broad states of mind and contexts, and the tolerance that allows this awareness to have impact - underpins positive relationships to one's own mind and the mental lives of other people. Although one may be cruel, as a consequence, one's cruelty must arise within a life that already has a certain organisation. A range of contingent factors will impact the specific content of one's life as an integrated person, but having one's mind organised in this way makes it seem likely that one is more likely to be receptive to a range of good relations to other people.

However, it is hard to evaluate the extent to which this is actually true. There may be (outlying?) cases where being integrated actually enables one to resist pressures which would mask the fact that one is comfortable with being ruthless, and that one has desires for socially unacceptable ends. Indeed, some ruthless people seem ruthless precisely because of their ability to pursue bad ends in an authentic, self-reflective, way. As mentioned above, integration does not involve the capacity to evaluate one's agential ends more broadly, and possession of the capacity, on its own, cannot insulate one against vicious action. The most one seems to be able to say, is that the capacity ensures one relates to others, and oneself, in a way that, perhaps contingently, seems associated with a preponderance of virtuous over vicious conduct.

If integration relates to virtue, it does so obliquely. Although integration is not itself a virtue it could be required for one to have a select group of virtues or, more strongly, it could underpin all virtues. Here is an argument to think that integration is a morally significant capacity, even if it is not a virtue.

In chapter five I argued that it is often important for one to feel appropriate emotions, even if one must also reason and act decisively. I argued that there are occasions where the lingering presence of an emotional conflict is what evidences one's virtuous character when one acts under constraint, because one's emotions manifest one's sensitivity to the values that one is unable to act upon, given the contingent constraints of the context. Captain Vere was my main example of a person whose affective tensions served to manifest his virtuous character, despite his decisive involvement in events that led to Billy's execution. Integration has moral significance because it enables one to manifest these affective tensions in contexts where it is good and right to do so. Vere had this ability, but Agamemnon, in contrast did not. His inability to undergo the affective tensions which should have accompanied his decisive and bloodthirsty killing, and subsequently unfold over time, shows his absence of virtuous character. Agamemnon is also passive in the face of the changes to his mental organization. Even if it was psychologically impossible to avoid the extreme rage he entertains in order to have his daughter killed, he should have subsequently been able to realize, reflectively, that this state was not to languish in, and thus take steps to actively confront the way he split off, in acting, the sensitivity to value he purportedly manifested prior to action in deliberation.

If one is integrated, one is better able to reflect the complexity of one's situation, as one understands it. On its own, this capacity does not ensure that one's perception of ethical reality is accurate or sufficiently complex, it does enable one to ensure that one's perception is not distorted in response to internal pressures which prevent one from tolerating difficult mental states, or which motivate one to remain mentally positioned in inappropriate ways. My appeal to Agamemnon illustrates this. If he were blind to the ethical complexity and meaning of his responsibilities to both his army and daughter, then being integrated would not change that fact. However, he did exhibit prior sensitivity to those responsibilities and meaning in his life, only to subsequently fail to act well, or recover his ethical sensitivity. Captain Vere, in contrast, retained a similar sensitivity prior to action (one can assume), but retained it precisely because of his ability to maintain integrated.

Integration underpins the virtuous traits one has by ensuring that their affective aspects manifest in appropriate ways. Virtues manifest in action, thought, and affective life. In some situations, the appropriate manifestation of these traits results in affective conflicts, ambivalence, or difficult states of mind. Because of this, one who is virtuous needs to be able to tolerate these conflicts or ambivalence. If one lacks this tolerance, one's virtuous traits will not be able to manifest affectively. This is why one needs the integration capacity. However, possession of integration relates to virtue only insofar as one has other virtuous traits, and can engage with the world in an ethically sensitive manner. The capacity is not a substitute for those traits.

One might object that the integration capacity only underpins *some* virtues. In particular, one might think only some virtues are liable to conflict with others in the way they manifest affectively. The demands of justice and compassion in Captain Vere's situation may furnish us with an example. However, it is implausible to limit the impact of being integrated to a narrow band of virtues. One cannot tell in advance when difficult emotions, or emotional conflicts, will arise as a consequence of trying to act according to good reasons in a situation; or when the manifestation of one virtue will be in tension with difficult emotions, desires, or thoughts that pull one in a contrary direction. There is no *prima facie* reason to think any particular virtue is immune from these tensions. For instance, one may find it hard to be temperate if one cannot tolerate the manner in which one's desires, thoughts, or feelings clash; that is, if one cannot even come to consciously acknowledge and experience these aspects of one's mental life.

Alternatively, one may object that the integration capacity is simply practical wisdom, described differently. After all, stability is a core feature of a virtuous trait, this stability affects one's ability to manifest virtuous emotions, and (on Aristotle's account of virtue), virtues are rendered stable by practical wisdom (NE. 1105a-b). Aristotle describes practical wisdom:

> It seems to be characteristic of the practically wise person to be able to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself, not in particular respects, such as what conduces to health or strength, but about what conduces to living well as a whole. (NE. 1140a)

Practical wisdom is a deliberative capacity that encompasses universal claims and the particularities of situations.[117] The practically wise person is sensitive to relevant reasons for action, and can bring reasons to bear on their actions.[118] This sensitivity underpins the development of one's dispositions, from natural virtues (such as daring) to proper virtues (such as courage), for the properly virtuous person has the ability to quasi-perceive when courage, say, requires something surprising.[119]

One might argue that the integration capacity just allows one to do what Aristotle describes practical wisdom as allowing one to do; namely respond sensitively in relation to particular situations, in a way that considers the broader horizon of an

[117] "Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is concerned with human affairs, namely, with what we can deliberate about. For deliberating well, we say, is the characteristic activity of the practically wise person above all… since practical wisdom is practical, one needs both kinds of knowledge [of universals, and of particulars], but especially the particular kind." (NE. 1141b)

[118] Hence practical wisdom differs from the faculty of judgement: "But judgement and practical wisdom are not the same. Practical wisdom gives commands, since its end is what should or should not be done, while judgement only judges." (NE. 1143a)

[119] Jonathan Lear describes courage well: "A virtue like courage is a perceptual-and-motivational unity: one sees the world and understands oneself in certain ways and is thereby motivated to act. As such, courage is a source of creative repetition. No matter how varied experience is, no matter the peculiarities of the moment, a courageous person will be alive to the salient aspects of the situation that call for courage; and she will have the capacity to engage in an appropriately creative response. Yet her creativity will always be brought back to the question of how to live courageously" (Lear, 2005 p.152)

ethically good life. Practical wisdom governs one's emotions as well as one's actions, so even if integration, as I have described it, is primarily an affective notion (a presupposition I think we should resist), it still appears that I'm describing practical wisdom.

This objection falters, however, because the integration capacity is not wholly rational or deliberative, and does not encompass one's ends (hence it can underpin sensitivity and cruelty). The tolerance internal to this capacity can be present without thought or reasoning, and there may be contexts where its manifestation requires the absence of sustained practical reasoning in favour of more symbolic or imaginative processing (or even the total absence of thought). This accords with my thought that integration may also be present in one who fails to be practically wise.

Therefore we should think of integration as a companion to practical wisdom. One who is integrated will think in a fairly transparent way. When they do reflect, they will think about their situation, and occasionally about their own emotions or thoughts. But they will rarely think about the organisation of their mind.

At this point one may reply that practical wisdom is not solely cognitive either. Although this is in tension with Aristotle's view, it is independently plausible. Thus one option, here, is that integration is a new facet of a much richer conception of practical wisdom. This view would represent a significant advance because it shows that practical wisdom needs to be more richly described in a way that captures one's ability to withstand various kinds of, not necessarily moral, mental state (or the organisation of mental states), and difficult to tolerate mental states. Moreover, it would provide further motivation to think that practical wisdom requires imaginative, empathetic, forms of tolerance in order to be effective.

The non-rational aspect of the integration capacity underpins one's ability to reflect sensitively. Practical wisdom, even if understood in a quasi-perceptual manner, allows one to reflect and deliberate about what to do, in the broadest terms. But to be practically wise one needs the various facets of one's mind, perhaps especially those that are difficult to tolerate, to be *thinkable* in the first place. The integrated person finds their mind is thinkable in a context. The nature and quality of their subsequent deliberation, or lack of it, is a different question.

One may be practically wise, but to an impoverished extent because one's mental life is impoverished. One's mental life is impoverished because one cannot tolerate harsh affects, like anger or anxiety, or contain positive experiences, such as excitement or sexual desire. One's relationships with others may be structured by defensive mechanisms, such as projective identification, which prevent one from confronting one's difficult emotions. Despite this, of perhaps *because* of it, one may be reflective and make decisions that seem cogent from one's impoverished perspective.

If one was more integrated in the sense I have described in the previous chapter, one could reason in a richer way. (This is not to deny that an integrated person may fail to be practically wise.) An integrated person is able to tolerate their anger or anxiety, and contain their excitement. They can dismantle or dampen their cycles of projective identification, and recognize and soften the defensive manoeuvring within their interpersonal relationships. Like some moral virtues, such as courage, this tolerance is not under one's direct control, even if it does have a reflective component.

In emphasizing that the integration capacity has non-rational features, I do not want to deny that they are connected to its rational features. Becoming integrated is akin to other emotional responses to the world, or other skills one has. One is typically responsive, in one's fear, say, to something that is appropriately fearful. But this accurate responsiveness can fail; on occasion one is afraid of things one knows to be safe. In those situations one's reasoning has a weak grip on what one feels. Repeated exposure to these situations, coupled with reflection, and support, may be helpful. To take a different example, one may be able to reason that one's piano playing is deficient in a particular respect, but that reflective awareness does not directly result in more dexterous fingering.

In a similar respect, reflection may play a role in enabling one to become more integrated. Like misguided fear, reflection may enable one to recognize one is avoiding difficult emotions. Like mastering the piano, reflection can help one see when one's projective identification is inappropriately defensive. However, as in these two analogies, the connection between reflection and a change in one's tolerance and resistance is often indirect.

I have been discussing the non-rational aspects of the integration capacity, which accompany practical reflection. But one must avoid being misled by this appeal to 'reflection' when considering what integration involves (and thus what being ideally integrated may involve). Remember that I have assumed a conception of ethics that rejects the choice and argument conception of moral agency. One correlate of that move is to approach reflection in a richer way.

Reflection, whether ethical or otherwise, involves many different features. One who reflects well is able to think imaginatively and rationally, one will not resist phantasy or other creative modes of expression such as humour or play; one will be open to re-description. Iris Murdoch uses the term "attention" to describe the effort used to overcome systematically false or misleading forms of engagement with the world,

> …psychic energy flows, and more readily flows, into building up convincingly coherent but false pictures of the world, complete with systematic vocabulary…Attention is the effort to counteract such states of illusion. (1997, p.329)

The notion of attention straddles both perceptiveness and reflectiveness. It also captures the sense in which one's efforts are guided by reflection, but also rest on non-rational abilities.

So the capacity to be integrated has a rational attentive aspect and a non-rational tolerant aspect. But in what sense does this underpin virtue? I have suggested integration enables one to face the difficult aspects of one's mental life. Thus this capacity enables practical intelligence to encompass those areas. Insofar as they bear on action, thought, and feeling, integration thus helps one's traits remain intelligently oriented to their changing situations. Integration also ensures that one's virtuous traits are stable. Stability was a key component of virtuous traits on Aristotle's view. If one is well integrated one is not hostage to one's mental life. One is able to manifest one's virtuous traits in difficult or tragic situations, whilst remaining receptive to the main reasons for action.

Conclusion

Integration is a personal excellence, but not a virtue. As a capacity it underpins the practice of virtue in certain difficult situations, but it remains compatible, if not enables, some forms of viciousness such as cruelty. The connection between the capacity and sustained viciousness, however, is less clear. I have conjectured that because being integrated removes potential distortions from one's mind (even if one is conflicted or ambivalent) one is more likely to be able to relate well to others and oneself.

Conclusion

I have argued that conflicts and ambivalence do not directly impair one's agency or diminish one's well-being. Indeed there are contexts where it is morally good for one to be ambivalent or conflicted, and situations where one is harmed by being free of these conditions – i.e. being integrated in the sense I explained in chapter one. Integration in *that* sense, though it makes itself felt in contemporary moral psychology in a number of different forms (witness the discussions of Smith, Frankfurt and Pugmire in chapters three, four, and five) is not a viable ideal. Despite this negative conclusion, I argued that we could reinterpret the notion, and proposed an alternative ideal of integration as the capacity to tolerate one's mental states, and to remain active in the face of one's changing mental positions. This is a Character Conception of integration in which one's mental states are integrated into one's mind even if they conflict with each other. It is capacity that underpins the practice of virtue, because it enables one to manifest the various attitudes virtue requires when one encounters conflicting values, or when one can act on the basis of only some important reasons whilst bypassing others. However, certain forms of insightful cruelty may also require integration in this alternative sense, so I argued the capacity might facilitate viciousness, which means integration is not itself a virtue.

I do not deny that some conflicts are painful or otherwise harmful, or that one needs to be decisive in certain situations. In chapter four, for example, I described obstructive ambivalence, which seems harmful because ambivalence masks one's inability to act on the basis of stable desires. One can also fail to be decisive because one mistakenly thinks that 'seeing every side' of an issue is always valuable. Throughout my argument, I have heeded the danger of fetishizing the need to be sensitive to one's mind or environment. Whilst this is important, I wanted to avoid an overly intellectualist conception of ideal mental structure, where one is compelled to be constantly reflecting on the shape of one's mind. Although I rejected a 'silencing' view of virtue, in chapter six, because a virtuous person may properly attend to reasons they should nonetheless not act on, one can be overly-contemplative towards one's mind, and overly attentive to reasons that are not directly relevant. Greater attention is not always better attention.

My alternative conception of integration allows me to theoretically accommodate situations where episodic conflicts impair one's agency or diminish one's well-being. People who have this capacity may be better placed to tackle harmful conflicts when they arise because they can tolerate, and thus confront, the pressures that can make it difficult to address specific conflicts or ambivalence. If one is integrated according to this alternative conception, one is less exposed to projective identification, for example, or less likely to unreflectively remain insensitive and 'fall to bits' in the face of an intimate relation who needs one's care. Generally speaking, whilst some conflicts should be removed, many others are less threatening.

My argument in chapters three and four touched upon the ways conflicts or ambivalence can form central features of one's identity. These discussions highlighted the potential trade-offs between a stable sense of oneself over time, and the desire to be free of conflict. One cannot ascertain, in advance, whether excising a conflict will necessarily improve one's subjective experience or make one act better. It may be preferable to remain imperfectly oriented towards multiple objects of concern than to achieve singlemindedness. This is so, both in cases where those concerns comprise one's identity, as when sexual and religious identities conflict, but also in cases where one's ambivalence is responsive to an important other, such as a recently deceased loved one. Removal of the ambivalence that stems from grief may comprise a double loss more devastating than any clash of emotions themselves. I have noted the various ways one's responses to conflicts are often sources of harm or impaired agency.

Often, the pressure to remove a conflict stems from a latent social norm; a norm that ought to be subject to critique and social contextualization. Thus one faces the extra task of resisting various unchallenged norms that structure one's attitudes towards one's conflicts. Moreover, there are many barriers to understanding the complexities of one's agential context. My introduction of descriptive ambivalence, in chapter six, should caution one against the desire to concretise one's descriptive grasp of the situations one occupies.

My argument rests on the presupposition that mental life is rich and often outstrips one's ability to describe it, that

> Our inner world, the place of psychic reality, is inevitably less coherent than our representation of it; a moving medley of part thoughts, incomplete visualisations, fragments of dialogue, recollections, unremembered active presences, sexual states, anticipations, urges, unknown yet present needs,

> vague intentions, ephemeral mental lucidities, unlived partial actions: one could go on and on trying to characterise the complexity of subjectivity, and yet the adumbration of its qualities does poor service to its reality. (Bollas, 1994, p.47)

Thus one should not be surprised that an attempt to respond to a feature of mental life can cause more damage than the feature itself. Hasty attempts to become decisive, or avoid ambivalence, or suppress difficult emotions, may, in their own ways, prevent one from acting, or from acting well, or from being well.

I have also described the complex relationship between personal conflicts and action. One's conflicts and ambivalence can be visible in one's actions, even when one acts decisively. But one can also be ambivalent about a past decision, often partly because it was past, and thus one cannot change one's situation but only make reparations. This discussion was intended to weaken the connection between the presence of conflicts and the possibility of impaired agency. Indeed, the presence of conflicts, in certain contexts, is to be expected and manifests good character, not just morally, but also practically, because one is shown to be sensitive towards practically relevant reasons. One is mistaken in thinking ambivalence, for instance, *just is* an agential failure, or has to be experienced negatively. One also errs in assuming that one's environment is always cooperative. In extreme cases, a stark, even identity-threatening, conflict may be the only apt response to tragedy.

My ideal of integration differs from Plato's because it is consistent with the experience and tolerance of conflict and ambivalence. Like Plato of the *Republic*, however, I agree that the extent to which one is conflicted depends heavily on one's particular life circumstances, and the nature of one's social world. For some, attempts to be virtuous will generate frequent conflicts because ethical sensitivity equips one to respond to relevant features of one's situation, and there may be an overabundance of these features in a chaotic environment. For others, a cooperative environment means that virtuous action is easy. However, the capacity to be integrated, as I defined it, remains ideal irrespective of one's context, for were things to change one would be well placed to tolerate difficult states of mind, and not remain passive in the face of one's shifting mental positions.

In chapter one, I describe Plato's complex image of the ordered self that appears towards the end of the *Republic* (588b). Underlying Plato's metaphor is the idea that one ought to cultivate oneself, and seek an orderly arrangement of the warring parts of one's soul; doubtless Plato thought philosophy was instrumental in this task. My arguments motivate a change of emphasis. Cultivation is too optimistic a term. Cultivation is possible only if the land in question is suitable and can withstand one's attempts to sculpt and tame it, irrespective of how poor one's efforts are in practice. But I have suggested mental life is frequently opaque and resists direct address. Non-rational configurations of desire, intersecting emotions, and competing rational considerations often outrun one's rational attempts to generate order. *That* fact is itself something one has to respond to; the limitations, opacities, and non-rational features of mental life have to be contained if one is to live well.

This may seem pessimistic, but one should not conflate the need to contain aspects of mind with the separate claim that what is contained is thereby bad. Pleasures, excitement, joy, all have to be contained and managed alongside difficult emotions. Thus there is a further good to integration as I understand it, for the person who develops their ability to contain various difficult emotions has also developed their ability to experience and tolerate valuable forms of pleasure and enjoyment: important aspects of a good life.

When integration is understood as the mere absence of conflict and ambivalence, there is no reason to think that such an end state will enrich one's life. As I have argued, one could be integrated in that sense precisely because one leads an impoverished life. To avoid conflicts, one might starve one's desires, suffocate emotions and take steps to limit what one personally values. Formal order is most easily achieved at the expense of diversity and vitality. Yet insofar as lives resemble landscapes, there are benefits to loosening one's grip on the desire to cultivate. One can be integrated in the reinterpreted sense I outlined in chapter seven, and live a vibrant life. One may be conflicted, or experience ambivalence, but one will be better placed to confront the ever-changing landscape of one's mind.

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