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THE ANATOMY OF VICE

At a press conference after the U. S invasion of Iraq in 2003, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was questioned about the scenes of chaos and looting in Baghdad. "Stuff happens" was his response to indications that things weren't exactly going according to plan. As events unfolded it was becoming increasingly clear that the architects of the invasion – Rumsfeld, President George W. Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz- had seriously underestimated the potential for an Iraqi insurgency and the troop numbers needed to contain it.

How could they have been so wrong? One study suggests there was little planning for maintaining order and stability after the invasion because it was thought that the task would be easy.[1] The Bush administration assumed that Iraq 2003 would be a cakewalk but the reality was different.[2] Senior administration figures believed that American soldiers would be welcomed with open arms by the Iraqis and that local security forces would willingly assist the occupation of their own country by a foreign power.[3] Even at the time these assumptions seemed a barely credible exercise in wishful thinking, and their naïvety was demonstrated by the disaster that unfolded after the invasion. How could Rumsfeld and other members of the administration have believed that things would be so easy? What were they thinking?

In his account, Thomas E. Ricks points out that senior figures in the military, including Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, had argued that at least 300,000 troops would be needed to pacify Iraq.[4] Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld thought they knew better and insisted on a much lower number, below 40,000.[5] They didn't just ignore Shinseki's advice, they derided it. According to Wolfowitz claims that several hundred thousand U.S. troops would be needed were 'wildly off the mark', and it wasn't credible that more soldiers would be needed to keep order after the invasion than to invade Iraq in the first place.[6] He got his

way, and when the looting in Baghdad started the U.S. military lacked the resources to do anything about it. It seems obvious in retrospect that Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld should have listened to Shinseki. Why didn't they?

This is where, in Ricks' account, things start to get personal. The story, as he tells it, is that Bush, Cheney Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, the four horsemen of the Iraqi apocalypse, acted as they did because they were 'arrogant', 'impervious to evidence', and 'unable to deal with mistakes'.[7] The President was incompetent, Wolfowitz was a know-it-all who didn't know it all, and Rumsfeld's "Stuff happens" remark was one among many indications of his hubris and arrogance. Ricks does also mention what he calls 'systemic' factors but the overall impression is that the Iraq fiasco was due in large part to the *personal* failings of President Bush and some of his senior colleagues.

My concern here isn't with whether Ricks' analysis is correct – this isn't a book about the Iraq war – but the nature of the personal failings he draws on to explain the Iraq fiasco. So-called 'virtues of the mind' - open-mindedness, thoroughness, humility and so on - have been extensively discussed by philosophers.[8] Arrogance, imperviousness to evidence and an inability to deal with mistakes are vices of the mind. The dictionary definition of 'vice' is 'evil or grossly immoral conduct'. This isn't the sense in which vices of the mind are vices. 'Vice' is from the Latin *vitium*, which is a fault or a defect. Vices of the mind are personal *intellectual* defects that have a negative impact on our *intellectual* conduct. If Ricks is correct then arrogance, imperviousness to evidence and an inability to deal with mistakes were among the intellectual defects that prevented Rumsfeld from coming to know the answers to certain rather pertinent questions, such as: how many American troops will be needed after the invasion? Rumsfeld's vices prevented him from listening to military advisors who knew the answer to this question better than he did. As a result he got it wrong.

I'm using this example not in order to make a political point but because it perfectly illustrates how vices of the mind are obstacles to knowledge or how, as José Medina puts it, they 'get in the way of knowledge' (2013: 30). There was knowledge to be had but Rumsfeld missed out on it because of his attitude towards those who had it. Suppose that Shinseki knew what he was talking about and tried to share his knowledge with Rumsfeld. He was prevented from doing so by Rumsfeld's unwillingness to listen and his unfounded conviction that he knew better. For Rumsfeld, 'military dissent about Iraq had to be considered the result of ignorance' (Ricks 2007: 42) and he showed his disdain for Shinseki by naming his successor 14 months prior to his retirement. This is the kind of behaviour that led John Batiste, who turned down the position of commander of U.S forces in Iraq, to comment: 'The trouble with Don Rumsfeld is that he's contemptuous, he's dismissive, he's arrogant and he doesn't listen' (Cockburn 2007: 215). A list of the intellectual vices that contributed to the Iraq fiasco would also include dogmatism, closed-mindedness, prejudice, wishful thinking, overconfidence, and gullibility. It's easy to detect overconfidence and wishful thinking in the assumption that Iraq could be subjugated with just 40,000 soldiers. Rumsfeld's unwillingness to tolerate dissent is evidence of closed-mindedness and dogmatism. Senior members of the administration were gullible if they believed reports of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). And so on.

Intellectual vices are obstacles to knowledge but not all obstacles to knowledge are intellectual vices. For example, suppose that acute insomnia makes people who suffer from it forgetful and inattentive during waking hours. That would be a reason to classify insomnia as an obstacle to knowledge but not as an intellectual vice unless one is prepared to view it as an *intellectual* defect. The distinction between intellectual and other defects is hard to define but, at an intuitive level, conditions like insomnia aren't conditions of the intellect even though they undoubtedly have intellectual consequences.[9] Forgetfulness and inattentiveness sound more like intellectual defects but they aren't intellectual vices for a different reason: they

aren't defects for which a person can reasonably be criticised, at least where they are caused by insomnia. Defects that don't merit criticism aren't intellectual *vices* regardless of whether they get in the way of knowledge. Some intellectual vices are severely criticised. Others are seen as only mildly reprehensible, but there is no such thing as an intellectual vice that merits no criticism at all.[10]

Sometimes it's difficult to know whether a trait is a vice or not because it is difficult to know whether it gets in the way of knowledge. For example, the classification of closed-mindedness as an epistemic vice can be challenged on the grounds that this trait can protect a person's knowledge by making them less susceptible to being misled by people who know less than they do. This sort of worry can be dealt with by stipulating that the classification of closed-mindedness as a vice of the mind depends on whether it *normally* or *systematically* gets in the way of knowledge, not on whether it invariably does so.[11] In the case of stupidity, another defect that was on prominent display in Ricks' story, the question is not whether it gets in the way of knowledge – it obviously does - but whether it is genuinely reprehensible or not. Is a person's stupidity something for which they can reasonably be criticised? Not if stupidity is understood as lack of intelligence but it can also be understood as foolishness or lack of common sense. Stupidity in this sense is a reprehensible obstacle to knowledge, a genuine intellectual *vice*.

Another label for intellectual vice is 'epistemic vice'. I prefer this label because it highlights the fact that these vices get in the way of knowledge. In effect, Ricks attributes a bunch of epistemic vices to Rumsfeld and his colleagues and explains their intellectual and other conduct partly by reference to these vices. Such 'vice explanations' are familiar enough in politics and history, and in later chapters I'll give other examples that cast light on the notion of an epistemic vice. An objection to vice explanations is that they are too personal and ignore more important factors, including the systemic factors that Ricks mentions. It's

hard to assess this suggestion without greater clarity about the nature of the systemic and other alternatives to vice explanations. A convincing account of the events described by Ricks needs to be multi-dimensional. From a vice perspective the important point is not that Rumsfeld's decisions can be explained by reference to any single factor but that, if Ricks is to be believed, epistemic vices are among the factors that help us to make sense of his thinking and his decisions.

Because of its emphasis on the role of epistemic vices in obstructing knowledge I call my account *obstructivism*. The emphasis in obstructivism is on the *consequences* of epistemic vices for our knowledge rather than on their *motives*.[12] The contrast is with motivational accounts of epistemic vice, which are based on motivational accounts of epistemic virtue. These see the epistemic virtues 'rooted in a deep and abiding desire for knowledge' (Baehr 2011: 4). Whether or not this view of epistemic virtue has anything going for it, epistemic vices aren't rooted in a desire for ignorance and needn't have epistemic motives that account for their badness. For obstructivism, epistemic vices don't have to have bad motives and aren't vices because they have bad motives. For example, closed-mindedness is motivated by a desire for firm answers rather than confusion or ambiguity, but it is far from obvious that such a desire is a bad motive or one that accounts for the badness of closed-mindedness.

It's hard to talk about epistemic or other vices without mentioning Aristotle. As will soon become apparent there are many disagreements between obstructivism and accounts of epistemic vice inspired by Aristotle but there are a couple of points on which agreement is possible. One is that vices are harmful. Aristotelian accounts emphasise the harmfulness of vices for their possessor.[13] For obstructivism epistemic vices are *epistemically* harmful to their possessor. That is, they are harmful to us as *knowers* and this is the sense in which, like vices generally, they are 'destructive of the self and prevent its flourishing' (Taylor 2006: 1). Reading Ricks it might seem strange to put the emphasis on the ways in which Rumsfeld's

epistemic vices were harmful to *him*, but the point is not to deny that a person's vices can be harmful to others. The ways in which Rumsfeld and his colleagues were harmed by their epistemic vices resulted in policies that were immensely harmful (and not just epistemically) to others but the question one keeps coming back to is: how could their judgement have been so poor? This is the question to which obstructivism offers an answer.

Aristotelian views and obstructivism also agree that epistemic vices are reprehensible to some degree. One suggestion is that 'merely to use the labels "virtue" and "vice" indicates candidates for praise and blame' (Taylor 2006: 6). Some have questioned whether we have the kind of responsibility for our epistemic vices that is required for them to be blameworthy. However, blame is not the only form of criticism, and it is possible to be *critical* of a person's epistemic vices without *blaming* them.[14] Whether or not a deeply arrogant person deserves blame for being that way they can certainly be criticised for their arrogance. One issue in such cases is whether what is being criticised is the vice itself or – if there is a difference- the person whose vice it is. Regardless, it does seem that some form of appropriately targeted censure must be in order where vice is concerned.

Obstructivism raises many questions. Here are the most pressing ones:

1. I've said that epistemic vices are obstacles to knowledge but how exactly do they 'get in the way of knowledge'? What is the mechanism, and what is significance of concession that they don't invariably get in the way of knowledge. For that matter, what is obstructivism's conception of knowledge?

2. What kind of *thing* are epistemic vices? The examples I have given are a mixed bag. Some, such as closed-mindedness, are character traits. However, others might better be described as attitudes. It was Rumsfeld's arrogant *attitude* that was his undoing, and this raises a more general question about the relationship between character traits and attitudes. To make things even more complicated, some

epistemic vices are neither character traits nor attitudes but ways of thinking. One such epistemic vice is wishful thinking. Are there any more varieties of epistemic vice? Which type of vice, if any, is the most fundamental?

3. Is it plausible that epistemic vices don't need a motivational component? Even if it isn't their motivational component that accounts for their badness must each vice have a specific motivation that makes it the vice it is?

4. In what sense are epistemic vices reprehensible? Are they blameworthy or merely open to criticism? What are the conditions under which a character trait, attitude or way of thinking is blameworthy, and do epistemic vices satisfy these conditions?

5. What are the strengths and limitations of vice explanations? What are 'systemic' or other alternatives and how do these alternatives relate to vice explanations? In what sense are vice explanations 'too personal'?

The rest this chapter will briefly address each of these questions in order to set the stage for the more detailed discussion of later chapters.

Knowledge is something that we can acquire, retain, and transmit. Put more simply, it is something that we can gain, keep, and share. So one way to see how epistemic vices get in the way of knowledge is to see how they obstruct the acquisition, retention and transmission of knowledge. For example, an important source of knowledge is *inquiry*, defined as the attempt to find things out, to 'extend our knowledge by carrying out investigations directed at answering questions, and to refine our knowledge by considering questions about things we currently hold true' (Hookway 1994: 211). Inquiry is an activity in which we are all engaged at least some of the time. It is by inquiring that we look for answers to our questions, ranging from the trivial ('Where are my socks?') to the momentous ('What are the causes of global warming?'). Inquiry can be more or less effective, that is to say, more or less knowledge-

conducive. Could it be, then, that epistemic vices obstruct the acquisition of knowledge by impeding effective inquiry?

To get a sense of how an epistemic vice might do this, consider once again the vice of arrogance. An arrogant person has an intellectual superiority complex and is dismissive of the views and perspectives of other people. It is easy to see why that is so bad for one's ability to acquire knowledge by inquiry. In the real world inquiry is rarely a solitary activity, at least in relation to complex questions. There is usually the need to learn from others and to rely on their expertise. This means being willing to defer to others and acknowledge that one doesn't know it all. These are all different ways of saying that effective inquiry requires a degree of intellectual humility. Effective inquirers are good listeners; they can own up to their mistakes and learn from them. Arrogance is a problem for effective inquiry because it tends to make one a poor listener and unwilling to learn from others or from one's own mistakes. This was Rumsfeld's problem, and his arrogance did him no good at all in his inquiries.[15]

Inquiry is, of course, not the only source of knowledge. It is also possible to acquire knowledge by perception, and in these cases it is less obvious how epistemic vices can get in the way of knowledge. For example, if I look out of the window and see that it is raining how can I be prevented by an epistemic vice from knowing that it is raining? What epistemic vice would that be? It is true that epistemic vices are less of a threat to knowledge by perception than knowledge by inquiry but even when it comes to perceptual knowledge epistemic vices can make their presence felt. For example, a person witnesses a crime but misidentifies the perpetrator as a result of prejudice. They literally can't believe their eyes and so are deprived of the knowledge they would otherwise have had. What one sees is affected by one's beliefs and background assumptions. It isn't just a matter of taking in what is in front of one's eyes and this creates an opening for vices like prejudice to obstruct the acquisition of knowledge

by perception. As long as the intellect plays a role in knowledge-acquisition, whether by the senses or other means, intellectual vices can get in the way.

When it comes to understanding the role of epistemic vices in obstructing the sharing of knowledge, Ricks provides some useful illustrations. I've already mentioned Shinseki's failed attempts to share his knowledge with Rumsfeld, where the failure was due the latter's unwillingness to listen. Sometimes, not being willing to listen is not an epistemic vice. There is no obligation to listen to those who are plainly ill-formed about the topic at hand and don't know what they are talking about. In such cases epistemic vices don't impede the sharing of knowledge because there is no knowledge to be shared. The problematic case is where epistemic vices prevent a person who knows from sharing their knowledge with a person who doesn't. The epistemic vices that obstruct the sharing of knowledge might be the vices of the putative recipient of knowledge, the vices of the knowledge transmitter, or both. In one scenario the person trying to share their knowledge is an expert who isn't believed because what they have to say is at odds with the prejudices of their audience. In another case the problem is that expert's dogmatism and arrogance are so off-putting that they make non-experts unwilling to listen. The sharing of knowledge requires both sides in the exchange to be virtuous at least to some degree.[16]

An epistemic vice that threatens the retention or preservation of pre-existing knowledge is gullibility. Imagine an intelligence analyst who believes, with justification, that Iraq doesn't possess WMD. Assuming that his belief is true he can be credited with knowing that Iraq doesn't possess WMD. He is then informed by a patently untrustworthy source that Iraq has WMD. Because the analyst is gullible he changes his mind and is now of the opinion that Iraq has WMD. He has gone from knowing to something (that Iraq doesn't have WMD) to not knowing it, and his loss of knowledge was due to his gullibility. If he had been less gullible he would have ignored the source and continued to know the truth. What is more, the

analyst can reasonably be criticised for his gullibility: he should have known better than to trust that source.

It's instructive to compare this scenario with one in which a person fails to retain an important piece of knowledge as a result of forgetfulness. The difference is that forgetfulness is not, as such, an epistemic vice. A person can't reasonably be criticised for being forgetful unless their forgetfulness is taken as an indication of carelessness or ill will.[17] That can happen but in these cases it is the carelessness or ill will that is subject to criticism. Forgetfulness, *per se*, isn't reprehensible even though individual instances of forgetting can be. It isn't clear, in any case, that all things considered forgetfulness is an obstacle to knowledge. Knowledge can be lost by forgetting but without forgetting there would be no room for new knowledge. In this sense forgetting *abets* knowledge by making room for new knowledge. It's worth adding that much of the knowledge that is lost by forgetting is useless knowledge. Forgetting is only problematic in cases where a person forgets what they really need to remember or ought to remember.

Obstructivism is compatible with more than view of knowledge. My view assumes that knowledge requires true belief: if P is the proposition that only a small number of troops would be needed to subjugate Iraq then Rumsfeld knew that P only if P was true, which it wasn't, and he believed that P, which he did. More controversially, I take it that in order to believe, and therefore to know, that P one must be reasonably confident that P.[18] It may be, as Timothy Williamson notes, that 'modest people know many things without being especially confident of them' (2009b: 297). Still, without an appropriate degree of confidence that P one doesn't know that P. One also doesn't know P if one's confidence is unjustified or misplaced. Rumsfeld was confident that P but his confidence was unjustified. To put it another way, he didn't have the right to be confident.[19]

What level of confidence is required for knowledge and how that level of confidence can be justified are difficult questions. For my purposes here the following observations will suffice: the degree of confidence required for knowledge is less than certainty but a person who knows, and so believes, that P must be prepared to rely on P in their practical reasoning. Rumsfeld evidently satisfied this condition: in his practical reasoning about Iraq he took it for granted that only a small number of troops would be needed to get the job done. What it takes for one's confidence to be justified is partly an objective and partly a subjective matter. If one arrives at the belief that P using a *de facto* unreliable method then one's confidence that P is unjustified. This is the 'objective' dimension of justified confidence. If the method is reliable but one has no rational basis for one's belief then one's confidence is still unjustified. What is needed for knowledge is both that one's confidence is reliably based and rational.

This account of knowledge means that there are several different ways for epistemic vices to get in the way of knowledge. One is by reducing the likelihood that the affected individual's beliefs will be true. An arrogant and closed-minded inquirer is much more likely to end up with false beliefs than a humble and open-minded inquirer, and that is one reason for categorizing the former pair as epistemic vices and the latter pair as epistemic virtues. Alternatively, or additionally, an epistemic vice can get in the way of knowledge by getting in the way of belief. For example, the rarely recognised vice of underconfidence disposes one to abandon one's beliefs far too easily, even beliefs that are true, rational, and reliably based. To this extent underconfidence has at least as good a claim to be classified as an epistemic vice as Rumsfeldian overconfidence. A third possibility is that epistemic vices get in the way of knowledge by undermining one's right to be confident in one's beliefs. A person whose arrogance and closed-mindedness lead him to believe that P, or whose belief is sustained by these vices, might be very confident that P but their confidence is unjustified.

Obstructivism doesn't just say that epistemic vices get in the way of knowledge in any of these ways. It also says that this is what makes epistemic vices epistemic vices. This makes obstructivism a form of consequentialism. The consequentialism I have in mind is similar to consequentialism about moral virtues and vices. This view says that 'a virtue is a character trait that produces more good (in the actual world) than not systematically' (Driver 2001: 82). Moral vices systematically produce bad states of affairs in the actual world. Even if it is possible to conceive of possible worlds in which, say, benevolence systematically produces bad consequences what matters to us is the actual world and worlds similar to it. Worlds in which benevolence systematically has bad consequences would be ones in which benevolence isn't a moral virtue but in the actual world benevolence is a virtue. The point of 'systematically' is to allow us to ascribe moral virtue in the actual world to people who, as a result of bad luck, aren't able to produce good: 'if they possessed a character trait that systematically produces good in that context (though not in their particular case) they still have the relevant moral virtues' (2001: 82-3).

Obstructivism doesn't restrict epistemic virtues and vices to character traits but the basic idea is similar. The 'good' in the epistemic case isn't just true belief but knowledge. An epistemic virtue is one whose possession and exercise systematically produces knowledge in the actual world. An epistemic vice systematically obstructs knowledge in the actual world even if there are possible worlds in which it is conducive to knowledge rather than ignorance. The point of the 'systematically' is to allow for particular cases in which an epistemic virtue has bad epistemic effects or an epistemic vice had good epistemic effects. Luck comes into it, as in the moral case, but there would be no justification for classifying closed-mindedness or arrogance as epistemic vices if they didn't systematically get in the way of knowledge in the actual world. The point of distinguishing between 'systematically' and 'invariably' is to make room for the possibility that epistemic vices can unexpected effects in particular cases.

It isn't as easy as one might think to come up with plausible examples of epistemic vices abetting the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge. The example given of someone whose closed-mindedness saves him from misled by people who know less than him is not decisive. In this case is it the vice of close-mindedness that is protecting his knowledge or the virtue of tenacity? If it is really closed-mindedness that is at issue then one would have to ask how what it is protecting can possibly be *knowledge*. For if it is closed-mindedness that leads a person to hold on to a true belief of theirs it isn't obvious how their confidence in that belief is justified. If epistemic virtues and vices are defined by their consequences for knowledge then imaginary worlds in which epistemic vices have good epistemic effects systematically would be ones in which they aren't just truth-conducive but conducive to justified belief.[20] Whether such worlds are possible is questionable, but not much turns on this as long as one keeps hold of the idea that epistemic vices are defined by their real world impact rather than their imagined impact in imaginary worlds.

The next question is: what kind of thing are epistemic vices? It is surprising how often it is taken for granted in philosophy that epistemic vices are character traits. It is even more surprising given that philosophers who take this for granted often go on to give examples of epistemic vices that clearly aren't character traits. There is much more about character in the next chapter but for the moment character traits can be defined as stable dispositions to act, think and feel in particular ways. For example, an arrogant person has the stable disposition to (a) behave arrogantly, that is to say, in ways that are aggressively assertive, overbearing or presumptuous, (b) think of themselves as superior to others and (c) feel superior. Intellectual arrogance pertains to one's intellectual conduct and sense of intellectual superiority. A person who is arrogant in this sense has what Medina calls a 'cognitive superiority complex' (2013: 31), and to describe a person as intellectually arrogant is to make a claim about what they are like as a person.

In these terms, wishful thinking isn't a character trait even though there is a good case for regarding it as an epistemic vice. It is a way of thinking rather than the disposition to act, think and feel in particular ways. It gets in the way of knowledge because it is thinking in which the thinker's desires have a greater influence than logical or evidential considerations. Wishful thinking is what a person does rather than what a person is like. A person's character is, of course, partly a function of how they think but this is not a good reason to classify ways of thinking themselves as character traits. For example, to attribute Rumsfeld's views about the number of troops needed in Iraq to wishful thinking is to make a comment about the nature and the quality of the thinking that led to a particular conclusion. The fact that a person is guilty of wishful thinking on a particular occasion or topic says something about them but how much it says depends on whether their thinking was in character. A person who is prone to wishful thinking might be described as a 'wishful thinker' but one certainly doesn't have to be a fully-fledged wishful thinker to engage in the occasional spot of wishful thinking. We all do it.

An example of an epistemic vice that is neither a character trait nor a way of thinking is prejudice. To describe someone as prejudiced against something or someone is to describe their *attitude*. I will have more to say about attitudes in chapter 4 but the basic idea is that attitudes are orientations or postures towards something. Examples of attitudes in the pre-theoretical sense are contempt and hostility. To be contemptuous of someone is to adopt a scornful posture towards them, where this isn't just a matter of what one believes about them but also of how one feels. There is such a thing as *feeling* hostile or contemptuous. These attitudes are affective postures but needn't be character traits. One can be contemptuous towards a particular person without being a contemptuous person, someone who is generally disposed to be contemptuous. In the same way, one can have a prejudice about something in particular without being a prejudiced person, a person with numerous strong prejudices.

Some epistemic vices can be understood as character traits or as attitudes. Arrogance is a case in point: a person's attitude towards others can be arrogant, and a person can also be an arrogant person. Although arrogance as an attitude and as a character trait are closely related, they are nevertheless distinct insofar as the presence of the attitude in a particular case does not entail the presence of the character trait. It is possible to be arrogant in certain specific respects without being a generally arrogant person. Arrogance in particular respects is compatible with humility in others. One might be hard pushed to say in such cases whether a person who combines arrogance with humility is an arrogant person but it might still be quite clear that some of their attitudes are arrogant.

Once character traits, ways of thinking and attitudes are recognized as different kinds of epistemic vice certain obvious follow-up questions suggest themselves. One which is best left open is whether these are the only three types of epistemic vice. Although there might be others it does seem that the most widely recognised epistemic vices fall into one or other of these categories. Here, for example, is Linda Zagzebski's list: 'intellectual pride, negligence, idleness, cowardice, conformity, carelessness, rigidity, prejudice, wishful thinking, closed-mindedness, insensitivity to detail, obtuseness, and lack of thoroughness' (1996: 152). There is nothing here that isn't a character trait, attitude or way of thinking, and this leads naturally on to the next question: is there one type of epistemic vice that is in any sense the most basic or fundamental?

A trait X is more basic than another trait Y if X can be explained without reference to Y but Y can't be explained without reference to X. In this case, X is *explanatorily* more basic than Y. In this framework, some ways of thinking are more basic than their corresponding character traits. If being a wishful thinker is a character trait then only way to explain it is by reference to wishful thinking – a wishful thinker is one who is disposed to engage in wishful thinking but the reverse isn't true. The characterisation of wishful thinking as thinking that is

more heavily influenced by the thinker's desires than by logical or evidential considerations makes no reference to 'wishful thinkers'. However, this might be a reflection of the fact that 'wishful thinker' is a manufactured trait that is defined by reference to wishful thinking and nothing else. Other traits aren't like that. For example, as will become apparent in the next chapter, one can say a lot about what it is to be closed-minded without saying anything about closed-minded thinking. What it is to *be* closed-minded is prior to what it is to think closed-mindedly: to think in this way is just to think as a closed-minded person would think. This suggests that there is no general rule about whether epistemically vicious character traits or epistemically vicious ways of thinking are more basic. It depends on the trait and the way of thinking.

As for the relationship between character traits and attitudes, consider prejudice again. A prejudice isn't just an attitude towards something, someone or some group but an attitude formed and sustained without any proper inquiry into the merits or demerits of the object of prejudice. Prejudices can either be positive or negative, and it is in the nature of prejudice not to be based on evidence. It is in this sense that, as Miranda Fricker puts it, 'the idea of a prejudice is most basically that of a *pre-judgement*' (2007: 32-3). There is nothing in this explanation about prejudice as a character trait. There doesn't even have to be such a trait. But if prejudice can be a trait there is certainly no hope of understanding it without reference to the corresponding attitude. In this case the attitude is explanatorily prior to the character trait. Whether this is generally the case remains to be seen.

Before moving on, there is one more question about the kind of thing that epistemic vices are. A popular view among writers who insist that epistemic vices are character traits is that they are *deep* rather than superficial qualities of their possessors. Here is Zagzebski's vivid statement of this view:

One way to express the depth required for a trait to be a virtue or a vice is to think of it as a quality we would ascribe to a person if asked to describe her after her death. Perhaps no quality is really permanent, or, at least, no interesting quality, but virtues and vices are in the category of the more enduring of a person's qualities, and they come close to defining who a person is than any other category of qualities (1996: 135).

It's easy to see the appeal of this view but there is one way in which it threatens to be far too restrictive. While some epistemic vices might indeed to said to define who a person is, it isn't clear that they all do. For apart from what, for want of a better word, one might describe as 'serious' vices like closed-mindedness there are also less serious traits that might not find a place in a person's obituary but are epistemic vices nonetheless. When a person is criticised for being pedantic, unclear, obscure, pretentious or long-winded they are being criticised for intellectual defects that get in the way of knowledge but one might be reluctant in all cases to see such defects as defining who the person is.

In what sense is long-windedness or obscurity an obstacle to knowledge? One way to see how this might be the case is to focus on the sharing of knowledge. There is nothing like obscurity or long-windedness to obstruct the sharing of knowledge. The negative impact of these defects on the sharing of knowledge is systematic and easy to understand: the inability to express oneself clearly and succinctly makes it hard for other people to understand what one is saying or to find the time to unravel one's pronouncements. As a result one is likely to be ignored even if what one has to say is worthwhile. The key to the sharing of knowledge for those who care to do so is to cultivate virtues like clarity and succinctness. The pursuit of these virtues can sometimes lead to shallowness or glibness but the latter are further examples of epistemic vices that may not merit a mention in one's obituary. Not all epistemic vices are deep.

The next question concerns the supposed motivational component of epistemic vices. As I've noted, motivational accounts of epistemic vice are inspired by motivational accounts of epistemic virtue. Zagzebski sees motives as emotions and argues that a person who has a virtue V has motives associated with V. For example, 'an open-minded person is motivated out of a delight in discovering new truths, a delight that is strong enough to outweigh the attachment to old beliefs' (1996: 131). A *motive*, for Zagzebski, occurs at a particular time or period of time. A *motivation* is the persistent tendency to be moved by a motive of a certain kind. In these terms, every virtue can be defined in terms of a particular motivation, and the goodness of the virtue is at least partly a function of the goodness of its particular motivation. Underpinning the specific motivational component of each intellectual virtue is a general motivation which Zagzebski calls 'the motivation for knowledge' or for 'cognitive contact with reality' (1996: 167). In this sense 'all the intellectual virtues have the same foundational motivation' (1996: 166).

If this account of intellectual virtue is used to model epistemic vices then one would suppose that the latter can be defined in terms of particular motivations that partly explain their badness and that all epistemic vices have the same foundational motivation. What could that foundational motivation be? As I've noted, there is no reason to suppose that epistemic vices are rooted in a desire for ignorance. Epistemic vices may *result* in ignorance but that is not the same as being motivated by a desire for ignorance. In that case, could it be that the epistemic vices are grounded not is a desire for ignorance but in an inadequate or excessively weak desire for knowledge?[21] That doesn't seem right either. The closed-minded person can be as passionate about knowledge as the open-minded person. The closed-minded don't lack a healthy desire for knowledge but their approach to inquiry isn't conducive to knowledge. There is a mismatch between what they seek – cognitive contact with reality- and how they go about achieving it. I'll say more about this in the next chapter.

Even if epistemic vices lack a common motivational foundation it could still be true that individual vices can be defined in terms of particular desires or motivations. This is more plausible in some cases than others. Take the vice of obscurity. Sometimes one suspects that intellectual obscurity is motivated by the desire to appear deeper than one really is, but not always. Sometimes writers and thinkers are just obscure – that is their intellectual style - and their obscurity unmotivated or purposeless. Another example is stupidity. What is component of motivation that is specific to stupidity? It's not clear that there is one. If one is committed to the motivational conception one might see this as a reason for denying that obscurity and stupidity are epistemic vices but obstructivism turns this argument on its head: obscurity and stupidity are epistemic vices, they can't be defined in terms or particular motivations, so it isn't true that epistemic vices generally can be defined in these terms. In the case of epistemic vices that are not definable by their motives, vices are distinguished from another not by their motivational components but by the dispositions with which they are associated and the particular way they get in the way of knowledge. It isn't as if, without reference to motive, we have difficulty grasping the difference between obscurity and stupidity.

Even in the case of epistemic vices that can be partly defined by their motivational components it is a further question whether they have motives that are bad in themselves or that account for the overall badness of the vice. In his useful study of closed-mindedness Arie Kruglanski argues that 'the tendency to become closed or open minded is intimately tied to one's epistemic motivations, that is, to (implicit or explicit) goals one possesses with respect to knowledge' (2004: 5). In the case of closed-mindedness one of the motivations is the need for closure, that is, 'the individual's desire for a firm answer to a question, any firm answer as compared to confusion and/or ambiguity' (2004: 6). This doesn't seem an inherently bad motive and even has potential benefits. The point at which it becomes problematic is the point at which it gets in the way of knowledge. This assumes that the badness of the motive

reflects the badness of its effects. For obstructivism, the badness of epistemic vices *and* their component motives – if any- is accounted for by their impact on knowledge.

The next question is: in what sense are epistemic vices reprehensible? The simplest view is that epistemic vices are blameworthy. When a vice V is described as blameworthy it isn't exactly V that deserves blame but the person whose vice V is. If a person is arrogant or closed-minded then they are blameworthy for being arrogant or closed-minded. For a person to be blameworthy for V it must be the case that V is *harmful*. This is the harm condition on blameworthiness.[22] A second condition is the responsibility condition: V must be a character trait, attitude or way of thinking for which the person whose vice it is is *responsible*. The first condition is straightforward given that it is the nature of epistemic vices to be epistemically harmful to their possessor. What it takes for a person to be responsible for their epistemic vices is a much trickier.

One kind of responsibility is *acquisition responsibility*: a person is responsible in this sense for a vice V just if they are responsible for acquiring or developing it. One way for that to be true is if the person made choices in the past that led them to develop V.[23] The implication is that they are responsible and blameworthy for V because they acquired it voluntarily. This is the Aristotelian view defended by Zagzebski.[24] For her, a vice is an 'acquired defect', just as a virtue is an acquired excellence. It takes time to develop virtues and vices, and 'this feature is connected with the fact that we hold persons responsible for these traits' (1996: 116). How are virtues acquired? By training, habituation and imitation. For example, one might acquire the virtue of open-mindedness by imitating open-minded people in one's thinking, practicing open-minded thinking so that it becomes an entrenched habit, and training oneself to be open to diverse perspectives. It takes time and effort to become open-minded and that is why one is responsible for being that way. Virtues aren't innate and they can't be acquired 'at the flip of a switch' (1996: 120).

Whatever one makes of this account of virtue-acquisition, it does not offer a plausible picture of vice-acquisition. It isn't as if becoming arrogant or closed-minded requires time and effort, or that vice-acquisition requires training. One doesn't normally acquire epistemic vices by practicing or by imitating other people who already have them. Closed-minded and arrogant people typically don't have to work at being that way. For some it comes naturally; vices can be cultivated but don't have to be. For Aristotle vice is voluntary and up to us but that doesn't seem plausible in many cases. Heather Battaly has example of the young man in the Swat valley whose dogmatism is largely the result of bad luck, 'including the bad luck of being indoctrinated by the Taliban' (2016: 100)? There doesn't seem much sense in which the young man's dogmatism is voluntary but it's still a vice, and it's possible to criticise his dogmatism without holding him responsible for becoming that way.

More generally, suppose that we aren't usually responsible for our initial possession of epistemic vices, for becoming dogmatic or closed-minded or whatever. But even if we lack acquisition responsibility for a vice we might be responsible in other ways or in other senses. A person who is not responsible for *becoming* dogmatic might still be responsible for *being* that way. In what way? Acquisition responsibility is backward-looking: it is concerned with the actual or imagined history of one's particular vices. However, apart from the question of how one came to be a certain way there is also the question of what one can now do about it. Intuitively, there is a distinction between attributes that, however one acquired them, one is stuck with, and attributes that are malleable, that are open to revision or modification through one's own efforts. If a person has the ability to modify their character traits, attitudes or ways of thinking then they are still have control over them and, because of that, can be responsible for them.[25] This form of responsibility is *revision responsibility* since the focus is on what the subject can and can't change or revise. In principle, one be revision responsible for a vice for which one is not acquisition responsible.

There is more than one way of understanding the notion or revision responsibility and there is also the question whether, when an epistemic vice is said to be open to revision, what matters is whether they it is open to revision *in principle* or *in practice*. These questions will come into sharper focus on chapter 6 but the important point for the moment is that what it takes for one to be responsible for an epistemic vice is that one has control over it, the type of control to which the notion of revision responsibility gives expression. If there are reasons for thinking that character traits aren't malleable that would be a reason for thinking that one lacks revision responsibility for epistemic vices that are character traits. This is not my view. On my view epistemic vices, including intellectual character traits, are malleable enough for revision responsibility. *Personality* traits such as agreeableness, extraversion and neuroticism might not be malleable but when it comes to character traits there is 'normally something we can do about what we are given' and 'we need not be wholly in the grip of what dispositions we may find in ourselves' (Taylor 2006: 16).[26] It is only if and because this is so that we are revision responsible for our character traits.

How does this help with Battaly's example? The problem with the Taliban recruit is not just that he isn't acquisition responsible for his dogmatism. It's also doubtful whether he is revision responsible. Given his circumstances, changing his dogmatic outlook might not be a practical possibility for him. For a start, he may be unable to recognise his dogmatism for what it is or see it as an epistemic vice that needs correcting. Even if he does manage to see it as a problem he may lack any practical strategies for tackling it in an environment in which the vice is constantly being promoted and reinforced. If he isn't revision responsible for his dogmatism he isn't blameworthy for it, and if he isn't blameworthy then why call it a 'vice'? Aren't epistemic *vices*, as distinct from mere defects, supposed to be blameworthy? Or do such examples show that vice doesn't *require* something for which we can be blamed even if people are often blamed for their vices?

What Battaly's example shows that is that it is possible for a person to have a vice for which they aren't blameworthy. [27] In that case, in what sense is the young Taliban recruit's dogmatism still a *vice*? It might be epistemically harmful but so are mere defects. One way to justify talk of vices in such cases is to argue that even if the Taliban recruit isn't revision responsible for his dogmatism it isn't in the nature of dogmatism to be unrevisable. From the fact that *his* dogmatism isn't blameworthy it doesn't follow that nobody's dogmatism is ever blameworthy. There can be individual variations in blameworthiness for one and the same vice. Indeed, even if one were persuaded that dogmatism is an incurable condition for which blame is *never* appriopriate this would still leave it wide open that those who display this vice – including the young Taliban recruit – are open to criticism on account of it. The incurable dogmatist's dogmatism reflects badly on him to the extent that it defines the kind of thinker or knower he is. There is no such thing as an epistemic vice that merits no criticism, and the Taliban recruit is not completely off the hook for his epistemic and other vices – his attitude towards women for example – just because of they are the result of environmental factors.

This suggests the following: there are cognitive defects for which neither blame nor criticism is appropriate. Being blind from birth is an obstacle to certain kinds of knowledge – for example, knowledge of how things look – but it would be wildly inappropriate to criticise a person's blindness, let alone to regard them as blameworthy for being blind. Then there are intellectual defects that are open to criticism and in this sense reprehensible whether or not they are strictly blameworthy. Lastly, there are defects that are strictly blameworthy. Because revision responsibility for epistemic vices can vary from one person to another, one and the same epistemic vice can be blameworthy in some cases without being blameworthy in every case. Epistemic vices are at least open to criticism and often blameworthy. There is obviously much more to be said about the distinction between blame and criticism and I will come back to this in chapter 6.

Here, then, is how obstructivism conceives of epistemic vices: epistemic vices are blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible intellectual defects that get in the way of knowledge. More fully:

(OBS) An epistemic vice is a blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible character trait, attitude or way of thinking that systematically obstructs the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge.

(OBS) only talks about character traits, attitudes and ways of thinking because the most commonly cited epistemic vices fall into one or other of these three categories. If a case can be made that there are blameworthy personal failings that systematically get in the way of knowledge but aren't character traits, attitudes or ways of thinking then one should be relaxed about admitting them as epistemic vices.

(OBS) explains why closed-mindedness, arrogance and wishful thinking are epistemic vices but blindness and insomnia are not. As well as not being intellectual defects blindness and insomnia aren't blameworthy or reprehensible. This is partly a reflection of our lack of revision control over them. It's true that one might control one's insomnia by taking pills but revision responsibility for one's epistemic vices requires that one is able to modify them through one's own *cognitive* efforts. Modification by drug therapy doesn't count. (OBS) also allows stupidity to count as an epistemic vice. Understood as foolishness rather than lack of intelligence stupidity is an intellectual defect that gets in the way of knowledge.[28] Whether or not it is fully blameworthy it is open to criticism. Lack of intelligence is something a person can't help but when a person is criticised for foolishness it is assumed they could and should have known better. The implication is that they have a kind of revision responsibility for their flaw. The same goes for lesser epistemic vices like pretentiousness. They are both malleable – one can be less pretentious- and at least mildly reprehensible.

The remaining question is whether vice explanations are too personal. This question arises because epistemic vices are *personal* failings and part of the point of attributing such failings to people is to explain their conduct. A worry about this approach is that it neglects other more pertinent but less personal factors. Two alternatives to vice explanations are of particular interest. One draws attention to the role of *structural* factors in the explanation of human conduct. The other focuses on the role of *cognitive biases*. Sally Haslanger explains the first alternative as follows:

> Individuals exist within social structures; we are part of social structures. We work for organizations, we plays on sports teams, we raise children in families. In the case of structured wholes, the behavior of their parts is constrained by their position in the whole, and such constraints are relevant to explaining the behavior of the parts (2015: 4).

On this view, if one is serious about explaining Rumsfeld's conduct one needs to focus not on his individual psychology or personal epistemic vices but on the social and organisational structures within which he operated and by which his conduct would have been constrained. For example, there is the fact that he occupied a key role in the Department of Defense, with its own traditions and links to arms manufacturers. He didn't operate in a social and political vacuum in which everything turned on his personal outlook or character. He represented a set of interests that he would have taken into account in his planning and decision-making and that limited his room for manoeuvre. By focusing on Rumsfeld the man one risks losing sight of all these highly pertinent factors.

'Structuralism', as Haslanger's view might be called, offers important insights but the way to take account of them is not to say that the epistemic vices identified by Ricks played no part in explaining Rumsfeld's conduct.[29] The sensible view is that personal and structural factors were both relevant. It's easy to speak vaguely about the structural constraints on

Rumsfeld's conduct but once one gets down to specifics it's hard to see vice explanations as irrelevant. For example, what were the structural constraints that explain Rumsfeld's view that military dissent about Iraq had to be deemed the result of ignorance? Given his position as Defense Secretary one might have expected him to take the military's advice more seriously and it's not plausible that he behaved as anyone else in his position would have behaved. No doubt he wasn't free to do anything he liked but what he actually did and how he did it was an expression of him and his character. Structural explanations can be illuminating but they have their limits.[30] Sometimes it's down to the individual and his or her own character traits, attitudes and ways of thinking.

Cognitive biases are 'mental errors caused by our simplified information processing strategies' (Heuer 1999: 111).[31] We are hard-wired to use simple rules of thumb ('heuristics') to make judgements based on incomplete or ambiguous information and while these rules of thumb are generally quite useful they sometimes lead to systematic errors. These errors are, or are the result of, cognitive *biases*. An example is confirmation bias, the tendency to search for evidence that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs and interpret any evidence one finds as confirming what one already thinks. Cognitive biases are predictable, universal and mostly unconscious. It has also been argued by some notable theorists that cognitive biases can't be controlled because they stem from what Timothy H. Wilson and Nancy Brekke describe as 'uncontrollable mental processes' (1994: 118). If true this would make it difficult to think of cognitive biases as epistemic *vices* since it would leave no room for revision responsibility. In addition, hard-wired biases that are built into the way our minds work aren't person-specific – we all have them - and they aren't personal failings in the way that ordinary epistemic vices are personal failings. And yet cognitive biases offer powerful explanations of our intellectual conduct. Whereas vice explanations are 'personal', explanations in terms of cognitive biases are 'sub-personal'.[32]

Consider this example: the stated rationale for the US invasion of Iraq was a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) which asserted that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. WMD were never found and by 2004 it was widely accepted that most of the major judgments in the NIE were wrong. What is the explanation of these errors? According to a Senate Intelligence Committee report the problem was that the intelligence community 'had a tendency to accept information which supported the presumption that Iraq had….WMD programs more readily than information that contradicted it'.[33] Ambiguous evidence was interpreted as 'conclusively indicative' of a WMD programme while evidence that Iraq didn't have such a programme was ignored. When UN inspectors failed to find evidence of active Iraqi WMD programmes many intelligence analysts 'did not regard this information as significant'. In effect, the view that Iraq had WMD became 'a hypothesis in search of evidence'.

This reads like a textbook illustration of confirmation bias in action. According to the Senate Report the intelligence community struggled with the need for intelligence analysts to 'overcome analytic biases', such as 'the tendency to see what they would expect to see in the intelligence reporting'. Even if this is interpreted as a sub-personal explanation of the conduct of those responsible for the NIE this would still leave it open that there are *other* cases in which personal vice explanations work better. For example, Ricks' vice explanation of Rumsfeld's conduct is still in play and can't be replaced by a better sub-personal explanation. Rumsfeld's conduct was presumably influenced in various ways by his cognitive biases but there is no sub-personal cognitive bias that provides a more convincing explanation of his handling of Shinseki than Ricks' vice explanation. Arrogance is not a cognitive bias but a character trait or attitude. Sometimes there is no better explanation of a person's conduct than one in personal terms: getting personal in the way that Ricks does can be perfectly appropriate.

It's also not absolutely clear, in any case, that cognitive biases shouldn't be regarded as epistemic vices. Cognitive biases are universal, but then so are some epistemic vices such as wishful thinking. If cognitive biases are hard-wired, so are some epistemic vices. Wishful thinking is again a case in point. People vary in the extent to which they engage in wishful thinking but they also vary in the extent of their susceptibility to confirmation bias. Cognitive biases are mostly unconscious but so are epistemic vices: people are rarely conscious of their own epistemic biases and often don't know they have them. The only factor that really would count against the notion that cognitive biases are epistemic vices would be their supposed uncontrollability but it is controversial whether cognitive biases are really uncontrollable. As will become clearer in later chapters there may well be effective strategies for what has been called 'cognitive debiasing' (Croskerry et al 2013: ii66). The analysts responsible for the NIE are subject to criticism for their failure to overcome their analytic biases not only because of their terrible consequences but also because it is assumed that such biases can be overcome to some extent. It's hard to overcome one's cognitive biases if one doesn't know about them but the existence and seriousness of cognitive bias is something the analysts would have known about.[34]

If cognitive biases are genuine epistemic vices what kind of epistemic vice are they? The tendency to search for evidence that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs can be thought of as an attitude towards new evidence. Alternatively it is way of thinking. It's harder to think of cognitive biases as character traits though they may underpin some character traits such as closed-mindedness. There is no decisive reason for regarding cognitive biases as a category of epistemic vice that is fundamentally different from the ones listed in (OBS) but it wouldn't particularly matter anyway if they cognitive biases are different. I've already said that (OBS) should be relaxed about admitting additional varieties of epistemic vice as long as they satisfy the criteria.

Where does this leave the suggestion that vice explanations are 'too personal'? It's easy to see the force of this objection if proponents of vice explanations are trying to promote the notion that structural and sub-personal factors don't play an important role in explaining our intellectual and other conduct. There is, of course, no need for them to do that or to deny that satisfying explanations of our intellectual conduct are almost certainly going to have to be multidimensional. As well as structural and sub-personal explanations account also needs to be taken of the force of *situational* explanations of human behaviour generally: sometimes our conduct has much more to do with the situations in which we find ourselves than with our supposed virtues or vices. All of this should certainly be acknowledged by obstructivism. However, there are cases where structural, sub-personal and situational explanations don't do the job and where it is difficult to understand a person's intellectual conduct other than by reference to their epistemic vices. I've given one example in this chapter and will give others in later chapters. Sometimes when our thinking goes wrong or our inquiries fail to discover seemingly obvious truths the explanation *is* personal. The role of epistemic vices shouldn't be exaggerated but nor should it be underestimated.

Before concluding this chapter there is one more point about epistemic vices that needs to be made. The idea that being an epistemic vice has something to do with obstructing knowledge assumes that knowledge is worth having but sometimes, as Edna Ullman-Margalit notes, we don't want to know. For example, 'adopted children may wish not to know who their biological parents are' and 'it is possible that you do not want to know precisely what your spouse is up to when you are away' (2000: 73). Factors that prevent you from knowing what you don't want to know might not seem all that bad but the problem with epistemic vices is that they don't discriminate between desired and undesired knowledge, between the many varieties or knowledge that are worth having and those that aren't. That, in the end, is why epistemic vices are a problem for us and why tackling them, to the extent that they can

be tackled, is a worthwhile project. Knowledge is, by and large, something that human beings want and need. The fact that epistemic vices make it harder for us to get it, keep it, and share it is what ultimately accounts for their badness.

[1] This was a study by the Rand Corporation quoted in Ricks 2007: 78-9. I've drawn extensively on Ricks' book in this chapter. I'm aware that not all readers will agree with Ricks about Iraq.

[2] The administration's attitude was well expressed by a 2002 *Washington Post* column by Kenneth Adelman. The title of the column was 'Cakewalk in Iraq'.

[3] See Ricks 2007: 110-111.

[4] Ricks 2007.

[5] See Ricks 2007: 68-74 and also chapter 8 of Andrew Cockburn 2007.

[6] See the account in Ricks 2007: 97-8.

[7] These descriptions are all from Ricks 2007.

[8] Book length discussions of intellectual virtues include Kvanvig 1992, Montmarquet 1993, Zagzebski 1996, Roberts & Wood 2007, Baehr 2011 and Battaly 2015.

[9] The point I'm making here is similar to one that Casey Swank makes in a helpful discussion. What I have so far been calling intellectual virtues and vices Swank calls 'epistemic' virtues and vices. Swank points out that 'it has always just gone without saying that (whatever else they might be) epistemic virtues and vices are, to begin with, epistemic traits' (2000: 197). However, although the distinction is often clear in practice it's probably a fool's errand trying to come up with necessary and sufficient conditions for a trait or defect to be specifically epistemic or intellectual.

[10] 'Reprehensible' is sometimes defined as 'deserving of strong criticism'. I take it to mean 'deserving of some criticism'. 'Mildly reprehensible' is not an oxymoron.

[11] See Driver 2001: 82 on the importance of the qualification 'systematically'. However, she is mainly concerned with moral rather than intellectual virtues and vices.

[12] Driver argues that *moral* virtue has 'no necessary connection to good psychological states' (2001: xxi). In my view, epistemic vices have no necessary connection to bad psychological states.

[13] Taylor 2006 is a good example of this approach.

[14] On the distinction between blaming and criticising see Driver 2000: 132.

[15] As Tiberius & Walker point out, a 'dismissive attitude towards the views and perspectives of others' is 'at the heart of arrogance' (1998: 382). Tanesini 2016 argues convincingly that arrogance produces ignorance by silencing others.

[16] Fricker 2007 is the classic account of how the epistemic vice of prejudice can prevent the sharing of knowledge.

[17] See Smith 2005.

[18] As Miranda Fricker points out, 'many conceptions of knowledge cast some sort of epistemic confidence condition as a condition of knowledge' (2007: 49). Although it isn't uncontroversial that knowledge requires confidence it is nevertheless correct. On the notion that in order to know that P one must be 'reasonably confident' that P see Williamson 2000: 97.

[19] Adapting an example from A. J. Ayer, a superstitious person who inadvertently walks under a ladder might be confident that he was about to suffer a misfortune. Even if he *is* about to suffer a misfortune, he didn't know that this was going to be so because he didn't have the *right* to be confident. In Ayer's terminology, he didn't have 'the right to be sure'. One reason is that 'he arrived at his belief by a process of reasoning which would not be generally reliable' (1956: 31). For a discussion of Ayer's view see Foster 1985: 85-125.

[20] For further discussion of such scenarios see Montmarquet 1987 and Cassam 2016.

[21] Zagzebski 1996: 208.

[22] In general, 'we judge a person to be blameworthy when they are responsible for harm, and have no excuse' (Pickard & Ward 2013: 1142).

[23] See Smith 2005: 238-9.

[24] And also by Jonathan Jacobs in Jacobs 2001. On Aristotle, see Broadie 1991: 159-78.

[25] In her discussion of how we can be responsible for our own attitudes, Angela Smith compares what she calls the 'voluntary control view' with her own preferred 'rational relations' view. The former says that what is essential for attributions of responsibility is that a person have the ability to control or modify their attitudes 'through her own voluntary efforts' (2005: 240). The latter says that in order for a creature to be responsible for an attitude, 'it must be the kind of state that is open, in principle, to revision or modification through that creature's own process of rational reflection' (2005: 256). Either way, what counts for responsibility is revisability. There is more on the relationship between voluntary control and rational revisability in chapter 6.

[26] The 'Big Five' personality dimensions are extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness. These are determined partly by genetic factors and partly by environmental factors. To the extent that one's personality traits can't be changed through one's own efforts one lacks revision responsibility for them. This would also be a reason adopting Taylor's distinction between personality traits and character traits. The latter label should be reserved for traits for which one is at least partly revision responsible. Some personality psychologists use 'character' and 'personality' interchangeably but it's better not to do that. An excellent introduction to personality psychology is Nettle 2007.

[27] As Battaly puts it, 'it seems *possible* for us to have virtues and vices for whose possession we are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy' (2016: 107).

[28] On the distinction between stupidity as lack of intelligence and stupidity as foolishness see Mulligan 2014: 78.

[29] I'm not suggesting that this would be Haslanger's view. Unlike more extreme structuralists, such as Louis Althusser, she isn't proclaiming what Jackson & Pettit describe as the 'abolition of the subject' (1992: 111). See Althusser & Balibar 1979, Jackson & Pettit 1992, Thompson 1995, and Haslanger 2016.

[30] There is more about this in chapter 2.

[31] This is Heuer's summary of the conception of cognitive biases developed in the 1970s by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. See Kahneman 2011 for an overview. Like Kahneman (e.g. Kahneman 2011: 3-4) Heuer writes as if that cognitive biases *are* systematic errors. It would be more accurate to describe them as the *cause* of various systematic errors in our thinking.

[32] In sub-personal explanations, 'the person, qua person, does not figure' (Elton 2000: 2). Their concern is not with what *people* do but with how their brains operate. The sub-personal level is, at Dennett puts it, the explanatory level of 'brains and events in the nervous system' (2010: 105).

[33] All the quotations in this and the next paragraph are from the 2004 *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq* by the Select Committee on Intelligence. As well as confirmation bias, the report also makes much of the extent to which intelligence analysts were affected by 'groupthink', the phenomenon described in Janis 1982.

[34] Thanks to the work of Richards Heuer, who wrote excellent survey articles about cognitive bias for the benefit of intelligence analysts at the C.I.A. Some of this work is reproduced in Heuer 1999. According to Heuer, his aim was to translate the psychological literature on cognitive bias 'into language that intelligence analysts can understand' (1999: vii). There is little evidence that the intelligence analysts criticised by the Senate Report took on board Heuer's insights.