Paper title: Epistemic Insouciance

Author: Quassim Cassam

Affiliation: University of Warwick, UK

Address: Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, U.K

Email: q.cassam@warwick.ac.uk

Abstract:

This paper identifies and elucidates a hitherto unnamed epistemic vice: epistemic insouciance. Epistemic insouciance consists in a casual lack of concern about whether one's beliefs have any basis in reality or are adequately supported by the best available evidence. The primary intellectual product of epistemic insouciance is bullshit in Harry Frankfurt's sense. This paper clarifies the notion of epistemic insouciance and argues that epistemic insouciance is both an epistemic posture and an epistemic vice. Epistemic postures are attitudes towards epistemic objects such as knowledge, evidence or inquiry. Epistemic vices are defined as character traits, attitudes or thinking styles that systematically obstruct the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge. Epistemic insouciance is not just a posture but an affective posture. Such postures are distinguished from epistemic stances, which are policies that one can adopt or reject. Epistemic malevolence, as Jason Baehr describes it, is an example of an epistemically vicious epistemic stance that issues in active attempts to undermine the knowledge possessed by a specified group of individuals. An example of epistemic malevolence in action is the so-called 'tobacco strategy'. I argue that epistemic malevolence undermines knowledge by instilling doubts about respectable sources of evidence.

I

In the days leading up to Britain's 2016 vote to leave the European Union (EU), a leading pro-Leave campaigner was asked by a journalist how many independent economic authorities agreed with him that Britain would be better off outside Europe. The interviewer was Faisal Islam of *Sky News* and his interviewee was Michael Gove, a government minister. Gove was pressed by Islam to admit that his views about the economic benefits of leaving the European Union were not shared by most experts. In response Gove airily dismissed such concerns. "The people of this country", he insisted "have had enough of experts".[1]

Gove wasn't the only Leave campaigner who seemed to be thinking in these terms. In an interview after the vote Arron Banks, a funder of the Leave campaign, explained his side's victory on basis that the pro-EU Remain campaign had featured "fact, fact, fact, fact, fact" but that didn't work: "you've got to connect with people emotionally".[2] Facts, on this view, are boring, and politicians who rely on evidence or experts in formulating their policies are likely to fail when confronted by opponents who don't feel the need to burden themselves with such matters. Many commentators detected in the posture of Gove and Banks evidence of the rise of 'post-truth politics' in the UK, a style of politics in which, in the words of the *Guardian* columnist Jonathan Freedland, "an unhesitating liar can be king" and "those pedants still hung up on the facts and evidence and all that boring stuff are left for dust, their boots barely laced while the lie has spread halfway around the world" (Freedland 2016).

The post-truth politicians targeted by Freedland included Boris Johnson, a former Mayor of London and leading figure in the Leave campaign. In an early career as a journalist he made his name by writing faintly comic but mendacious articles about the EU. Johnson revelled in the effect his articles seemed to be having and laughed it off when his stories were shown to bear no relation to reality. He was twice fired for lying and was described by fellow

politician-turned-journalist Matthew Parris as "under-prepared, jolly, sly, dishonest and unapologetic" (Parris 2016). Curiously, Johnson had a reputation for not being in favour of withdrawal from the EU. Although he wrote a pro-Leave article for the *Daily Telegraph* it later transpired that he had also written a second article arguing for the opposite point of view.[3]

It's hardly news that politicians can be cynical and dishonest but what was striking about the politicians profiled by Freedland was their sheer *insouciance*. Insouciance in the ordinary sense is a casual lack of concern, carelessness or indifference. The particular form of insouciance to which some politicians are prone is *epistemic* insouciance: a casual lack of concern about the facts or an indifference to whether their political beliefs and statements have any basis in reality. Epistemic insouciance means not really caring much about any of this and being excessively casual and nonchalant about the challenge of finding answers to complex questions, partly as a result of a tendency to view such questions less complex than they really are. Epistemic insouciance means not giving a shit. It means viewing the need to find evidence in support of one's views as a mere inconvenience, as something that is not to be taken too seriously. Finding accurate answers to complex questions can be hard work and epistemic insouciance makes that hard work seem unnecessary.

Before going any further, there is one concern about the idea of epistemic insouciance that needs to be addressed at the outset. This is the concern that it is no more than an exotic label for a familiar phenomenon: intellectual dishonesty. When a politician makes claims that he knows to be false he isn't being 'epistemically insouciant'. He is lying. On this reading, calling a politician 'epistemically insouciant' is a polite way of saying, or implying, that he is a barefaced liar. In that case, why not just call him a barefaced liar? This is a reasonable question, and the best way to answer it is to relate the notion of epistemic insouciance to

Harry Frankfurt's notion of bullshit. In his essay "On Bullshit" Frankfurt gives this account of the difference between lying and bullshitting:

> It is impossible for someone to lie unless he thinks he knows the truth…. A person who lies is thereby responding to the truth and he is to that extent respectful of it. When an honest man speaks, he says only what he believes to be true; and for the liar, it is correspondingly indispensable that he considers his statements to be false. For the bullshitter, however, all these bets are off: he is neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false. His eye is not on the facts at all, as the eyes of the honest man and of the liar are, except insofar as they may be pertinent to his interest in getting away with what he says. He does not care whether the things he says describe reality correctly (2005: 55-6).

It is because the bullshitter doesn't care about this that "bullshit is a greater enemy of the truth than lies are" (2005: 61). The bullshitter doesn't *reject* the authority of truth, he pays no attention to it at all.[4]

One way to put this would be to describe the bullshitter as epistemically insouciant. Indeed, bullshit is the primary product of epistemic insouciance. Bullshit is "produced without concern for the truth" (Frankfurt 2005: 47), and this lack of concern is the essence of epistemic insouciance. This explains why being epistemically insouciant is not the same as being a liar. Lying is something that a person *does* rather than an attitude, and the intention to conceal the truth implies that the liar is far from indifferent to the truth or falsity of his utterances. Epistemic insouciance is an attitude rather than something that a person does, and it does imply an indifference to the truth or falsity of his utterances. To describe a politician as a liar rather than as epistemically insouciant is to ignore the fundamental distinction between their lies and their bullshit. Of course bullshitters can be liars but it isn't their lying as such that makes them bullshitters, and they don't have to be liars in order to qualify as

epistemically insouciant. The politicians I've accused of epistemic insouciance may or may not be liars but their political success is a testament to what James Ball aptly describes as the "power of bullshit" (2017: 15).

Epistemic insouciance is an epistemic vice. As I conceive of them, epistemic vices are character traits, attitudes or thinking styles that systematically, though not invariably, "get in the way of knowledge" (Medina 2013: 30) by obstructing the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge. I call this account of epistemic vice *obstructivism*. As obstructivism conceives of them, epistemic vices are harmful to us as knowers but they are different from mere defects. Unlike mere defects, epistemic vices are blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible. Epistemic insouciance is an *attitude vice*, an epistemic vice that is an attitude. By 'attitude' I don't mean 'propositional attitude'. Epistemic insouciance is what I will call an epistemic *posture*.[5] This further clarifies the relationship between epistemic insouciance and bullshit. Bullshit is not an attitude and nor, strictly speaking, is being a bullshitter, that is, being disposed to spout bullshit. Epistemic insouciance is the attitude, or an attitude, that makes one a bullshitter and thereby causes one to spout bullshit. Furthermore, bullshit is not the only product of epistemic insouciance. Epistemic insouciance might lead a person to refuse to engage with certain types of evidence or inquiry but refusing to engage is not bullshit even if it results in bullshit.

Some attitude vices are epistemic postures while others are what I will call *stances*. My idea of a stance draws on Bas van Fraasen's conception of a stance in his book *The Empirical Stance*, though I'll be using this notion in ways that weren't envisaged by van Fraassen. I'll have more to say below about distinction between postures and stances but an example of an epistemically vicious stance is what Jason Baehr calls "epistemic malevolence", that is, "opposition to knowledge as such" (2010: 190). Epistemic insouciance and epistemic malevolence can be difficult to distinguish in practice and some of the political

conduct I have been describing might be viewed as epistemically malevolent rather than insouciant. I will come back to this, after discussing a more clear-cut example of epistemic malevolence, namely, the so-called "tobacco strategy" described by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway in their book *Merchants of Doubt*.[6]

This paper has three main missions. The first is to elucidate the notion of an epistemic posture and make it plausible that epistemic insouciance is one such posture. The second is to elucidate the notion of an epistemic stance, with a view to distinguishing between stances and postures and identifying epistemic malevolence as a stance rather than a posture. The third is to explain the sense in which epistemic insouciance and epistemic malevolence are *bona fide* epistemic vices. Having completed these missions I will end with some brief reflections on the relationship between attitude vices and other vices. This essay is a contribution to vice epistemology, the philosophical study of the nature, identity and epistemological significance of epistemic vices.[7] Vice epistemology is less familiar than virtue epistemology, but the study of epistemic virtue is unlikely to cast much light on recent political events.

## II

Epistemic insouciance is an attitude but what is an attitude? One's attitude towards something is one's perspective on it.[8] Attitudes require attitude objects, and an attitude object is anything towards which it is possible to have an attitude.[9] So, for example, people, political parties and ideas are attitude objects. Attitudes can be positive or negative, weaker or stronger. Examples include dislike, contempt, indifference, disdain, suspicion, nonchalance, hostility, cynicism and respect. These are all examples of *postures*. For example, contempt for another person is a posture towards them that has a range of behavioral manifestations such as refusing to shake their hand or avoiding them in social situations. As Michelle Mason notes, contempt is a "form of regard" that has a "salient affective quality" (2003: 241). One element of contempt is a low regard for the object of one's contempt but contempt isn't just a

matter of belief or opinion.[10] It is something that is *felt*, and this feeling of contempt is the affective quality of the attitude. If this is right then contempt for another person is not just a posture but an *affective posture*, a posture with an affective dimension.

Another affective posture is arrogance. At the heart of arrogance is a "dismissive attitude towards the views and perspectives of others" (Tiberius and Walker 1998: 382). In the case of intellectual arrogance this attitude is grounded a belief in one's intellectual superiority but arrogance, like contempt, isn't just a matter of belief. It also involves what Alessandra Tanesini describes as "a feeling of superiority over others" (2016: 74).[11] The affective quality of arrogance, like that of contempt, is a mental presence – a feeling of superiority- but not all postures are like arrogance and contempt in this regard. For example, one might be said to *feel* indifferent about something but indifference is marked by the *absence* of certain feelings or emotions rather than by their presence. However, not even indifference is a pure absence; there is something that it feels like not to care about something or to be left feeling cold about it. Like numbness, indifference is both a feeling and an absence of feeling.

Affective postures are typically involuntary. The sense in which this is so is that they aren't matters of choice or decision. This isn't surprising since how one feels isn't usually a matter of choice or decision. For example, if one feels contempt or respect for another person one hasn't usually chosen to be contemptuous or respectful. One can, of course, choose to *show* respect but one can't choose to *have* respect for someone if one can see nothing about them that deserves respect. Equally, one can't decide to feel intellectually superior.[12] Even if, for some obscure reason, one decides to be dismissive of the views and perspectives of another person one might find their views so compelling that it is impossible for one not to take them seriously.

In philosophy, attitudes are usually understood as *propositional* attitudes, that is, as mental states ascribed by means of a 'that' clause. The relationship between propositional attitudes and postures is complicated. On the one hand, it seems clear that many postures aren't propositional attitudes and many propositional attitudes aren't postures. One is contemptuous or disdainful *towards* something or someone. There is no such thing as having contempt or disdain *that* such-and-such. Also, many propositional attitudes lack an affective element.[13] To say that someone believes it is raining is to say nothing about their feelings or emotions. On the other hand, if one feels contempt for another person it is usually because one has certain beliefs about them. One's affective posture in this case is not a propositional attitude but is related to one's propositional attitudes.

Epistemic insouciance is a posture towards truth, evidence or inquiry, a posture that is manifested by one's epistemic conduct. It implies, and is partly constituted by, a marked lack of intellectual seriousness, flippancy about basing one's views expert opinion or what the evidence shows. It is a casualness or indifference to the truth and to the need to base one's opinions on the relevant facts. Epistemic insouciance is not usually a matter of decision or choice and is in this sense involuntary. One doesn't normally elect to be excessively casual and nonchalant towards the challenge of finding answers to complex questions.[14] Epistemic insouciance is a reflection of what one cares about, and what one cares about is not typically a matter of choice or decision. It is possible not to care about what the evidence shows, or whether one's views about a particular topic have any basis in reality, without having decided not to care about these things.

Is epistemic insouciance an affective posture? It might seem that it is marked by the absence of certain feelings or emotions rather than by their presence but the reality is more complicated. Epistemic insouciance is not just a matter of not caring about certain things. Lack of concern about what the evidence shows is one element of epistemic insouciance but

another element in some cases is contempt. There is contempt for the facts, contempt for evidence and, in the case of some politicians, contempt for the public. Each of these varieties of contempt is detectable in the posture of politicians I have described. Their contempt is the affective quality of their epistemic insouciance and explains their indifference to matters that ought to concern a conscientious truth-seeker. In addition, as I've noted, indifference is itself something that can be felt; it is not the pure absence of feeling.

Is contempt necessary for epistemic insouciance? In the case of Boris Johnson one might think that the problem is not that he has contempt for the facts or evidence but that he doesn't care enough about these things and is too lazy to seek genuine evidential support for his views. In Heather Battaly's terminology, Johnson is a *slacker* who can't be bothered to do the hard intellectual work required to find accurate answers to complex questions. However, being a slacker can cause a person to be epistemically insouciant regardless of whether they feel contempt for serious inquiry or for those who engage in it. To say that a person feels contempt for something is to imply that they feel strongly about it but slackers don't care enough about serious inquiry to feel contempt for it. As Battaly points out, a genuine slacker doesn't have the energy to feel contempt.[15]

One response to this line of thinking would be to say that whether or not a slacker is *motivated* by contempt, his epistemic insouciance and the epistemic conduct to which it gives rise still *manifest* contempt for the facts and the evidence. On this account, however, it isn't his contempt that explains his epistemic insouciance but rather his epistemic insouciance that explains his contempt. That is, his contempt isn't an independently identifiable component of his epistemic insouciance. A slacker like Johnson *displays* contempt for something for which he may not *feel* contempt; he displays his contempt by his conduct. If this is right then contempt *qua* affective posture isn't strictly necessary for epistemic insouciance even if the two often go together. What is necessary is what I have described as an indifference to the

truth and to the need to base one's views on the relevant facts or evidence. It is this indifference or nonchalance that is essential to epistemic insouciance and that constitutes its affective dimension, assuming that indifference has an affective quality. Not caring about something is a negative rather than a positive affective posture.

If epistemic insouciance is an attitude what is its 'object'? Knowledge, evidence and inquiry are *epistemic* objects, and attitudes towards epistemic objects are *epistemic attitudes*. In these terms, epistemic insouciance is an epistemic attitude. Lack of concern about what the evidence shows is one epistemic dimension of epistemic insouciance but there are others. A fundamental epistemic activity for most humans is inquiry. Inquiry is the means by which we search for answers to our questions, ranging from the banal to the momentous. Inquiry is the attempt "to find things out, to extend our knowledge by carrying out investigations directed at answering questions" (Hookway 1994: 211). Like other things we do, inquiring is something that can be done well or badly, and the quality of inquiry is partly a function of the attitude of the inquirer. To be epistemically insouciant is to have a distinctive attitude towards inquiry, to view the business of extending our knowledge by carrying out investigations directed at answering questions as a tedious chore that doesn't merit one's full attention. This makes epistemic insouciance an epistemic attitude, an attitude towards inquiry. However, the objects of this attitude aren't exclusively epistemic. Contempt for the truth isn't an epistemic attitude since truth isn't an epistemic object.

Just how representative is epistemic insouciance of attitude vices generally? Another attitude vice is prejudice. According to Miranda Fricker, "the idea of a prejudice is most basically that of a *pre-judgement*", that is, "a judgement made or maintained without proper regard to the evidence" (2007: 32-3). There are two ways in which this might seem at odds with my account of attitude vices. First, judgements are propositional attitudes rather than affective postures. Second, the objects of prejudice don't appear especially epistemic. If one

has a negative attitude towards another person on account of their race then one is certainly guilty of prejudice but people and races aren't epistemic objects, and racial prejudice doesn't sound much like an epistemic attitude. These issues are brought into sharp focus by Fricker's example from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.[16] In that novel, a young black man, Tom Robinson is accused of raping a white girl, Mayella Ewell. Tom is innocent but when the evidence of his innocence comes up against the all-white jury's prejudice the latter proves decisive and he is found guilty. The jury doesn't accept Tom's account of what happened between him and Mayella, and this is a reflection of their attitude towards black men in general and Robinson in particular. The jury's prejudice is, however, not just a matter of judgement. It is an affect-laden posture or orientation that involves deep feelings of contempt, loathing and superiority. The jury's negative attitude isn't at bottom an intellectual matter. It is more visceral than that. Like other affective postures one's prejudices are partly a reflection of one's judgements but this is not to say that prejudices *are* judgements, as Fricker suggests. What makes a prejudice a *prejudice* is that it is an attitude formed and sustained without any proper inquiry into the merits or demerits of its object. It is in the nature of prejudice to be resistant to counter-evidence but such resistance is not the exclusive preserve of judgements or beliefs. It can also affect affective postures.

As for whether prejudice is an *epistemic* attitude, Fricker's discussion brings out the sense in which it is. As she points out, in face-to-face testimonial exchanges the hearer must "make some attribution of *credibility* regarding the speaker" (2007: 18). If the speaker knows something but is disbelieved by a hearer because of the hearer's prejudice against the speaker then the speaker is wronged "specifically in their capacity as a knower" (2007: 1). This is one of the wrongs suffered by Tom Robinson, who is a victim of what Fricker calls "testimonial injustice". Testimonial injustice is an epistemic injustice, and the prejudice that is to blame for it is, to this extent, an epistemic attitude. Prejudice counts as an epistemic attitude to the

extent that it is an affective posture towards another person's *epistemic* credentials. A negative attitude towards another race is not *per se* an epistemic attitude but it implies an epistemic attitude. So prejudice is not a counterexample to the view that attitude vices are epistemic postures. This is not to say, however, that all attitude vices are postures. As mentioned previously, some attitude vices are stances, and now would be a good time to flesh out the notion of a stance. My conception of a stance is based on Bas van Fraassen's account in his book *The Empirical Stance*, so van Fraassen's work is the place to start.

III

According to van Fraassen, a philosophical position can consist in a "stance".[17] A stance in the literal sense is a person's vantage point or bodily posture.[18] In a less literal sense it is "an attitude adopted in relation to a particular subject" (2004: 175). A stance in this sense is "something one can adopt or reject" (2004: 175) and serves as a policy or guideline.[19] It is in this sense that philosophical views like empiricism are stances. For example, when empiricists declare that all factual knowledge must ultimately derive from experience they can be viewed as adopting the policy of denigrating claims to knowledge that lack any basis in experience.[20] However, stances are neither affective nor involuntary. They aren't distinguished by the presence or absence of a particular affective quality and they can be voluntarily adopted or rejected.[21] Like postures, stances may involve propositional attitudes but "having a stance can't be equated with holding particular beliefs" (van Fraassen 2004: 174). Nevertheless, the policy of rejecting claims to knowledge claims that aren't based on experience is based on beliefs about the relationship between knowledge and experience.[22] Stances are usually a reflection of what one believes.

I've already suggested that epistemic malevolence is an attitude vice that is a stance rather than a posture. Jason Baehr characterises moral malevolence as "*opposition to the good as such*" (2010: 190) and epistemic malevolence as "opposition to knowledge as such" (2010:

203). Being malevolent in either sense is a policy rather than a posture: it is a voluntarily adopted epistemic attitude that lacks an affective element.[23] For Baehr, the opposition to the good that is essential to malevolence, whether moral or epistemic, is volitional, active and personally deep.[24] It is volitional in the sense that it involves the will and is not the mere preference that the good should be opposed. It is active in the sense that it issues in actual attempts to "stop, diminish, undermine, destroy, speak out, or turn others against the good" (2010: 190). Finally, what makes it personally deep is that it reflects the malevolent person's cares and concerns. Assuming that the epistemic good is knowledge, epistemic malevolence is opposition to knowledge. In its impersonal form it is opposition to knowledge as such. In contrast, personal epistemic malevolence is opposition to another person's share of knowledge or to their "epistemic well-being as such" (2010: 203).

A rich source of examples of epistemic malevolence is research in the emerging field of *agnotology*, the study of the production and maintenance of ignorance.[25] One example is the tobacco industry's attempts to generate and maintain public ignorance concerning tobacco's impact on health. The story of this exercise in fact fighting, which is told by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway in their book *Merchants of Doubt*, is worth recounting if the aim is to see what real world epistemic malevolence might look like.[26] The story begins in the 1950s with the discovery that smoking causes lung cancer. The tobacco industry was thrown into panic by this discovery and reacted by hiring a public relations firm to challenge the scientific evidence. The firm recommended the creation of a Tobacco Industry Research Committee which would fund research to cast doubt on the link between smoking and cancer.

Doubt was the key. In the words of a notorious memo written by one tobacco industry executive, "Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the minds of the general public".[27] What Oreskes and Conway refer to as the "tobacco strategy" was simple but highly effective. By "cherry-picking data and focusing

on unexplained or anomalous details' (2010: 18) the aim was to manufacture uncertainty about the health effects of smoking and to foster the impression of a genuine scientific debate about the link. The industry's view was that there was no proof that tobacco was bad. It promoted this view by inventing a debate and "convincing the mass media that responsible journalists had an obligation to represent 'both sides' of it" (2010: 16). This strategy worked, especially in court, where for many years the tobacco industry was able to defend itself by supplying expert witnesses to testify that the link between smoking and cancer was uncertain. The industry knew perfectly well that smoking was harmful but it "conspired to suppress this knowledge…. to fight the facts and to merchandise doubt" (2010: 33). The merchandising of doubt about the effects of smoking was the means by which the industry tried to prevent the public from knowing what it knew. If the public doubted whether smoking was harmful, or thought it was still an open question, they couldn't know or believe that smoking was harmful because they wouldn't be confident that this was the case.

The tobacco strategy generalises and indeed similar methods have been used by climate change deniers, anti-vaccination campaigners and others to sow the seeds of doubt about what is in reality overwhelming scientific evidence.[28] In every case the basic strategy is to employ scientists to denigrate the work of their mainstream colleagues and suggest that the facts are less clear than they really are. However, Oreskes and Conway suggest that the modern era of fighting facts began with the tobacco strategy. The story they tell is "about a group of scientists who fought the scientific evidence and spread confusion on many of the most important issues of our time" (2010: 9). An obvious question is: why would any self-respecting scientist want to do that? No doubt the financial incentives were considerable but it is difficult for anyone familiar with these notions not to think that moral and epistemic malevolence were also playing a significant role. The sense in which the scientists employed by the tobacco industry were morally malevolent is that they actively undermined the

physical well-being of smokers by making them less likely to kick the habit. The scientists' epistemic malevolence consisted in their opposition to epistemic well-being of smokers by spreading knowledge-undermining doubts about the health effects of smoking. They blocked the spread of knowledge by fighting genuine facts with 'alternative facts' and relying on the inability of non-scientists and the media to tell the difference.[29] They didn't bullshit about the dangers of smoking, they lied about its dangers and about what they knew.

One worry one might have about describing the tobacco strategy as epistemically malevolent in Baehr's sense is that its target is too specific. Presumably the tobacco industry was not opposed to knowledge as such and so didn't display epistemic malevolence in its impersonal form. Nor did it oppose the *overall* epistemic well-being of cigarette smokers. All it did was to prevent many cigarette smokers from acquiring or retaining one specific variety of knowledge – knowledge of the health consequences of cigarette smoking – and one might think that this target is too narrow for talk of epistemic malevolence to be appropriate. This is so even if it is recognised that the tobacco strategy did a lot of collateral epistemic damage. For example, its assault on scientific knowledge of the effects of smoking was also implicitly an assault on scientific knowledge more generally. Scepticism about mainstream science in one domain can lead to scepticism in others but the tobacco strategy itself was only concerned to undermine the received scientific wisdom in one domain.

One response to this worry would be to broaden the notion of epistemic malevolence to allow even highly targeted knowledge-undermining to count as an instance of it. Even if the tobacco strategy lacks the full generality of epistemic malevolence as Baehr understands it, it is still recognisably a form of epistemic malevolence. A different response to the concern about the narrowness of the tobacco strategy would be to look for less restricted forms of epistemic malevolence to illustrate the phenomenon. For example, the epistemic malevolence of certain tabloid newspapers and news channels seems quite general. They undermine the

epistemic well-being of their readers and viewers in a more general sense by presenting propaganda as news and implicitly promoting the lowering of epistemic standards. It is as if these news outlets are actively trying to damage the epistemic sensibilities of the electorate. Prolonged exposure to *Fox News* or British tabloids can't do anyone much good, epistemically speaking.

What is the relationship between epistemic malevolence and epistemic insouciance? They are conceptually distinct though often allied in practice. The conceptual distinction is between not caring about something and actively opposing it. Epistemic malevolence is different from epistemic insouciance precisely because it is *not* a matter of being excessively casual or nonchalant about the challenge of finding answers to complex questions or tending to view such questions less complex than they really are. Whatever else the tobacco industry can be accused of it isn't that. Unlike the epistemically insouciant, the epistemically malevolent don't find the need to find evidence in support of their views a mere inconvenience. They are in the business of actively undermining what, in private, they recognise as good evidence in favour of the views they seek to undermine. It is precisely because the epistemically malevolent *do* care what the evidence shows or what the facts are that they are in the business of subverting the evidence or putting forward 'alternative facts'. The tobacco industry cared very much what the evidence showed about harmful effects of smoking and many industry executives gave up smoking when they saw the evidence. What they didn't want was for their customers to do the same and that is not at all the same as not caring about the evidence.

A very natural way to capture these intuitive distinctions is to conceptualise epistemic malevolence as a stance rather than a posture. Stances aren't distinguished by the presence or absence of a particular affective quality and much the same goes for epistemic malevolence. Epistemic malevolence is an attitude but not an *affective* attitude like epistemic insouciance.

The tobacco strategy shows clearly that one can be epistemically malevolent without being epistemically insouciant. Baehr suggests at one point that malevolence involves a kind of "hostility or contempt for the good" (2010: 190), and this might make this attitude appear no less 'affective' than epistemic insouciance. However, hostility or contempt for the epistemic good isn't essential for epistemic malevolence, and what motivated the tobacco strategy wasn't contempt for knowledge but economic self-interest. Furthermore, the tobacco industry's epistemic malevolence, like epistemic malevolence generally, was a matter of policy rather than a passive orientation, the policy of spreading doubts about the dangers of smoking. It was open to the industry to adopt or reject this policy. Epistemic malevolence is voluntary in a way that postures are not. One doesn't decide not to care about whether one's views are supported by the evidence, in the way that one decides whether to undermine another person's knowledge or the evidence on which their knowledge is based.

Even if epistemic malevolence doesn't entail epistemic insouciance, could it be that epistemic insouciance entails epistemic malevolence? There might be a case for thinking this if one took the view that insouciance entails contempt, and that the contempt it amounts to a form of malevolence.[30] However, the affective core of epistemic insouciance is indifference rather than contempt and indifference is not a form of epistemic malevolence. Furthermore, even if one took the view that epistemic insouciance does entail contempt it still wouldn't follow that it entails epistemic malevolence since contempt is not the same as malevolence. Contempt for knowledge is a posture rather a stance and, unlike epistemic malevolence, needn't result in the active undermining of knowledge or subverting of evidence.

Despite the relatively clear conceptual distinction between epistemic insouciance and epistemic malevolence it can be hard to know which vice a person's conduct exemplifies. It is reasonably clear that the tobacco strategy was epistemically and morally malevolent but what about the way that some Leave campaigners argued in favour of Britain's exit from the EU?

For example, they claimed that Britain sends £350 million a week to the EU and this amount would be available for the National Health Service after Britain's exit. Yet the £350 million figure was misleading since it took no account of money paid to Britain by the EU, and the suggestion that an extra £350 million a week would be available for the National Health Service after Brexit was hastily withdrawn by the official Leave campaign after its victory in the 2016 referendum.[31] To describe the attitude of those responsible for this strategy as epistemically insouciant might be seen as over-generous. In its own way, the spreading of misleading information about the economic benefits of leaving the EU was as epistemically malevolent as the tobacco strategy. The active promotion of political and economic ignorance was the *policy* of some senior figures in the Leave campaign, and not just a reflection of an epistemic *posture*. Yet some of these same figures also displayed what I have been calling epistemic insouciance. Exactly where epistemic insouciance ends and epistemic malevolence begins is sometimes hard to say, and the attitude of many politicians in democratic political systems is a mixture of the two. What, if anything, can be done about this is an important question, but not for discussion here.

## IV

The remaining question is: in what sense are epistemic insouciance and epistemic malevolence epistemic vices? For obstructivism epistemic vices systematically obstruct the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge, and different vices bear on different dimensions of our knowledge. Intellectual arrogance obstructs the gaining and sharing of knowledge. For example, as Thomas Ricks shows in his book about the Iraq war, the arrogant and dismissive attitude of senior members of the Bush administration prevented them from coming to know how many troops would be needed in Iraq after the US invasion in 2003.[32] It did that by making it difficult for them to learn from those in the military who knew the answer to their question. By the same token, those who knew the answer were prevented from sharing their

knowledge with the administration. Prejudice is another attitude that obstructs the gaining and sharing of knowledge. In Fricker's example, the jury's prejudice prevented Tom Robinson from sharing his knowledge and thereby also prevented the jury from knowing what happened to Mayella Ewell. With epistemic malevolence the primary impact is on the gaining and keeping of knowledge. For those who didn't know about the link between smoking and cancer the aim of the tobacco strategy was to prevent them from coming to know about it. With regard to people already who knew about the link the aim was to deprive them of their knowledge. As for the epistemic consequences of epistemic insouciance, lack of concern about the truth makes it harder to know the truth, while the casual disparaging of experts prevents them from sharing their knowledge with the rest of us. In addition, the half-truths and outright falsehoods that are the natural by-product of epistemic insouciance make it harder for us to retain our knowledge. Being subjected to a relentless barrage of misleading statements about a given subject can deprive one of one's prior knowledge of that subject by muddying the waters and making one mistrust one's own judgement, even if one's judgements is in fact sound.

These impacts of attitude vices on our knowledge are made intelligible by an account of knowledge on which one knows that P only if P is true, one is reasonably confident that P and one has the right to be confident.[33] On this account, which is by no means the only account that is capable of explaining the impact of epistemic vices on our knowledge, one way for an attitude vice to get in the way of knowledge is for it to make one's beliefs less likely to be true. All the epistemic vices I have been describing have that effect. The evidence in favour of a belief is evidence for its *truth*, and beliefs with adequate evidential backing are more likely to be true than beliefs that lack such backing. Attitude vices, like epistemic vices generally, get in the way of knowledge by making one's beliefs less likely to be evidence-based. The jury's prejudice in *To Kill a Mockingbird* meant that they didn't base their belief

in Tom Robinson's guilt on the evidence, and as a result ended up with the false belief that he was guilty. Similarly, it wasn't just bad luck that the Bush administration's beliefs about the number of US troops that would be needed in Iraq were false. They were false because they weren't based on the evidence, and they weren't evidence-based because the arrogance of Donald Rumsfeld and others led them to ignore that evidence. Someone who is epistemically insouciant as well as intellectually arrogant is even less likely to end up with true beliefs: not caring about the evidence is hardly conducive to forming beliefs that are evidence-based.

Another way for attitude vices to get in the way of knowledge is by undermining one's confidence and making it more difficult for one to hold on to one's true beliefs. This is the essence of the tobacco strategy. The surest way to deprive someone of their knowledge of the connection between smoking and cancer is to instil doubts in their mind about whether there really is a link. The more one doubts the existence of a link the less confident one is that it is genuine. Beyond a certain point this loss of confidence implies loss of belief and, by implication, loss of knowledge. However, the person who is deprived of knowledge by the vice of epistemic malevolence is not the person with the vice. Epistemic malevolence is in this respect different from other epistemic vices, whose primary epistemic impact is on those whose vices they are. Epistemic malevolence is other-directed, and its effectiveness is an indication of the close relationship between knowledge, belief and confidence. Instilling doubts about the link between smoking and cancer is effective as a means of depriving a person of knowledge of this link because knowledge requires confidence.

This point is worth making because the idea that epistemic confidence is a condition of knowledge is not uncontroversial.[34] It has often been argued, correctly, that knowledge doesn't require certainty, and some epistemologists have even questioned the idea that belief is a condition of knowledge.[35] If knowledge doesn't require belief then depriving someone of their belief that smoking causes cancer doesn't necessarily deprive them of their knowledge

that smoking causes cancer. If knowledge doesn't require confidence then undermining one's confidence that smoking causes cancer doesn't necessarily deprive one of one's knowledge of this fact. However, it is easy to turn this argument on their head: if confidence and belief are not required for knowledge then the tobacco strategy would not be nearly as effective as it is. The datum is that the tobacco strategy *is* an effective knowledge-deprivation strategy, and the best explanation of this datum is that without a suitable degree of confidence in one's beliefs there is no knowledge.

Just how easily an individual can be caused to lose confidence in a particular belief of theirs depends, no doubt, on the nature of the belief and the nature of the individual. A person who is presented with good grounds for doubting whether P might continue to be confident that P but the question in such cases is whether their confidence is justified. This points to a third way for attitude vices to get in the way of knowledge: by depriving one of one's right to be confident that P rather than by depriving one of one's confidence. Imagine a variation on Harper Lee's story in which Tom is guilty but where the jury's confidence in his guilt is the result of prejudice rather than a sober consideration of the evidence. In that case the jury would have no right to be confident that Tom is guilty and wouldn't know he is guilty, even if he is. It isn't always easy to be sure on what basis someone has a particular belief but to the extent that a person's belief that P is attributed to an attitude vice, or indeed any another epistemic vice, their right to be confident that P or to believe that P is called into question. It can happen that a person's belief is evidence-based but their interpretation of the evidence is itself unduly influenced by one or more of their attitude vices. This is another way for attitude vices get in the way of knowledge: even if a particular vice isn't the basis on which a person believes P, it might be the basis on which they interpret their evidence as indicating P. If this happens, they may not have the right to be confident that P. In the same way, they may lack

the right to be confident that P if prejudice, epistemic insouciance or some other attitude vice is the basis on which they reject evidence against P or interpret such evidence as misleading.

None of this is to deny that there are circumstances in which epistemic insouciance and other epistemic vices abet the acquisition, transmission or retention of knowledge. The claim is not that epistemic vices invariably get in the way of knowledge but that this is not the normal case. In the actual world, epistemic vices systematically get in the way of knowledge. If epistemic vices didn't systematically, that is, non-haphazardly get in the way of knowledge there would be no reason to call them epistemic *vices*.[36] There would also be no reason to refer to them in this way if they were not blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible, that is, open to criticism. On one view, vices are voluntarily acquired. This makes us fully responsible and potentially blameworthy for our vices, whether epistemic or moral. This view has little going for it. It is, of course, possible to cultivate one's vices in the way that, according to Aristotle, we cultivate our virtues, but prejudice, epistemic insouciance and other epistemic vices are often passively absorbed rather than actively cultivated.

A more promising basis for holding people responsible and potentially blameworthy for their epistemic vices is the thought that even if they didn't acquire them voluntarily it is nevertheless possible for them to exercise control over them and modify them. Epistemically malevolent tobacco industry executives were responsible for their malevolence because they didn't have to be that way. Their malevolent stance was voluntary. Character traits, attitudes or thinking styles over which one has control, whether one exercises it or not, are ones for which one is responsible. Control comes in different varieties. The control we have over our epistemic postures is not voluntary but evaluative or manipulative.[37] There is no question of changing one's posture by an act of will but change is possible by evaluating whether one's attitude is properly grounded or justified. For example, concluding that one's contempt or epistemic insouciance is based on false beliefs or is otherwise unwarranted is potentially a

way of becoming less contemptuous or epistemically insouciant. Some of our postures are resistant to this type of evaluative control and this is the point at which the possibility of exercising manipulative control over our attitude and other vices is significant. Manipulative control is exercised by implementing self-improvement strategies of one sort or another. If one's attitudes are the product of environmental factors then one effective way to manipulate one's attitudes is to manipulate one's environment.[38]

There is much more to say about the issue of responsibility but the intuition that some of the politicians I described at the outset are responsible for their epistemic insouciance is the intuition that they don't have to be that way. They can and should know better and they can and should change their attitude. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that attitudes that are revisable in principle might not be revisable in practice because of the way that they are sustained by environmental factors over which one has little control.[39] One such factor is social class. In his work José Medina gives a class analysis of epistemic vice.[40] He identifies a cluster of epistemic attitudes that he regards as the epistemic vices of the privileged, that is to say, vices associated with social privilege. These corrupted attitudes include epistemic arrogance, epistemic laziness and closed-mindedness. Even though epistemic arrogance is not always present in the psychology of the powerful and privileged, Medina contends that "those in a position of power are certainly more at risk of developing this flaw" (2013: 31).[41] In the same way, there are entire aspects of life with which those in positions of privilege don't need to be familiar. Examples include poverty and oppression. This "socially produced and carefully orchestrated lack of curiosity" (2013: 31) is what Medina means by 'epistemic laziness'. Although Medina doesn't mention epistemic insouciance, it is possible to see this posture as another epistemic vice of the privileged. Being in positions of power and privilege can result in intellectual overconfidence or a cognitive superiority complex, and these flaws might find expression in the nonchalance which is at the heart of epistemic insouciance.[42]

Epistemic insouciance and bullshitting are, of course, not the exclusive preserve of the privileged but might nevertheless be sustained by power and privilege.

If this has any plausibility then revising one's corrupted attitude by manipulating or altering one's environment is no easy matter. It isn't as if one can change one's social class or educational background. Depending on one's view of the conditions for blameworthiness this might or might not diminish privileged individuals' blameworthiness for their corrupted attitudes. However, epistemic vices needn't be blameworthy.[43] Blame is one thing and criticism is another. As Julia Driver observes, "we sometimes, and indeed often do, make critical comments about someone's intellect without blaming them" (2000: 132). Even if Tom's Robinson's jury could not really have done anything to change its racist attitudes and was not strictly blameworthy for them it would be bizarre to suppose on this account that the attitudes themselves, and the individual jurors holding them, were immune to criticism. The jury's racist attitudes were appalling and reprehensible whether or not they were, in some ultimate sense responsible them. In the same way, though perhaps not to the same extent, the epistemic insouciance of the privileged is open to criticism and in this sense reprehensible. Just what it takes for an attitude to be reprehensible as distinct from blameworthy is not a question that can be tackled here. The important points for present purposes are that Driver's distinction is a good one and that epistemic insouciance is reprehensible if not blameworthy. This is enough to make it an epistemic vice given that it gets in the way of knowledge.

That completes the main argument of this paper. There is however one more issue that I would like to address before bringing the discussion to a close. The focus here has been on attitude vices. This contrasts with 'responsibilist' accounts of epistemic vices and virtues that take these to be character traits. Obstructivism has a more eclectic conception of epistemic vice according to which epistemic vices can be attitudes, character traits or even ways or styles of thinking. Closed-mindedness is an epistemically vicious character trait and wishful

thinking is an epistemically vicious way of thinking. What is the relationship between attitude vices, character vices and thinking vices, and is it absolutely clear that epistemic insouciance is an attitude vice? When someone like Boris Johnson is said to be epistemically insouciant this can be interpreted as a comment about his character or about his attitude. However, there is this asymmetry between the two readings: it makes no sense to suppose that a person's character traits include epistemic insouciance without also supposing that they have an epistemically insouciant attitude to the task of finding answers to complex questions. This is a reflection of the fact that one's character traits are a function of one's attitudes in a way that one's attitudes are not a function of one's character traits.[44] It makes perfect sense to suppose that a person might display a particular attitude in response to a particular question even if they lack the corresponding character trait; their attitude in this case might be 'out of character'. What it is for a person's attitude in a given case to be epistemically insouciant can be explained without reference to epistemic insouciance as a character trait but the character trait can't be explained without reference to the attitude.

The relationship between attitudes and ways of thinking is less clear but there is a case for saying that epistemic postures are partly a reflection or function of how one thinks. A person with an epistemically insouciant attitude must be disposed to think in characteristic ways. Attitudes aren't just ways of thinking but they *involve* thinking, or being disposed to think, in particular ways. At the same time these ways of thinking can't be explained or understood without reference to the attitudes they manifest. If this is so then neither the attitude nor the way of thinking is more basic than the other though both are more basic than the character traits to which they correspond. It has to be said, though, that while questions about the basicness or explanatory priority of one kind of vice over another might be of philosophical interest their practical interest is limited. For present purposes the important point isn't that attitude vices are more or less basic than character vices or thinking vices but

that attitude vices exist as a distinctive type of epistemic vice. This point seems obvious enough once it is made, and the neglect of attitudes in philosophical accounts of epistemic vice is difficult to understand.[45]

It shouldn't be in the least bit surprising that there are attitudes that are conducive to the gaining, sharing and keeping of knowledge and attitudes that have the opposite effect. The challenge in thinking about these issues from a philosophical standpoint is not to assume that these attitudes are 'propositional attitudes'. Attitude vices are 'attitudes' in a more ordinary sense, the sense in which contempt and indifference are attitudes but belief is not. It is the affective dimension of ordinary attitudes that I have emphasised because it is easily missed. More generally, it's worth keeping in mind the importance of posture in one's intellectual or cognitive life, as in one's physical life. The importance of one's physical posture in doing physical work is widely recognised. The importance of one's epistemic posture in doing epistemic work is not. Poor physical posture causes all manner of physical problems, and a poor epistemic posture causes all manner of intellectual problems. So the best advice to the epistemically insouciant and intellectually arrogant is this: improve your posture.[46]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Merrihew. 1985. “Involuntary Sins.” *The Philosophical Review* 94: 3-31.

Ayer, Alfred. J. 1956. *The Problem of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Baehr, Jason. 2010. “Epistemic Malevolence.” In *Virtue and Vice, Moral and Epistemic*, ed. Heather Battaly. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 189-213.

Ball, James. 2017. *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World*. London: Biteback Publishing.

Battaly, Heather. 2015. *Virtue*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Battaly, Heather. 2016. “Epistemic Virtue and Vice: Reliabilism, Responsibilism, and Personalism.” In *Moral and Intellectual Virtues in Western and Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Chienkuo Mi, Michael Slote and Ernest. Sosa. New York & London: Routledge, 99-120.

Cassam, Quassim. 2016. “Vice Epistemology.” *The Monist* 88: 159-80.

Cassam, Quassim. 2017. “Diagnostic Error, Overconfidence and Self-Knowledge”. *Palgrave Communications* 3: 1-8.

Dasgupta, Nilanjana and Anthony Greenwald. 2001. "On the Malleability of Automatic Attitudes: Combating Automatic Prejudice With Images of Admired and Disliked Individuals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81: 800-814.

Driver, Julia. 2000. "Moral and Epistemic Virtue." In *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, ed. Guy Axtell. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 123-34.

Driver, Julia. 2001. *Uneasy Virtue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frankfurt, Harry. 2005. *On Bullshit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Freedland, Jonathan. 2016. "Post-truth politicians such as Donald Trump and Boris Johnson are no joke." *The Guardian*, 13 May 2016.

Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hieronymi, Pamela. 2006. "Controlling Attitudes." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 87: 45-74.

Holroyd, Jules and Dan Kelly. 2016. "Implicit Bias, Character, and Control." In *From Personality to Virtue*, ed. Jonathan Webber and Alberto Masala. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 106-33.

Hookway, Christopher. 1994. "Cognitive Virtues and Epistemic Evaluations." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 2: 211-27.

Jackson, Richard. 2015. "The epistemological crisis of counterterrorism." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8: 33-54.

Lipton, Peter. 2004. "Discussion – Epistemic Options". *Philosophical Studies* 121: 147-58.

Maio, Gregory and Geoffrey Haddock. 2015. *The Psychology of Attitudes and Attitude Change*, 2nd edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Mason, Michelle. 2003. "Contempt as a Moral Attitude." *Ethics* 113: 234-72.

Medina, José. 2013. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oreskes, Naomi and Erik Conway. 2010. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Parris, Matthew. 2016. "Tories have got to end their affair with Boris." *The Times*, 26 March 2016.

Proctor, Robert. (2008). "Agnotology: A Missing Term to Describe the Cultural Production of Ignorance (and Its Study)." In *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*, ed. Robert Procter and Londa Schiebinger. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1-33.

Proctor, Robert and Londa Schiebinger (eds.). 2008. *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Radford, Colin. 1966. "Knowledge - by Examples." *Analysis* 27: 1-11.

Ricks, Thomas. 2007. *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*. London: Penguin Books.

Shipman, Tim. 2017. *All Out War: The Full Story of Brexit*. London: William Collins.

Tanesini, Alessandra. 2016. " 'Calm Down Dear': intellectual arrogance, silencing and ignorance." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supplementary volume 90: 71-92.

Teller, Paul. 2004. "Discussion – What is a Stance?" *Philosophical Studies* 121: 159-70.

Tiberius, Valerie and John Walker. "Arrogance." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 35: 379-90.

van Fraassen, Bas. 2002. *The Empirical Stance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

van Fraassen, Bas. 2004. "Replies to Discussion on *The Empirical Stance*." *Philosophical Studies* 121: 171-92.

Williamson, Timothy. 2000. *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williamson, Timothy. 2009. “Reply to Elizabeth Fricker.” In *Williamson on Knowledge*, ed. Patrick Greenough and Duncan Pritchard. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 293-301.

## ENDNOTES

[1] A full transcript of the interview is available here: https://corporate.sky.com/media-centre/media-packs/2016/eu-in-or-out-faisal-islam-interview-with-michael-gove,-30616-8pm.

[2] As reported by *The Independent*: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brexit-news-donald-trump-leave-eu-campaign-facts-dont-work-arron-banks-lies-referendum-a7111001.html

[3] Both articles appear as appendices in Shipman 2017. Shipman questions the view that Johnson was “a dedicated supporter of EU membership who decided to back Leave for the simple and cynical motive of advancing his career.” 2017: 171.

[4] Frankfurt 2005: 61.

[5] ‘Epistemic posture’ is from Jackson 2015.

[6] Oreskes and Conway 2010.

[7] This characterisation of 'vice epistemology' is from Cassam 2016.

[8] This is roughly how psychologists conceive of attitudes. In psychology, "most attitude theorists would argue that evaluation is *the* predominant aspect of the attitude concept. In other words, reporting an attitude involves making a decision of liking versus disliking, or favouring versus disfavouring a particular issue, object, or person." Maio and Haddock 2015.

[9] Maio and Haddock 2015: 4.

[10] In Mason's words, "in taking up contempt as a form of regard I mean to justify – ultimately morally justify – a certain affective stance toward another person, not (or not merely) the adoption of a certain belief about them (e.g., that they are contemptible)." 2003: 239.

[11] Is it plausible that intellectual arrogance has an affective quality? Is there really such a thing as a "feeling of superiority" and is it essential to intellectual arrogance? On the first of these issues, there is no more reason to doubt the possibility of a person feeling superior than to doubt the possibility of their feeling smug or confident. It could be that these are all metaphorical uses of 'feeling' but I think there is no reason not to take appearances at face value and regard superiority, like smugness and confidence, as something that can be felt. To suppose that this feeling is not essential to arrogance is to suppose that arrogance can be totally unemotional but I contend that arrogance with no emotional charge is not genuine arrogance. Paradoxically, intellectual arrogance is not a purely intellectual attitude, and this is the key to understanding its behavioural manifestations. All too familiar behavioural manifestations of intellectual arrogance include refusing to listen or queue-jumping in discussion. The affective quality of arrogance that motivates these behaviours is a feeling of superiority. Tanesini 2016 is an illuminating discussion of intellectual arrogance.

[12] Think of the futility of someone who is going through a crisis of intellectual self-confidence deciding to feel intellectually superior.

[13] The contrast between attitudes and beliefs was one that Wittgenstein was drawing on when he famously argued that one's attitude towards another person is an attitude towards a soul and that one is not of the opinion that he has a soul.

[14] Having said that, one can perhaps imagine someone who takes pride in their epistemic insouciance and actively cultivates their insouciant attitude. It has been suggested to me that President Trump might be such a person. However, even if it is conceivable that a person might take steps to nurture their own epistemic insouciance I take it that this isn't the normal case.

[15] Battaly made this point about slackers in comments on an earlier draft of this paper. See Battaly 2015: 99-100 for the concept of a slacker. Being a slacker in Battaly's sense means not caring about what is good or bad and failing to develop a conception of what is good or bad. It's not clear, though, that Johnson has no conception of what is epistemically good or bad. In his case, and I would argue in the case of intellectual slackers generally, the crucial point is not that they lack a grasp of the distinction between strong and weak evidence but that they don't care enough about basing their views on good evidence.

[16] Fricker 2007: 23-29.

[17] "A philosophical position can consist in a *stance* (attitude, commitment, approach, a cluster of such possibly including some propositional attitudes such as beliefs as well). Such a stance can of course be expressed, and may involve or presuppose some beliefs as well, but cannot simply be equated with having beliefs or making assertions about what there is." van Fraassen 2002: 47.

[18] See van Fraassen 2004: 174.

[19] For the idea that stances are best interpreted as policies or guidelines see Lipton 2004: 148 and Teller 2004: 161.

[20] Cf. Lipton 2004: 148: "For example, the empirical stance includes a policy of advocating scientific practices and denigrating metaphysical claims. Instead of embracing a doctrine, the empiricist is advised to adopt such a policy."

[21] This is the basis on which Lipton correctly interprets van Fraassen as proposing a form of epistemological voluntarism. 2004: 147.

[22] This is at least one sense in which, as van Fraassen puts it, "having or adopting a stance consists in having or adopting a cluster of attitudes, including a number of propositional attitudes, which will generally include some beliefs." 2004: 175.

[23] This is my view of epistemic malevolence rather than Baehr's.

[24] Baehr 2010: 190.

[25] On 'agnotology' and the coining of this term see Proctor 2008.

[26] Oreskes and Conway 2010.

[27] Quoted in Oreskes and Conway 2010: 34.

[28] See the essays in Proctor and Schiebinger 2008.

[29] See the *Wikipedia* entry on alternative facts for an account of the origins of this notion: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_facts.

[30] I thank Heather Battaly for this suggestion.

[31] The story of the Brexit debacle is told in Shipman 2017 and Ball 2017, chapter 1. Ball sees the successful Brexit campaign as the triumph of bullshit but much of what he describes is epistemically malevolent rather than mere bullshit. In keeping with what I have been arguing, and with Frankfurt's account, Ball sees bullshit as involving a "casual attitude to truth." 2017: 13.

[32] Ricks 2007.

[33] Ayer insists that in order to know that P one must be completely sure that P and have the "right to be sure." 1956: 31. This is too strong. One can know that P without being sure that P, but not without being reasonably confident that P. See Williamson 2000: 97.

[34] Timothy Williamson objects that "modest people know many things without being especially confident of them." 2009: 297. He accepts, however, that in order to know that P one must be "reasonably confident that P." 2000: 97. As Miranda Fricker points out, "many conceptions of knowledge cast some sort of confidence condition as a condition of knowledge." 2007: 49. Mine is one such conception.

[35] Radford 1966.

[36] Compare Driver 2001: 82: "a virtue is a character trait that produces more good (in the actual world) than not *systematically*."

[37] On the notion of voluntary control see Adams 1985: 8. The distinction between "evaluative" and "manipulative" control (which she also calls "managerial control") is due to Pamela Hieronymi. On her account, we have evaluative control over our beliefs: we control them "by evaluating what is true." 2006: 53. We have manipulative control "when we manipulate some ordinary object to accord with our thoughts about it" (ibid.). For example, I have manipulative control over the layout of the furniture in my study: I can change the layout by shifting things around.

[38] See Dasgupta and Greenwald 2001 and Holroyd and Kelly 2016.

[39] See Battaly 2016.

[40] For Medina, epistemic vices "are composed of attitudinal structures that permeate one's entire cognitive life: they involve attitudes towards oneself and others in testimonial exchanges, attitudes towards the evidence available and one's assessment of it, and so on." 2013: 31. A key question for Medina is: "what are the epistemic vices that the better off of society can (or even tend to) develop?" 2013: 30.

[41] Why should that be? Because the privilege of always being presumed to know "sometimes spoils people." 2013: 30.

[42] For an account of overconfidence see Cassam 2017.

[43] As Heather Battaly argues, "it seems *possible* for us to have virtues and vices for whose possession we are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy." 2016: 106.

[44] For Medina character traits are *composed* of attitudes, and an epistemic vice is "a set of corrupted attitudes and dispositions that get in the way of knowledge." 2013: 30.

[45] One person who isn't guilty of neglecting attitudes in her work on epistemic virtues and vices is Alessandra Tanesini. See, for example, Tanesini 2016.

[46] For helpful discussions and comments on an earlier version of this paper I thank Mark Alfano, Heather Battaly, Jonathan Freedland, Fleur Jongepier, Ian Kidd, Fabienne Peter and Alessandra Tanesini.