The Integrity Project

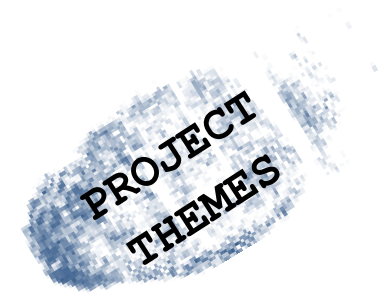*Investigating the value of integrity and the price of doing without it*

What is integrity? What is its role in our lives? What are its conceptual and institutional preconditions? What are the practices that undermine it? And what is lost if integrity becomes impossible?

The Integrity Project explores the psychological, social, institutional and political preconditions for acting and speaking with integrity; those which undermine the possibility of maintaining integrity; and the consequences on individuals and societies of widespread failures integrity. Addressing this brings together social anthropologists and sociologists; philosophers and political and cultural theorists; historians and scholars of literature and the arts. We also invite people living and working in circumstances which compromise or enable integrity to reflect on the possibilities for changing or extending those circumstances, and the benefits and risks of so doing.

We are investigating the historical dimensions of these issues – both ancient and modern – as well as the psychological, social, political, anthropological and above all conceptual dimensions.

PROJECT THEMES

Core questions

* What is integrity?
* What is its role in our lives?
* What kind of value, if any, does it have, and under what conditions?
* What are its conceptual and institutional preconditions?
* What are the practices that undermine it?

  What is at stake if we lose all possibility for it?

The Integrity Project

Investigating the value of integrity and the price of doing without it

Want to be involved? (for more, download our **TAKE PART** leaflet)

We are philosophers specialising in philosophy of action and ancient philosophy. For this project we are keen to find collaborators, within and outside the UK, from anthropology, sociology, history, politics, history of art, cultural theory, psychology, and philosophy.

We are also interested to hear from people working outside academia.

We'll be updating the project blog page with upcoming events; let us know if you're coming along to an event or have suggestions about the kind of things we should be organising.

We're still shaping the project and would particularly welcome comments and suggestions in relation to project content, themes and structure.

Amber and Rachael

contact@integrityproject.org

Project themes

Ancient Integrity

Plato famously makes psychological unity the keystone of his account of justice in the *Republic*. Aristotle follows by granting his *phronimos* unqualified consistency between practical appreciation of right and wrong, and the affects supporting and surrounding action and practical judgement. These accounts make integrity almost synonymous with virtue itself. But they require for their plausibility a detailed moral psychology: a unified account of our many forms of appreciating value must underwrite the aspirations for integrity. They also arose in the context of an experiment in democracy which put constant pressure on personal and public integrity.

Integrity in the Early Modern and Modern Era

The reformations and revolutions of these periods brought new demands for integrity and possibilities for expressing and undermining it. Both personally and philosophically, conscience became a particularly important mode for discussing integrity, and both the opportunity and necessity for taking on multiple and shifting identities became more widespread. With the rise of printing and its associated manifestation in the press, integrity and calls to it became not just a personal matter but a political one. This period provides a context within which to examine the relationship between conceptions of the individual, society, and integrity.

The Demandingness of Integrity: Monsters and Saints

Integrity may not always be a virtue — or it may demand behaviour that is or appears socially awkward, harmful or even vicious. What is the difference (if any) between the fanatic and the person of uncompromising integrity? This section explores whether the demands of integrity can be unreasonable, or whether there can be limits set on the demands of integrity which are internal to integrity itself. Might preserving integrity require us to become saints – or turn us into monsters? Perhaps the demand for purity, lest one be called a hypocrite, is in fact a tool for undermining integrity.

Integrity, Truthfulness and Action

There is a close connection between the possession of personal integrity and genuine action and truthful speech. Agents who pretend, lie, or bullshit are usually thought to lack integrity; those who speak their mind and act in accord with their conscience, even when this is in conflict with their own interests, are identified as persons of integrity. This section explores, on the one hand, the nature of the connection between genuine action and truthfulness, and personal integrity and, on the other, the inter-personal contexts and circumstances which encourage or inhibit authenticity and truthfulness.

Integrity and Protest

Integrity can drive individuals to challenge existing structures and practices in various ways – campaigning against them, separating from them, or exemplifying alternative lifestyles. This section explores how personal integrity has compelled non-conformists, utopians, activists and reformers to act only according to their conscience. Integrity is important to the origins of protest but also to its ends and means. We explore the ways integrity has shaped debate over strategies of protest, how it has governed action as well as intention, and how the forms of organization and collective action are negotiated to preserve the integrity of the actors.

Medieval Questions (late antiquity to Renaissance)

This section explores medieval debates on lying and its relationship to character. During this period concepts of honour were deployed as a means or mode of preserving integrity. Christian intercourse with pagans and the centrality of faith to Christianity raised issues about the relationship between practice and belief. During the scholastic period the rise of the university made acute the tension between intellectual integrity and integrity of character, in the religious sense.

Institutions as Enabling and Disabling Integrity

This section explores the political and institutional structures that encourage or undermine, inhibit, or prevent the possibility of acting and speaking with integrity. It will focus on conflicts between institutions and personal integrity, and on associated pathologies such as alienation, reification, and ideology. The role of institutions in the generation of integrity will be considered, as well as relations between institutions and selfhood.

Integrity and Well-being

Is having integrity good for you? What is the effect of having or lacking integrity on the person who has or lacks it? How are interpersonal relations affected by individuals' integrity (or lack of it)? On some accounts integrity is a precondition for virtue. This section will explore whether it is a precondition for well-being. It will examine the psychological consequences of acting towards others without integrity, and the psychological effect of being prevented from acting with integrity.

Other Themes Under Construction

Language & Integrity The close connection between thinking and language means that corrosive language corrupts thinking, rendering integrity impossible or meaningless.

Representations of Integrity, Integrity of Representing In poetry, literature, and art. Works of art can have or lack integrity. What does this mean and how does this relate to the integrity of the artist? How does this relate to artistic representations of integrity?

Integrity & Authenticity What is the relation between authenticity and integrity? Critiques of liberal democracy, post-modernism and irony are relevant.

Religion & Integrity Original sin as self-deception; Luther as person and protestant; scientist and believer; conscience; martyrs

Integrity outside the European sphere Relevant aspects of non-European treatments of integrity will be treated in respective sections above. We may also directly treat integrity as it has arisen in non-European contexts

Structure of intellectual life In Britain; in Anglophone vs. non-Anglophone cultures; history and growth of the University as an institution for integrity; student as protester vs. student as consumer