Arrogance

From the Individual to the Collective

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Abstract

This thesis provides a novel account of arrogance and applies it to both individuals and collectives. In Chapter 1, I introduce and summarise the main aims and contributions of the thesis and note its omissions. In Chapter 2, I introduce a variety of plausible examples of individual arrogance and survey extant philosophical accounts of the trait. I argue, contra two contemporary accounts, that arrogance is an essentially interpersonal vice. I also argue for the novel view that arrogance can not only involve feelings of superiority to or uniqueness from others but also feelings of similarity. In Chapter 3, I elaborate a novel approach to arrogance, understood as principally involving making *undue assumptions of license*. I explain how this account can disaggregate moral and epistemic forms of arrogance and argue that even highly domain-specific manifestations of arrogance can be conceived of as character traits. In Chapter 4, I use the analysis developed in earlier chapters to assess how we should understand the arrogance of groups. I argue that claims of group arrogance found in the extant philosophical literature involve *sub-agential* groups that are not paradigmatic group agents. An account of collective arrogance that caters to such groups is therefore required. The chapter proceeds to argue that prominent approaches to collective epistemic vice do not adequately account for these cases. In Chapter 5, I aim to fill this gap in our understanding by offering a novel account of collective arrogance. I argue that the dispositions of sub-agential groups can be understood in terms of the social norms that operate within them; that social norms underlie the arrogant dispositions of putatively arrogant groups. I conclude, in Chapter 6, by summarising the thesis' key contributions and considering some of the questions that they raise for future research.

For Alyce and Ottilie,

and in loving memory of Sue Biddle,

whose humility and kindness the arrogant could learn a lot from

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1

Introduction

Arrogance, it seems, is having a moment. Numerous and prolonged political crises, increasingly hostile so-called "culture wars", and the rise of an intractable polarisation between political opponents both on- and offline appear to have offered fertile conditions for it to prosper. The trait of arrogance has been perhaps most striking in our political leaders, many of whom appear to have embodied and fuelled these developments rather than having sought to quell it. And this apparent trend has certainly not gone unnoticed by philosophers, who have made contributions to a whole volume dedicated to polarisation, arrogance, and dogmatism (Tanesini & Lynch, 2020) alongside others in related topics.[1] Michael Patrick Lynch describes arrogance as the 'defining trait of the age', a 'toxic' contemporary socio-political problem fuelled by a polarised politics and easy access – via the internet – to information that purports to confirm what we already "know" (2017: para. 1). People are better equipped than ever to claim to 'know it all' – to position themselves as experts – and to therefore stop listening.

The rapid and largely unregulated nature of online communication no doubt constitutes a problem for effective and democratic deliberation, but I am sceptical of the idea – suggested by Lynch's (2017) words, above – that arrogance is an especially *contemporary* problem. Arrogance in some form or another may be found to be a – and perhaps *the* – root cause of a whole set of historical human failings. Elizabeth Anderson (2014) suggests that the course of historical moral progress tells a story of the powerful being held to account for their arrogance (amongst their other vices) through social movements and effective contestation, indicating that arrogance is a longstanding problem.[2] And Robin Dillon (2021) argues that arrogance is a core component of

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[1] Examples include Kidd et al. (2020), Hannon & Ridder (2021), and Bordonaba-Plou et al. (2022).

[2] I do not here wish to take a position on the merits or demerits of engaging with narratives of progress, though it seems to me that moral progress is, at the very least, a worthy ambition. That does not, however,

'ideologies of domination' like white supremacy; that it can become part of one's identity within social groups set apart from others: the 'arrogant heart of racism, sexism, religious animosity, and other forms of bigotry and oppression' (2007: 105-106) - which of course have a long legacy. If such claims have any plausibility, then it ought to motivate a range of questions about arrogance and its social dynamics. Of particular significance is that these authors' claims position arrogance not just as an individual trait, but as a feature of groups – the powerful, for Anderson, and social groups in dominant or dominating positions, for Dillon. This thesis aims to answer some of these questions, principally and most centrally: what is arrogance and how, if at all, can social groups demonstrate it?

Almost all the recent philosophical work on arrogance concerns *epistemic* arrogance – that is, the kind of arrogance that relates to knowledge, belief, and our practices of inquiry. This forms part of a wider and growing focus in analytic philosophy on "vices of the mind" – epistemic (or intellectual) vices, the study of which has come to be known as *vice epistemology*.[3] Interest in this field of study follows decades of research on the intellectual virtues in analytic philosophy. Ernest Sosa's (1980) paper 'The Raft and the Pyramid' – in which Sosa argues that disagreements between *foundationalist* and *coherentist* theories of knowledge can be settled by using the concept of intellectual virtue as a measure of justification for belief and knowledge – is commonly held to have sparked these debates. But studies in vice epistemology also appear to have been inspired by an increased interest in the epistemic workings (and failings) of the social world and the ways in which injustice and oppression can be fostered by vices like arrogance. As such, this field of research represents a small but growing sub-branch of wider work on social epistemology, epistemologies of ignorance, and epistemic injustice, which has itself been borne largely out of advancing debates in the philosophical traditions of feminism and critical philosophy of race.[4] I reflect on much of this work in this thesis, though I do not restrict my study of arrogance solely to its epistemic varieties. In fact, one of the aims of the thesis

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make it a natural or inevitable result of human development. For a critical discussion, see Amy Allen (2016).

[3] I use 'intellectual' and 'epistemic' interchangeably in my discussion of vices and virtues, as appears to be the convention.

[4] Edited volumes from Sullivan & Tuana (2007), Brady & Fricker (2016), and Kidd et al. (2017) highlight some of the key debates and contributions within this literature.

is to understand how best to distinguish between epistemic and non-epistemic varieties of arrogance – a task I pursue in Chapter 3.

1. Aims and contributions

Although, like any thesis, this one must limit its scope to a particular set of questions in relation to a particular range of sources, my hope is that the contributions that it makes to a range of philosophical questions regarding arrogance is nevertheless significant. The thesis can be quite straightforwardly divided in two, with the first part focussing on questions relating to individual arrogance and the second part dedicated to theorising the epistemic arrogance of social groups. Questions relevant to part one include, what do existing philosophical accounts of arrogance look like and are they compelling? Does arrogance solely or necessarily involve believing in one's superiority? If not, what other cognitive features can it involve? Does arrogance have a distinctive motivational outlook or orientation? Is it always vicious, or are there reasons to think that, sometimes, it could be a virtue? How should we differentiate between moral and epistemic forms of arrogance? Must it always manifest as a character trait, or can it consist in other cognitive phenomena like attitudes, sensibilities, or thinking styles?

In part two I address questions about arrogance in social groups, including, what examples of group arrogance have so far been put forward by philosophers? Do extant accounts of collective vice adequately account for these cases? Is the idea of collective arrogance merely a useful shorthand for describing the aggregated individual arrogance of a group's members or can it describe a genuinely collective vice? If genuinely collective, what group feature or features underpin this? What kinds of groups can demonstrate collective arrogance, and what kind of collective agency must they have?

The main aim of this thesis, then, is to critically assess extant philosophical accounts of arrogance and collective vice in order to ascertain a theoretical grounding of collective arrogance. In the first part, I develop a novel understanding of individual

arrogance, understood as primarily involving the undue assumption of licence. In the second part, I argue for a novel account of collective arrogance that is applicable to large, informally constituted social groups, according to which a group can be disposed towards arrogance in light of its social norms.

The first key contribution of the thesis is to debates regarding the nature of individual arrogance. I establish a taxonomy of accounts of arrogance in Chapter 2 that distinguishes between accounts for which the interpersonal dynamics of arrogance play a central role and those which claim that arrogance sometimes does not involve interpersonal relations. Setting out the accounts in such a way highlights some of the key differences in contemporary thought regarding both moral and epistemic arrogance. But it also allows me to critically assess claims of non-interpersonal approaches to arrogance. Ultimately, I argue that arrogance is an essentially interpersonal vice and that even those who become so arrogant that they feel no need to compare themselves, or even engage, with others will nevertheless plausibly display forms of interpersonal disrespect that underlie the interpersonal characterisation. I suggest that putatively non-interpersonal manifestations of arrogance – varieties of which are described by Robin Dillon (2007, 2021) and Alessandra Tanesini (2016a, 2021) – will, like all forms of arrogance, necessarily involve a reckless regard or over-reaching for forms of agency that involve a wilful disregard for the interests of others.

The second key contribution that I make in this thesis regards the precise kinds of comparative judgments that arrogance involves. Many thinkers, including Tiberius and Walker (1998), Roberts and Wood (2007), Bell (2013), and Cassam (2019), think of arrogance as necessarily involving a sense of one's superiority.[5] Dillon (2007, 2021) and Tanesini (2016a, 2021), while accepting that it will often involve this sense of superiority, suggest that arrogance can also involve a perhaps more fundamental feeling of difference or uniqueness from other people. I accept that arrogance can involve feeling superior, different, or unique, but I argue that it can also involve feelings of similarity with others.

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[5] I do not detail Bell's or Cassam's approach to arrogance in this thesis, whereas I do with the other authors noted here. Cassam describes the arrogant as having 'an intellectual superiority complex' (2019: 7) while Bell labels arrogance a 'vice of superiority' (2013: 96-136).

In instances highlighted by Lorde (2017), Ortega (2006), and, more recently, Liebow and Ades (2022), individuals arrogantly assume that they understand experiences of oppression and can talk authoritatively about them, despite not having had those experiences nor taking adequate care to be cognisant of the experiences of those who do. I argue that these examples plausibly demonstrate arrogance yet do not fit the characterisation provided by existing accounts of arrogance. Instead, as I argue in Chapter 2, these cases support a novel conclusion: that arrogance sometimes involves unwarranted feelings of similarity with, or closeness to, those to whom individuals direct their arrogance. This conclusion supports a broadening of our understanding of arrogance and thus constitutes one key intellectual contribution of this thesis.

My third key contribution in this thesis is an original analysis of individual arrogance, which I develop based on the conclusions reached in the preceding discussion. I argue that arrogance principally involves a disposition to make *undue assumptions of license*. Drawing upon philosophical scholarship on the concepts of *assumption* and *license*, I argue that this account helps explain how arrogance is necessarily vicious and that it can accommodate manifestations of epistemic arrogance that involve feelings of similarity. I also show how the *undue assumption of license* account can help us distinguish between moral and epistemic forms of arrogance by identifying the kinds of license that are being assumed in different cases.

I apply the analysis of individual arrogance gained in the first part of the thesis to questions around collective arrogance that arise in the second part. In this section, I make a fourth key contribution in providing a novel account of collective epistemic arrogance. This account, as I argue in Chapter 5, adds explanatory power to approaches that seek to understand the vices of groups in terms of their dispositions (Byerly & Byerly, 2016; Holroyd, 2020) through a discussion of social norms. Central to the account is the explanation of group vice in terms of the social norms of the group, in light of which members' behaviour is coordinated and interpreted. As I will argue, this power inherent to social norms, when directed towards behaviours characteristic of epistemic arrogance, underlies at least one way in which social groups can demonstrate a collective vice. This position stands in contrast with Miranda Fricker's (2010; 2020) prominent and influential

approach to collective epistemic vice (which I discuss in Chapter 4) that understands the vices of groups in terms of the presence of joint commitments between members.

2. Noteworthy omissions

That this thesis is restricted in scope to contemporary work on arrogance in analytic philosophy is not to deny that there is a rich history of interest in the epistemic vices that spans far beyond contemporary academic philosophy. The early Daoist, Zhuāngzǐ, discusses a variety of epistemic character failings that can be articulated as arrogance and dogmatism, while early Buddhist texts detail a diversity of intellectual failings, 'defilements' or 'fetters' (*samyojana*) that 'perpetuate our entrapment within *samsara*, the cycle of rebirth and *dukkha*' (Kidd et al., 2020: 3). Aristotle introduced the notion of intellectual virtues in Nicomachean Ethics VI and Socrates famously targeted his interlocutors' hubristic stances, their inflated confidence in their beliefs.[6] While these texts, alongside many others, offer rich accounts of various intellectual failings and stand to illustrate an interest in such vices spanning several millennia, their rigorous analysis is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. So, too, is a critical conceptual history of arrogance's relation to a variety of other vices – for example hubris, pride, and narcissism – though such a project would surely be of great intellectual value and is a fruitful avenue for my future research.

Another noteworthy omission from this thesis is a critical discussion of the relationship between arrogance and humility – the concept that is traditionally conceived as being the virtuous counterpart to the vice of arrogance. Although Roberts and Wood's (2007) account of intellectual arrogance (which I outline in Chapter 2) is developed principally in order to contrast this vice with an account of intellectual humility, the virtue gets little mention in this thesis. Whilst this is not to say that there is potentially much to be learnt about arrogance by seeking out how it contrasts with philosophical work on humility, I have found that the extant accounts of arrogance alone prompt sufficient

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[6] For a much fuller discussion of the long history of interest in epistemic vice than I can offer here, see the introductory chapter to Kidd et al.(2020).

investigation for this additional work to be beyond what I have been capable of in this thesis. The same is unfortunately true of the relationship between arrogance and servility – the *vice* opposed to arrogance insofar as the servile seem to excessively lack what the arrogant excessively claim. There has been a good deal of philosophical attention paid to servility recently, including from Tanesini (2018b; 2021), Battaly (2022), and Levy (2020). Again, unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to contribute to these conversations, though these are questions that I hope to pursue in future work.

A further distinction that I will not have space to consider in this thesis is that between two ways of conceptualising epistemic vices and virtues that have come to be known as *reliabilism* and *responsibilism*.[7] *Reliabilist* intellectual vices are those cognitive features or faculties that reliably produce epistemically bad results. *Responsibilist* intellectual vices are those personal epistemic characterological failings for which agents are ultimately responsible. While it seems that those working within the reliabilist framework tend to be more principally concerned with traditional epistemological questions like the nature of knowledge, belief, and justification, those who focus their attention on responsibilist virtues and vices tend to have wider ethical and political concerns beyond these questions. This is not to suggest that one way of theorising intellectual virtues and vices ought to take precedence over the other, or even that the two methods are in tension, but that there are two distinct approaches to modelling epistemic virtues and vices within the literature.

There is much nuance and difference in how vices (and virtues) are understood within each of these traditions of philosophical thought, but I should note early on that my project can be located firmly within the responsibilist tradition. I assume throughout this thesis that arrogance is a responsibilist vice. We typically take the arrogant to be at least in some way responsible for their arrogant behaviour. Charges of arrogance are typically dispatched pejoratively, to express a judgment that someone is at fault and that they are responsible for their behaviour. When we describe someone as epistemically

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[7] Heather Battaly (2016) provides a systematic analysis of the differences between reliabilism and responsibilism, while suggesting an alternative but related approach in the form of *personalism*.

arrogant, we are not merely pointing out that they appear to possess a trait that will do them no good epistemically speaking – we are finding that person at fault, and responsibly so. That arrogance will tend to reliably inhibit access to epistemic goods such as knowledge or justified belief may also be true (as I think it is), but this feature only partially accounts for what we typically take arrogance to involve and therefore how we typically go about ascribing arrogance to individuals. That said, I also omit from my analysis a rigorous discussion of precisely how individuals or groups ought to be considered responsible for their arrogance. Although I recognise that questions on this topic will be of interest to many, the possible answers and debates around responsibility appear to me to warrant a whole thesis worth of analysis. As such, I withhold questions of responsibility for individual and collective arrogance for another time.

3. Chapter summary

I will conclude with a summary of the thesis' chapters. The first part of the thesis focuses on analyses of individual arrogance. In Chapter 2, I begin my discussion by introducing a range of plausible cases of arrogance, some novel and others from the philosophical literature, some fictional and others (sadly) not. These examples offer test cases on which to develop my analysis of arrogance in this chapter and Chapter 3. I then introduce and explain a variety of the most prominent and developed accounts of arrogance from the philosophical literature, offering a two-pronged taxonomy of accounts by distinguishing between those which claim arrogance is essentially interpersonal and those which claim that arrogance is sometimes non-interpersonal in virtue of it not necessarily involving comparative mental states. I argue that there are compelling reasons to reject the idea that arrogance is sometimes non-interpersonal. I suggest that arrogance will plausibly involve the arrogant having some mental state with interpersonal contents (that is, comparisons of one's own to others' competences) that reflect an underlying disrespect for other agents. Next, I consider whether arrogance necessarily involves beliefs or feelings of superiority, difference, or uniqueness and argue for the novel position that, additionally, arrogance can sometimes follow from feelings of similarity and even solidarity with the subject or subjects who are harmed by this arrogance. In other words,

I argue that arrogance does not necessarily entail, nor does it necessarily consist in, beliefs or feelings of superiority or uniqueness, as philosophers have previously maintained.

I continue my discussion of the nature of arrogance in Chapter 3, which first considers the question of whether the trait necessarily involves a distinctive motivational outlook. I outline the various positions on this and highlight how, for most accounts, the self-esteem motive plays a central and necessary role in cases of arrogance. With reference to wider discussions in vice epistemology between *motivationalist* and *anti-motivationalist* conceptions of vice, I argue that the self-esteem motive is plausibly a normatively neutral motivational outlook that does not appear to adequately account for the essence or disvalue of arrogance. I then introduce my positive account of arrogance, which I conceive of as consisting in the making of an *undue assumption of license*, drawing upon various philosophical works to further elaborate the account. With reference to my argument for the essentially interpersonal nature of arrogance in Chapter 2, I argue that the *undue assumption of license* account can fittingly explain the disvalue of arrogance, and thus secure its status as (always) vicious. I also respond to, and offer an argument against, Dillon's (2021) claim that arrogance can sometimes be a virtue of the oppressed in contexts of oppression. Next, I show how this novel account of arrogance can help us distinguish between moral and epistemic forms of the vice, depending on whether the kind or kinds of license that the arrogant assume relate to their epistemic or non-epistemic activities. I conclude the chapter by considering how arrogance can manifest in complex and heterogenous ways and ultimately argue that even highly domain-specific or granular instances of arrogance can be considered character vices. Thus, part one of the thesis concludes having developed a novel account of individual arrogance, in terms of undue assumption of license. This analysis foregrounds the interpersonal dimensions of arrogance and is particularly sensitive to cases of arrogance where the comparison involves unwarranted judgements about similarity, rather than only difference or superiority.

Part two of the thesis turns to collective vice.[8] In Chapter 4, I begin my discussion of collective or group-based arrogance by considering the kinds of groups against whom

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[8] For a condensed, published version of chapters 4 & 5, see Roe (2023).

ascriptions of arrogance are made. I explain how informally constituted and plausibly *sub-agential* groups often appear to be the object of these ascriptions, even though they are not paradigmatic group agents. I then introduce several sub-agential groups that are described by various philosophers as having the vice, namely, men and the privileged or powerful more generally. I argue that there are good reasons to interpret these discussions as attributing the vice of collective epistemic arrogance – of a form consistent with the *undue assumption of license* approach that I argued for in Chapter 3. I then look toward prominent positions and accounts of collective epistemic vice to consider how they might accommodate these attributions of arrogance. I first introduce the distinction between *summativist* and *non-summativist* approaches to collective vice and argue that the way in which the arrogant groups are described appears inconsistent with *summativist* approaches to group vice. Next, I consider two prominent non-summative accounts of collective vice and argue that neither provide an adequate explanatory basis for understanding collective arrogance, although I acknowledge that the *dispositional* account of collective vice does at least help diagnose the vice in sub-agential groups. I conclude by considering the gap in our understanding that the conclusions in this chapter represent.

Chapter 5 aims to offer a resolution to the explanatory gap that was identified in Chapter 4. I begin with a discussion of how to understand individuals' dispositions *qua* members of sub-agential groups before arguing that philosophical work on social norms can help to explain this. I draw upon Davidson and Kelly's (2020) approach to social norms in order to show how this is well-placed to explain how individual group members can be disposed towards the epistemic vices of their groups. Here I also consider some plausible examples of the kinds of social norms that might be found in arrogant groups. I then argue for the distinctiveness of this norms-based approach to collective vice in comparison with other non-summative accounts and offer several reasons why the approach is distinctly *collectivist*, rather than individualist or summativist. Next, I elaborate on this novel account of collective arrogance by way of a case study. This enables me to apply the analysis of arrogance developed in the first part of the thesis, as we see the collective vice of arrogance, understood as *undue assumption of license*, manifested in a sub-agential group. I discuss the phenomenon of mansplaining and argue that this is an archetypal epistemically arrogant behaviour associated with a sub-agential group: privileged men. The aim of this discussion is to illustrate how the epistemically arrogant

dispositions of a group's members can be explained via the social norms that operate within and are mobilised via group membership. In the final section of the chapter, I return to questions raised in Chapter 4 regarding the form or forms of agency that sub-agential groups are capable of, and the kind of agency needed in order to possess genuinely *collective* epistemic vices. I argue that the norms-based approach to collective arrogance helps us to understand at least one way in which sub-agential groups possess (at least) enough agency to be ascribed collective vices. I also argue that there are good reasons to think that *agential* collectives like institutions or corporations can possess norms-based collective vices, too.

In Chapter 6, I conclude by revisiting the main contributions of the thesis and pointing to important work that remains, not least towards the goal of ameliorating arrogance. My analysis, I suggest, is instructive in helping us to understand the work to be done in tackling the vice in its various manifestations, both individual and collective.

2

Varieties of (epistemic) arrogance

1.   Introduction

Arrogance is a concept commonly dispatched to describe and attack the characters of individuals, perhaps at an increasing rate; and politicians, celebrities, sports stars, and other public figures are those most likely to be the subjects of such a charge. The ubiquity of these claims motivates a range of philosophical questions regarding the nature of arrogance. What kinds of things do arrogant people think, feel, or do? Does arrogance always involve interpersonal relations or can it consist in simply how one feels about oneself? Does it necessarily involve a feeling or belief of superiority? If so, what kind of superiority, and, if not, what other attitudes or affective states can it involve? What makes arrogance a vice? What, if anything, motivates arrogance? What is the difference between moral arrogance and epistemic (or intellectual) arrogance?[1] In this chapter, I seek to address the first four questions posed here, saving the latter three for the next chapter. After describing a range of putative cases of arrogance and surveying the literature of extant philosophical accounts, I ultimately argue that arrogance requires some kind of mental state that is essentially interpersonal, though it does not require a belief or feeling of superiority (as some prominent accounts suggest). Additionally, I argue that sometimes arrogance is in part constituted by feelings of similarity in the arrogant towards those whom his behaviour affects.

In section 2, I introduce several cases in which arrogance is plausibly operating to help illuminate the proceeding discussion. These (fictional and real) examples come from the growing body of philosophical literature on arrogance and constitute cases of both

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[1] When talking about vices and virtues, I use 'epistemic' and 'intellectual' interchangeably, though I prefer to use 'epistemic' rather than 'intellectual', to avoid any confusion for readers who may misinterpret this as the vices and virtues of intellectuals (as a group), rather than the intellect (as a feature of all, or almost all, humans).

moral and epistemic arrogance. An account of arrogance, I suggest, ought to be able to provide a plausible description of the key features involved in these cases and explain how arrogance operates differently in cases which appear substantively different. I therefore use these cases as a litmus test for a satisfactory account of arrogance (here understood to include both epistemic and moral arrogance, for now). After introducing these examples, I discuss (in section 3) a variety of the most prominent and developed accounts of arrogance from the philosophical literature, from Valerie Tiberius and John D. Walker (1998), Robin Dillon (2007, 2015, 2021), Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood (2007, 2019), and Alessandra Tanesini (2016a, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). I offer a two-pronged taxonomy, differentiating between interpersonal and non-interpersonal accounts. My engagement with these accounts is less interested in the kind of mental states that arrogance involves (beliefs, feelings, motives, etc.) and more focussed on the content of whatever such mental states might be (whether they are essentially interpersonal, for instance). While I will discuss some of the differences between accounts with regards to the kinds of states that arrogance involves, I am ultimately more interested in the interpersonal disfunctions that result from arrogance and think of the mental states, as the vehicles of the contents at issue, as complex and heterogenous phenomena that will vary greatly depending on context and will play less of a role in causing these disfunctions than do the contents. This framing will also prove useful (and, I hope, more useful than focussing merely on the differences of mental states) when it comes to discussing the arrogance of groups in chapters 4 and 5.

While Tiberius and Walker, and Roberts and Wood consider arrogance to be essentially interpersonal, Dillon and Tanesini have subsequently argued that, additionally, arrogance is sometimes non-interpersonal with regards the kinds of attitudes or affective states that constitute it. In section 4, I critically assess and ultimately reject the claim that arrogance is sometimes non-interpersonal and argue that arrogance always involves an individual's estimation of what they owe to others around them. In other words, I defend the idea that arrogance is essentially interpersonal – that it always involves our relations with others. Following this, I ask if arrogance always involves a belief in, or feeling of, superiority. Need such a belief or feeling be false or unwarranted for arrogance to obtain? And what other affective states might be compatible with arrogance? Contrary to most, though not all, accounts of arrogance – which take either a true or false belief in one's

superiority as a necessary feature of arrogance – I argue that there are occasions where arrogance is found in people who feel no different from those towards whom they display their arrogance. Reflecting on cases of arrogance highlighted by Nabina Liebow and Rachel Levit Ades (2022), Audre Lorde (2017), and Mariana Ortega (2006), I suggest that arrogance sometimes follows from a feeling of similarity and even solidarity with the subject or subjects towards whom one is arrogant. This leads me to conclude that arrogance does not entail, nor does it consist in, beliefs or feelings of superiority or uniqueness, as previously thought.

2.   Arrogant exemplars

Before examining the most prominent and developed philosophical accounts of arrogance, I will first consider a variety of cases which I take to exemplify arrogance. Introducing some arrogant exemplars at this stage will, I hope, help illuminate the philosophical accounts that follow. As we will see, arrogant exemplars appear ubiquitous and there are a range of historical and contemporary cases to consider. The diversity of examples offered here will also offer useful points of reference when it comes to elaborating my analysis of these accounts and developing my arguments in section 4.

Let's start with the politicians. Alessandra Tanesini uses former British Prime Minister David Cameron's remarks against parliamentary opponent Angela Eagle to inspire her account of arrogance (2016a: 71-72). During a debate in the House of Commons in 2011, Cameron told Eagle to 'calm down, dear' in response to her questioning of his policies. According to Tanesini, the remark amounted to an attempt to silence Eagle insofar as it 'betrayed a fairly transparent attempt to rely on stereotypes about women's judgement being clouded by emotion in order to undermine or deflate the credibility of her questioning of his policies' (2016a: 71). Similarly, Heather Battaly suggests that former US President Donald Trump exhibited arrogance in a tweet on 31 July, 2019 in which he claimed to be 'the least racist person *in the world*' while also closed-mindedly dismissing CNN's Don Lemon as a trustworthy source of information, which also arguably amounts to an attempt to silence Lemon (2020: 53; emphasis in original

commentary, not the tweet). Quassim Cassam (2019: 1-3) draws upon Thomas E. Ricks' (2007) account of the (epistemic) behaviour of President George W. Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz around the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. Ricks' account suggests that these politicians demonstrated arrogance insofar as they 'assumed that Iraq 2003 would be a cakewalk' and dismissed the expert advice that suggested that the military challenge would be much greater than they thought it would be (Cassam 2019: 1-2). In other words, these leaders of the Bush administration seriously underestimated the scale of the operation and overestimated their abilities to make it a success.

In a more detailed case study, Valerie Tiberius and John D. Walker (1998) describe how former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger is said to have displayed considerable arrogance as a young Harvard Professor. During Kissinger's lectures he 'rambled on at length about whatever struck him as interesting or important, making no particular attempt to teach well, or even to make his lectures relevant to the announced course material' (1998: 381). He is said to have treated his students as more of a nuisance than individuals towards which he had any sorts of obligations, keeping them waiting for hours for meetings they were forced to schedule weeks in advance. According to a biography, he once stormed out of his office to demand that administrative staff search for a piece of paper that he had misplaced. Kissinger appeared to see his relationships hierarchically – consisting of superiors and inferiors – and he thought of himself as above students and administrative staff. He viewed his own concerns as deserving the immediate attention of others and thought he had nothing to learn from his inferiors; rather, 'they should consider themselves fortunate to have the opportunity to bask in his brilliance' (381-2). Kissinger's behaviour demonstrates how the arrogant are often seen to treat others with disdain or contempt, as unworthy of consideration for their lesser status.[2]

Besides the politicians, it is commonplace for sports people, and particularly footballers, to be called arrogant. While I would not want to endorse any particular

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[2] Lynch (2018, 2020) discusses the relationship between epistemic arrogance and contempt in more detail. Also, a recent news article by John Harris (2021) exemplifies how contempt and arrogance often coalesce in accusations against political leaders, notably in the case of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

ascription, it is a fruitful domain from which to postulate a recognisable (yet fictional) exemplar of arrogance. In this instance, let's imagine a footballer who plays for a club in the Premier League, the highest tier of English football and one of the most competitive leagues in the world. This footballer, call him Chris, has played football almost his entire life and has trained from an early age to develop superb footballing skills. Thanks to his considerable effort, self-belief, and unrelenting motivation to win, Chris was scouted-out to play for one of the league's best clubs. However, while Chris' footballing ability is no doubt impressive – he is among the most talented players in the country and perhaps the world – he is all too aware of this and smugly reminds everyone of it at every opportunity. Moreover, Chris has been criticised in the past for playing selfishly by not passing the ball to his teammates during games, harshly and immaturely criticising the referees for decisions against him, and treating fellow players and his coach, whom he often ignores, with disdain. He sometimes misses training sessions for no good reason, demands the best service ahead of others in the restaurants he frequents, and regularly seeks the attention of others for his own sexual gratification, despite being married to his childhood sweetheart (who believes and wants the relationship to be monogamous). For these reasons, Chris' name has become synonymous with the stereotypical and somewhat cliché idea of the arrogant footballer.

For another non-fictional arrogant exemplar, there is Alex Jones - a Texas-born radio talk show host and founder of *Infowars*, the infamous yet popular pseudo-news website through which Jones broadcasts his thoughts and theories. Jones is variously described as the 'most prolific conspiracy theorist in contemporary America' (Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2021), 'Donald Trump's Propagandist' (Medick, 2017), and 'an influential figure, spreading chaos' (Ronson, 2019). Jones became particularly noteworthy after Donald Trump thanked and praised him personally, on Jones' show, for the support Jones had offered Trump during and following his successful election campaign in 2016 (Haberman, 2016). In an episode for *This American Life* podcast, journalist Jon Ronson (2019) and his team sought to tell the story of how Jones came to be such a controversial yet influential figure. Described as a high school bully, Ronson quotes former classmates recalling how Jones 'spoke a lot about being Satan or the Antichrist' and, on one occasion, 'bludgeoned one of his closest friends to the point where he was unconscious, and bleeding, laying on the floor' (Ronson, 2019). More recently Veit Medick, reporting for *Der Spiegel*

magazine, describes how Jones has been 'living in his own world for the last 20 years' (2017: para. 4) and how, during an afternoon lunch break in between one of his daily radio talk shows, Jones ripped off his shirt before sitting down to devour a plate of barbecued meat in one of his office's meeting rooms. Jones is also a notoriously obnoxious and difficult interviewee, with his television appearances frequently resulting in Jones shouting at his interviewers as loud as he can for as long as he can while refusing to listen to or engage with others.[3] These encounters describe a man who treats others with disdain and overbearing derision, sometimes perhaps simply for his own amusement, who refuses to listen to others and presumes to know and assert truth where there is no evidence for it. Jones believes he can do, know, and think what he likes based on his preferences alone. He therefore responds contemptuously to anyone whom he sees as challenging his will. As such, I take it that Alex Jones is another exemplar of arrogance, not to mention many other vices.

Perhaps more contentiously, Roberts and Wood describe how a kind of intellectual arrogance can be ascribed to Aristotle (2007: 249-250). Though Aristotle was not – unlike Descartes – an 'epistemic Lone Ranger', owing to his 'collegial' approach of seeking out the opinions of those most likely to know about subjects, his (hierarchical) beliefs about human nature substantially limited his range of sources in 'information-impeding' ways. Citing Alasdair MacIntyre's (1999: 6) related discussion, Roberts and Wood argue that Aristotle's 'intellectual conduct assumes that slaves and women need not be consulted when asking ethical and political questions, because they have no important insight or information to contribute' (2007: 250). For Roberts and Wood, Aristotle's elitist perspective consists of an 'intellectual policy' that says that because slaves, women, and workers are inferior human beings, compared to enquirers like Aristotle, that such enquirers are entitled to ignore these peoples' testimonies as reliable sources of ethically or politically relevant information. Although – Roberts and Wood propose – Aristotle's intellectual conduct may not involve self-exalting or other vicious motivations (like greed or sensuality), it nevertheless appears intellectually arrogant.

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[3] For two good examples of this, see Alex Jones' interviews on Andrew Neil's Sunday Politics and on Piers Morgan's CNN "debate" on gun control in the USA.

We need not single out Aristotle as the only intellectual figure to display this kind of arrogance. In the 2014 film *The Imitation Game*, Alan Turing is depicted as demonstrating a similar intellectual arrogance insofar as he, at least initially, considers himself (perhaps rightly) to have superior intellectual skills to others working in his team, who are also working to break the enigma code. This leads him to work alone, apart from other members of the same team, actively pursuing a policy that refuses to engage with those he considers his inferiors. Again, it might appear that Turing was not motivated towards self-exaltation or to 'do others down' – he may even have been motivated by epistemic 'goods', like truth or reality – yet his intellectual policy, in denying that his colleagues have anything worthwhile to contribute, still appears intellectually arrogant. Another illuminating and related example, introduced by Roberts and Wood (2007) and further discussed by Charlie Crerar (2017) and Alessandra Tanesini (2018a), comes in the form of Galileo. Like Turing, Crerar comments that 'Galileo's dealings with other scientists paint the picture of an archetypal arrogant genius, keenly aware of his own intellectual superiority and thus closed-minded in his dealings with others' (2017: 7).

Nabina Liebow and Rachel Levit Ades (2022) give the examples of talk show host and model Tyra Banks and actor Kevin Spacey. Said to illustrate what they call 'synecdoche epistemic arrogance'. This, they suggest, is a form of arrogance which occurs when a privileged person 'assumes that she can know what it is like to be oppressed' based on limited experiences that the privileged person 'inaccurately (consciously or unconsciously) believes enable her to know what it is like to be oppressed', (2022: 2). Liebow and Ades claim that Banks and Spacey both wrongly assume, based on limited experience, that they can (and do) know what it's like to experience a particular form of oppression and therefore demonstrate a form of epistemic arrogance. During filming for her talk show, Banks donned a body suit to give her the appearance of a fat person in order to understand the discrimination that women who are fat regularly experience and to educate her viewers about this. In Liebow and Ades' words, 'Banks assumed her handful of hours in a fat suit gave her understanding and epistemic authority regarding what it is like to live every day as a fat woman in a fatphobic society' (2022: 2). Spacey, on the other hand, 'equated his experience of losing his job due to allegations of sexual misconduct to

the experience of those who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis' and 'claimed that this similarity provides him with the epistemic esteem to empathize' (2022: 1-2). These examples are used by Liebow and Ades to illustrate the presence of an arrogant 'way of thinking' which, when engaged in regularly, may result in the development of an epistemically arrogant character – a distinction which I will return to in section 3.

Veronica Ivy (formerly known and published as Rachel McKinnon, 2015) describes a strikingly similar example when referring to journalist John Howard Griffin's investigative project in which he took on the appearance of a black man in the southern United States in the late 1950s. Ivy questions the extent to which Griffin – a relatively privileged white man – could genuinely gain the 'what-it's-like' knowledge of being a black man and concludes that any proclaimed expertise in this area could only ever be 'relatively impoverished' (433, footnote 34). Another journalist, Grace Halsell, later replicated Griffin's experiment, attempting to live as a black woman in Harlem and Mississippi for a few months. She subsequently published a book about the experience titled 'Soul Sister: The Journal of a White Woman Who Turned Herself Black and Went to Live and Work in Harlem and Mississippi' (1969). *Washington Post* journalist Dorothy Gilliam commented, 'I am instantly repulsed by the audacity of Miss Halsell, after a few months of a half-masquerade... to call herself "soul sister". This is not only an affront, it is foolish' (1969). In both Griffin and Halsell's accounts, the suggestion is that, having attempted to "pass" as a black person for a relatively short amount of time, they now can understand what it is like to be a black man or woman in the United States and can speak authoritatively on this subject. I am very sceptical about this suggestion, as it seems both Ivy and Gilliam are regarding Griffin and Halsell, respectively. Insofar as both Griffin and Halsell are in fact wrong about having attained such knowledge, credibility, and epistemic authority, I take both cases to be indicative of a form of epistemic arrogance.

Audre Lorde distinguishes 'a particular academic arrogance' in those who 'assume any discussion of feminist theory without examining our many differences, and without a significant input from poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians' (2017: 89). Mariana Ortega (2006) offers a further example of arrogance in describing the 'lovingly, knowingly ignorant' white feminist who claims to have knowledge about, but in

fact produces ignorance with regards to, women of colour by failing to check and question knowledge claims about these women. And a related form of arrogance is apparent in those, typically more privileged individuals, who take it upon themselves to represent an oppressed collective, without consultation, and thus misrepresent the collective's experiences whilst failing to ameliorate, and perhaps even worsening, their oppression. While such cases lack much depth and detail, for now, I will return to them later and in the next chapter to show how a general account of arrogance can help locate the problematic dynamics at play here.

As I hope these examples show, arrogance can be varied and complex and often results in the mistreatment of others. The arrogant sometimes feel or believe that they are superior and this can lead them to treat others disdainfully or with contempt. The arrogant can mistakenly believe and espouse falsehoods about themselves or about the world in ways that can seriously disrespect and undermine the agency (including epistemic agency) and testimony of others (and, perhaps, themselves). The purpose of presenting these examples early on is that they help us to identify features that constitute arrogance and that should therefore be present in any general account of the vice. Such an account ought to provide the conditions under which all of the above examples are connected and help us to better distinguish what it is that is arrogant about their behaviour more precisely. Next, then, I will draw upon several prominent and developed philosophical accounts of arrogance to seek out their points of difference and convergence and to establish how they might apply to the examples above.

3.   Prominent accounts of arrogance

Whilst arrogance, and in particular epistemic arrogance, has garnered a fair amount of philosophical attention in recent times, the number of philosophical accounts of arrogance remains somewhat limited. In this section, I highlight some of the most prominent and developed views so that I can locate points of difference and similarity between them, which I will discuss in relation to the examples above. The presentation of accounts is structured between interpersonal and putatively non-interpersonal accounts,

as this appears to be one key source of difference between accounts – a source of difference that I will later critique.[4]

3.1 Interpersonal accounts

3.1.1 Tiberius and Walker

Valerie Tiberius and John D. Walker offer an early account in their 1998 article 'Arrogance', in which they argue that arrogance is 'essentially interpersonal' (388) in nature. This is the first developed contemporary account on the subject, in which the authors defend a view that includes but expands upon the idea that arrogance involves beliefs about oneself and one's status in relation to others. They argue that arrogance is not necessarily a matter of the arrogant having a *false* belief in their superiority, because even those who *rightly* believe they are superior in certain respects can still be arrogant. Many of the exemplars described above probably do have superior talents in certain regards – take, for instance, Alan Turing, Aristotle, or Kissinger's intellectual abilities – but it is not merely the belief or knowledge of these talents that makes these individuals arrogant. Believing, rightly or wrongly, in one's superiority is, however, a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of arrogance for Tiberius and Walker:

> Arrogant people begin with a belief, which may be more or less accurate, in their considerable talents and abilities. They then infer that they are superior to most other people insofar as they manifest the excellences appropriate to human beings to an above-average degree. They take themselves to be more perfect instances of humanity. (1998: 380)

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[4] Noteworthy exceptions to the accounts highlighted here come from José Medina (2013) and Dennis Whitcomb, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Daniel Howard-Snyder (2017). I engage more with Medina's work in chapter 4, as it is more directly relevant to philosophical think around collective arrogance. I do not directly discuss Whitcomb et al.'s work because its primary focus is towards developing an account of intellectual humility and, as such, it does not offer a detailed picture of arrogance, which other accounts do.

True or false belief in superiority is necessary for arrogance, but so is this move, or 'inference' towards a self-view of a more general superiority as a human, rather than just with regards certain abilities or talents. Tiberius and Walker expand upon this by suggesting that arrogance 'consists in a particular way of regarding and engaging in relations with others' (381) that involves structuring one's relationships hierarchically and nonreciprocally. The relationships of arrogant people are 'marked by a lack of mutual enrichment that is… an essential component of true friendship' (382). This results from the kinds of conclusions that the arrogant draw from their beliefs about their abilities and excellences. In contrast to a self-confident person, who might share a similar high opinion of their own talents or abilities, the arrogant individual draws a conclusion from this that refers to their normative status in relation to others. This view, held by the arrogant, places them above their supposed inferiors because of the conclusion 'that he [the arrogant individual] is a better person according to the general standards governing what counts as a successful human specimen' (382). This explains why the attitudes displayed by arrogant individuals suggest they (the arrogant) don't believe their inferiors have anything to offer them; they have 'nothing to learn from them' (381).

Additionally, Tiberius and Walker argue that arrogance should be considered a vice for both other- and self-regarding reasons. The other-regarding reasons will be clear based on the examples above. That is, arrogance frequently results in the mistreatment of other people – in their being 'hurt, insulted, and offended' – which offers neat consequentialist reasons for the disvalue of arrogance. But Tiberius and Walker also argue that arrogance harms the arrogant themselves in two ways. First, the way in which the arrogant structure their relationships impedes their ability to form true friendships, because such friendship requires a reciprocity and closeness that the arrogant are disposed to avoid, because they tend to structure their relationships hierarchically and non-reciprocally (386). Secondly, arrogance 'blocks a crucial source of self-knowledge, which is morally important because self-knowledge is needed for the successful pursuit of virtue' (387). This is so, again, due to the way in which arrogance disposes individuals to summarily dismiss the views or thoughts of others and to think of others as generally having little to offer. Other perspectives are denied by the arrogant and, where such perspectives can help us learn

about who we are and how we could improve our behaviour, they therefore deny themselves a valuable source of self-knowledge (387). Interestingly, this argument suggests that even moral arrogance – defined in terms of the moral rather than epistemic disvalue of the vice – has an epistemic dimension insofar as the vice is harmful to this form of moral self-knowledge.

To summarise Tiberius and Walker's account, then, they take arrogance to involve a (true or false) belief in domain-specific superiority leading to a (false) belief or, at least, feeling of a more general normative superiority as a human. They do not discuss the motivations related to arrogance but do argue that it is essentially interpersonal, and that its disvalue is based on both the harm that arrogance inflicts on others and the self.

3.1.2 Roberts and Wood

Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood (2007) develop an account of epistemic arrogance that bears a certain similarity with Tiberius and Walker's. As they note, Tiberius and Walker suggest that arrogance involves an inference 'from superiority in some respect to superiority as a human being' (2007:245). Roberts and Wood, on the other hand, define arrogance in terms of a false inference from superiority to entitlement. Specifically, they define arrogance as 'a disposition to "infer" some illicit entitlement from a supposition of one's superiority, and to think, act, and feel on the basis of that claim' (247). I will call this account 'false inference arrogance' (herein referred to as FIA, for ease). Three key features of FIA are therefore: (1) a 'supposition' or feeling of superiority in the arrogant, (2) an 'inference' toward wrongful entitlement, and (3) a disposition to think, act, and feel based on this entitlement, which involves 'resistance to correction' (247). The point of departure from Tiberius and Walker's account lies in the kind of superiority claim that is necessary for arrogance. Whereas Tiberius and Walker's account requires a general superiority claim – through which one must think of oneself as superior as a 'human specimen' (1998: 382) to meet the conditions of arrogance – Roberts and Wood argue that the superiority claim may be much more limited than this and could relate to a feeling of superiority merely in relation to a limited ability or set of abilities.

Roberts and Wood's use of the word 'supposition' with regards to the (possibly more limited) superiority claim implies that the cognitive state associated with arrogance is not always or necessarily a consciously held belief, but could be something less conscious like an idea, presumption or feeling of superiority. Again, this is an important departure from Tiberius and Walker's view, insofar as Tiberius and Walker use the language of belief, at least with regards to the initial superiority claim of the arrogant. Again, this signals a moderating of the account, in which the arrogant may not have an articulated and self-aware or consciously held belief in any particular superiority but need only suspect, assume, or have a sense or feeling of a particular form of superiority. Perhaps more significantly, for Roberts and Wood it is the inference towards entitlements and not the feeling of superiority that must be illicit for arrogance to obtain. They understand a feeling of superiority to be a necessary but not sufficient condition of arrogance.

What makes an entitlement illicit? The entitlement which arrogant people claim to have can be unjustifiable or simply unjustified in some instance. Someone could rightly (and non-arrogantly) think of themselves as superior in some specific domain. But the arrogant must be wrong about what their putative superiority (whether they are right or not) entitles them to. One might never be entitled to some things, like treating others with disrespect, while other things may be only 'illicit' in certain contexts – like claiming an entitlement to jump to the front of a queue (assuming that there are never good reasons for treating others with disrespect while there may often be good reasons for needing, and being entitled, to jump a queue). Roberts and Wood do not clarify exactly what makes an entitlement illicit, but it is plausible that the wrongness of the inferred entitlement consists in its falsity – i.e., the inferring person is not in fact entitled in the way they infer.

For Roberts and Wood the inference toward entitlement need not be explicit or made with self-awareness: the arrogant must consider themselves entitled but need not consciously consider their reasons *why* they take themselves to be entitled (2007: 244). Further, arrogance must be a disposition, which entails 'a certain resistance to correction' (246). If the arrogant give up their entitlement claim easily when challenged then we may

not consider the feature, as Roberts and Wood propose it ought to be considered, a 'disposition of the heart' (245). A doctor who falsely believes she is the best physician in the region and therefore infers entitlement over scarce medical supplies may not display arrogance if she easily gives up this entitlement claim when she finds out that there are other equally qualified doctors in the region (meaning her belief is false). However, if she demonstrates a resistance to accept clear counterevidence and continues to defend her supposition of superiority and subsequent entitlement claim over the medical supplies, we can plausibly describe her as arrogant.[5]

FIA therefore requires a feeling of superiority and an inferred, illicit, and resistant entitlement claim based on this feeling. The feeling of superiority may be appropriate or not, but the entitlement claim must be illegitimate. As opposed to Tiberius and Walker, Roberts and Wood also give an account of the possible motivational outlooks involved in arrogance. They propose three motivational tiers to arrogance. First, they argue that in 'the most characteristic cases, arrogant thought and behaviour are motivated by self-exaltation' (2007: 247), meaning the arrogant are seeking to bolster or maintain their self-image, sense of value, or demonstrate their self-importance. In such cases, then, arrogance is motivated by a need for the arrogant to feel better about themselves – to feel strong, powerful, important, etc. Second, 'less characteristic cases [of arrogance] have a vicious, but not viciously self-exalting motive' (247). Arrogance may be motivated by other vicious motives that are distinct from self-exalting motives. Entitlement claims that over-reach could be motivated by 'non-anti-humility' motives like vanity, sensuality, or acquisitiveness (246-7). For instance, we could describe Chris the footballer's arrogance, particularly how it manifests in his adulterous sex life, as motivated by sensuality or lust rather than any desire to strengthen or demonstrate his own sense of self-importance. Similarly, we might think that Alex Jones' arrogance is motivated by greed – recognising the financial wealth that he has accrued through peddling conspiracy theories – rather than by a need to bolster his sense of self-worth.[6]

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[5] This is an abbreviated, somewhat altered, but structurally identical version of Roberts and Wood's example of Albert Schweitzer's work as a physician in West Africa (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 246-247).
[6] For more on how much Jones' arrogance has earned him, see Williamson and Steel (2018).

Third, Roberts and Wood use the example of Aristotle to argue that the vice of epistemic arrogance can occur 'in the absence of any vicious motive whatsoever' (247). They therefore reject a view of vice that sees vicious motives as a necessary condition of vice, though they accept that in more 'characteristic cases' vicious motives will be present. Though I think there are reasons to doubt this suggestion, which I discuss in section 5, presumably Roberts and Wood make this claim on the grounds that Aristotle's intellectual policy is consistent with his social and historical context and therefore need not have been viciously motivated. Aristotle's view of human nature, informed by background beliefs or feelings of Athenian male citizen superiority – itself embedded in the social norms and practices of Ancient Athens – shaped Aristotle's intellectual policy that falsely infers an (epistemic) entitlement. Though a deeper analysis is not offered, perhaps Roberts and Wood see this as non-viciously motivated in the sense that Aristotle's policy was merely a reflection of his social or cultural milieu and that it would have been considered common sensical from anyone in his position. Aristotle would have adopted the policy unreflectively, without ever acknowledging a need to ask if it was a wise intellectual orientation. It was more a matter of background assumption than a self-exaltingly (or otherwise viciously) motivated piece of exclusionary intellectual apparatus. Further, Roberts and Wood's account leaves open the possibility that Aristotle had epistemically *good* motivations. Perhaps Aristotle was motivated to get to the truth but (wrongly) assumed that the opinions of women, workers, and slaves did not help to achieve this and so he felt entitled to ignore their opinions. I return to this discussion in section 5. For now, let's accept that Roberts and Wood's account allows arrogance to be motivated in non-self-exalting or self-esteem-bolstering ways and, indeed, for arrogance to altogether lack vicious motives.

FIA is an interpersonal account of arrogance in two distinct ways. First, the account relies on a 'supposition' of superiority – meaning that arrogance requires a comparative judgment about one's skills, abilities, or qualities in relation to those of others. Second, following the first interpersonal judgment the arrogant individual infers that they are entitled to more (or better) than other people; they think that they are entitled to goods that others are not. The illicit entitlements that the arrogant infer creates friction and dysfunction between people and lays the ground for inegalitarian distributions of goods

(including epistemic goods) amongst communities. In light of this, FIA is necessarily an interpersonal account.

3.1.3 Robin Dillon on 'status arrogance'

The third interpersonal account of arrogance that we will consider comes from Robin Dillon (2007, 2021), who proposes a two-pronged Kantian account of arrogance that differentiates between "status" arrogance (also referred to simply as 'interpersonal arrogance') and "unwarranted claims" arrogance.[7] Dillon argues that unwarranted claims arrogance is non-interpersonal, so I will return to this later.

Like Tiberius and Walker and Roberts and Wood, Dillon sees superiority as central to *status arrogance*, and the account bears a resemblance to both. Like Tiberius and Walker, Dillon sees *status arrogance* as involving thinking of oneself as superior to others in moral status. The 'hallmark' of status arrogance, for Dillon, is

> regarding oneself as superior in the sense of having a higher normative status than others, by virtue of which one is entitled to treat them as inferiors, to make demands on them and expect their deference, to insist that one's needs and wants take precedence over their,[sic] or to dismiss or ignore them. (2007: 103)

This view leads us back to Tiberius and Walker's claim that arrogance involves a sense of *general* superiority and not merely *domain-specific* superiority, with Dillon agreeing that this can begin with the belief that 'one's merits — one's talents, abilities, or accomplishments — are greater than those of others or that one has a high social status' (2007: 103). For Dillon, then, status arrogance requires thinking of oneself as normatively superior,

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[7] Dillon's account is Kantian in that it draws on Kant's work on the subject and insofar as the badness or wrongness of arrogance is derived from Dillon's claim that arrogance constitutes a failure of self-respect. I do not seek to adjudicate the validity of these claims here.

although it is unclear whether this need be a belief or merely a feeling or affective attitude. Importantly, however, it also requires that the status arrogant understand their higher normative status to entitle them to mistreat others in various ways, as listed above.[8] In this way, the account also resembles Roberts and Wood's *false inference arrogance*, because the move is from superiority to entitlement, although the accounts differ over the kind of superiority claimed by the arrogant, as previously discussed. Additionally, Dillon discusses how *status arrogance* involves the 'disordered' or 'unreasonable and defective' valuing of self in relation to others which is described as the 'systemic perversion of valuing' (2007: 107). This is an important way in which this type of arrogance is described as *interpersonal*, because it involves the way in which other people are treated and comparative attitudes towards and about other people and their status or worth.

As I have shown, Tiberius and Walker and Dillon agree that arrogance – or at least *status arrogance* – involves thinking (and possibly believing) that one is superior to other people *in general*, but I think there are good reasons for moving away from this position. If we take another look at the arrogant exemplars discussed in section 2, it seems that in no case need the arrogant think of themselves as *generally* superior for us to think of them or their behaviour as arrogant. We would still think of Kissinger as arrogant, for example, even if we were convinced that he did not think of himself as superior *in general* to his staff and students, or if he was respectful toward his colleagues but not his students. Trump still appears arrogant for his false proclamations of his lack of racist tendencies even if we think of him as not having a superior-in-general self-understanding or if we accept that he considers himself to have at least some epistemic limitations.[9] Further, people who think of themselves superior as a man, as a white person, as a citizen of the United Kingdom, as a fan of a particular football team, *but not superior more generally*, could surely still behave and think in characteristically arrogant ways. Further, we might also think of these domain-specific forms of superiority as relating to a view of one's status without the need for thinking that those with these views claim a more general higher normative status. Kissinger might only claim a superior status as a professor and yet still demonstrate

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[8] The idea, here, is that the status arrogant cannot be right about their claim to have a higher normative status because Dillon is assuming the equality of persons regarding their normative status.

[9] At the very least, Trump has admitted to not having the knowledge of a medical doctor, in the context of wrongly suggesting that injecting the body with bleach and irradiating it with UV light could offer an effective treatment of the COVID-19 virus (BBC News, 2020).

arrogance, whilst others might only claim superior status as a citizen of the United Kingdom while also demonstrating arrogance. This suggests the condition that a general account of arrogance requires thinking or believing that one is generally superior as a human is too restrictive.

This is perhaps explained by the way in which arrogant people's behaviour is interpreted. We might typically think that only a self-view of general superiority could explain the kinds of actions, demands, or statements of the arrogant, but this need not be the case. Alex Jones' particularly cruel behaviour might signal such a self-understanding, which we associate with arrogance, but Alan Turing's disrespectful behaviour toward his colleagues also appears to be characteristic of arrogance, although the presence of redeeming qualities – like intellectual brilliance and dedication to a worthwhile and important objective – might encourage us to interpret his self-view much more charitably without denying that he is disposed towards arrogance at least in some domains of his life. This suggests that a belief or feeling of general superiority might on occasion feature in the cognitive makeup of arrogant people, but it need not. This suggests that neither Tiberius and Walker's account nor Dillon's view of status arrogance provide the essential features of arrogance, although this is something that I think Dillon's two-pronged account accepts (as I will discuss shortly).

Finally, Dillon sees motives as an essential feature of arrogance. Arrogance is described as driven by the "self-esteem motive" – the desire to value oneself, and for others to value you, ever more highly (2021: 210). While it may be considered very difficult to determine whether this motive is operational in the cases of the arrogant exemplars described above, it is at least worth mentioning that this view, at least on Roberts and Wood's reading of Aristotle's motivational outlook, would discount the possibility that Aristotle does genuinely demonstrate arrogance. I will discuss this complication further in the next chapter, but for now it should be noted that Dillon's is explicitly a motive-based account of arrogance.

3.1.4 Alessandra Tanesini on 'haughtiness', or 'superbia'

Alessandra Tanesini (2016a; 2016b; 2021) has developed an account of epistemic arrogance that differentiates between a weaker form – which Tanesini calls *superbia* or intellectual *haughtiness* – and a stronger form, 'intellectual arrogance'. Tanesini (2021: 106-107) sees these two versions of arrogance as overlapping somewhat and suggests that they may often be found together, though expands an account that differentiates between the two. The account resembles Dillon's in several ways – no surprise given that Tanesini acknowledges that her account is 'greatly indebted' to Dillon's (2016a: 82, footnote 28) – including that Tanesini makes the claim that 'intellectual arrogance' proper does not 'concern an agent's relation to other epistemic agents' and so does not fit the interpersonal characterisation of *superbia* or *haughtiness* (2016a: 82). I will return to Tanesini's account of this deeper and putatively non-interpersonal account of arrogance shortly. For now, let us consider *haughtiness* (superbia). According to Tanesini:

Superbia is a disposition to try to 'do others down' in order to elevate oneself. It includes feelings of superiority, a tendency to arrogate special entitlements for oneself, a propensity to anger quickly and often as well as tendencies to engage in behaviours designed to humiliate and intimidate other people. (Tanesini, 2021: 98)

Like false inference arrogance, *superbia* involves a feeling of superiority, and 'manifests itself through disdain for other people' (Tanesini, 2016a: 73). However, (and, again, like false inference arrogance) a feeling of superiority is not sufficient for *superbia*, for one might think themselves superior in some domain but simply be making an 'honest (non-culpable) mistake' (2016a: 75). Instead, intellectual haughtiness involves the presumption, on the part of the haughty individual, that their alleged or genuine superior status 'entitles them to a range of privileges which they deny to others' (ibid: 75). Tanesini has described this form of arrogance to be a particular kind of 'arrogance in interpersonal relations' (2016b: 517) and recognises that *superbia* is akin with Roberts and Wood's account of intellectual arrogance - though they appear to disagree over the semantics (Tanesini, 2021: 100, footnote 14). Indeed, much like Roberts and Wood's *false inference arrogance* and Dillon's *status arrogance*, *haughtiness* involves a move from superiority to

entitlement. But, unlike Dillon, Tanesini does not think that *haughtiness* requires a general feeling of superiority but simply a feeling of intellectual superiority – thinking of oneself as more knowledgeable or of having more expertise than others around them. This difference, I propose, is largely explained by the fact that Tanesini's focus is on *intellectual* vice, whereas Dillon's is *moral* vice, meaning that the relevant variety of superiority for Tanesini will be intellectual superiority whereas for Dillon it will be more general.

Unlike Roberts and Wood's account but very much like Dillon's, Tanesini's is a motive-based account of vice. Tanesini's view of epistemic vice is what we might call *motivationalist*, in that Tanesini argues that 'intellectual character vices involve non-instrumental motives to oppose, antagonise, or avoid things that are epistemically good in themselves' (2018a: 350). This is consistent with Dillon's view of arrogance but clearly at odds with Roberts and Wood's 'three-tiered' view of arrogance, which says that arrogance sometimes lacks vicious motives. For Tanesini, intellectual vices (and virtues) – arrogance included – are best conceptualised as based on, or constituted by, 'clusters of attitudes' (2021: 11). With regards to *haughtiness* (and *intellectual arrogance*), Tanesini suggests that both are 'plausibly caused by defensive self-esteem and its associated clusters of highly accessible (that is, strong) positive explicitly measured attitudes directed towards aspects of one's own cognitive make-up such as one's skills, habits, faculties, and views' (2021: 103-4). Much more could be said here, given Tanesini's rich and detailed account of the social psychology of epistemic vice, but for our purposes we need only to note that for Tanesini epistemically defective motives are an essential ingredient of both *haughtiness* and the stronger form of arrogance, which we will get to shortly.

3.2   Non-interpersonal accounts

As mentioned above, it is helpful to distinguish accounts of arrogance that take interpersonal dynamics or comparative judgments to be central to the trait from putatively non-interpersonal accounts, which claim that there are forms of arrogance that do not involve comparative judgments or necessitate the same interpersonal dynamics. Here, I begin with Dillon's account of *unwarranted claims arrogance* before considering Tanesini's

more recent work on *intellectual arrogance*. According to Dillon, *unwarranted claims arrogance* can manifest even when individuals do not think of themselves as superior to others. Similarly, Tanesini sees *intellectual arrogance* as not involving interpersonal relations. I introduce and explain both accounts in this sub-section but ultimately defend the view that arrogance is essentially interpersonal in section 4.1.

3.2.1 Dillon on 'unwarranted claims' arrogance

Unwarranted claims arrogance is characterised, according to Dillon, by a sense of entitlement and a disposition to lay claim to certain goods, such as authority, rights, and knowledge, '*without warrant and despite good reason not to*' (2007: 107; my emphasis). *Unwarranted claims arrogance* manifests when the individual does not have the knowledge, rights, or authority that they claim *and* ought to know this: 'one arrogates in the face of, in contempt of countering evidence or reasons' (108). In the case of unwarranted knowledge claims, these are not arrogant simply for being mistaken, but for being mistaken in a context where the falsity of such a claim was available and the claimant is at fault for missing this. Nor is *unwarranted claims arrogance* a matter of stupidity or irrationality, for Dillon: the 'arrogant person always has subjectively the strongest reason for claiming and assuming what he does: he wants it' and 'that he wants it gives him a right to it and so he shall have it, that he wants it to be true makes it true' (108).

Those demonstrating unwarranted claims arrogance, according to Dillon, 'assume that they have the right to do whatever they want, or are cockily confident of their abilities, or take their views to be the only possible ones' (2021: 211). On this view, unwarranted claims arrogance is a demonstration of a confused moral sensibility insofar as the arrogant *think* they are entitled to lay claim to moral and epistemic goods when, *in fact*, they are not. Moreover, Dillon suggests two further aspects of *unwarranted claims arrogance*. First, that the goods claimed will always relate to high status or worth, meaning that claiming them can be a form of elevating oneself and one's sense of self-worth or 'a mark of antecedent inordinate valuing of oneself' (2007: 108). Second, that *unwarranted claims arrogance*, although it will sometimes be expressed openly or explicitly, will be

typically more subtle and stealthy than that: a matter of inexplicit assumption, unarticulated taking for granted, implicit expectation, a matter of presumption, of taking something as fact before the fact without questions of reasons, evidence, warrant, or justification ever even arising... much more a matter of what goes without saying and without thinking, more a matter of understanding, interpretation, construal, and perception than of inference, explicit belief, and declaration. It tends to operate stealthily, without thought, and unconcerned about, inattentive to, or contemptuous of truth and reality. (2007: 108)

Like *status arrogance*, Dillon sees unwarranted claims as 'powered by the self-esteem motive' (2021: 211). People demonstrate *unwarranted claims arrogance*, but not (or not obviously) *status arrogance*, when they claim to have the right to park their vehicle wherever they choose, when they claim to have the authority to stop a legal, peaceful protest, or when they claim that their fallacious conspiracy theories, pseudo-science, or "fake news" are the only possible "true" perspectives. In these cases, individuals make unwarranted claims of their rights, authority, or epistemic reliability without necessarily thinking of themselves as of a superior status to others around them. Considering this, Dillon claims that *unwarranted claims arrogance* is not interpersonal, like status arrogance, because it does not involve interpersonal relations.

While in practice it may be very difficult to distinguish between status arrogance and unwarranted claims arrogance, some of our exemplars of arrogance demonstrate the latter kind of arrogance in isolation well. The Bush administration appear to have undue confidence in their epistemic abilities. They lay claim to knowing best and take themselves to be entitled to know the truth of the capabilities of the US military, despite contrary expert testimony. It may also be true that some or all of those high-ranking politicians of the Bush Administration take themselves to be of a higher moral status to those around

them, but they need not do so, according to Dillon, to be arrogant.[10] Their unwarranted claim to know best with regards to the US invasion of Iraq is grounds enough for the charge of arrogance. Further, Alex Jones also demonstrates unwarranted claims arrogance of a particular epistemic variety when he claims the truth as his own in postulating and circulating fallacious conspiracy theories and "fake news". Again, depending on how charitable our perspective we may or may not view him as status arrogant, but the fact that many of his claims are unwarranted and that he should know better is undeniable.

Further, the idea of making unwarranted claims appears to underline the point that Liebow and Ades make in discussing the arrogance at the heart of Tyra Banks and Kevin Spacey's thinking. Both Banks and Spacey are said to assume, based on limited experience, that they know what it's like to be a fat person or a casualised worker made redundant, respectively. In other words, they claim the same epistemic standing as people from oppressed groups *without warrant* - and they should know better. Moreover, this is different from other kinds of epistemic mistake in that by claiming this epistemic standing these individuals are exalting their epistemic credibility and status, perhaps in the pursuit of self-esteem or social power. The same could be said of John Howard Griffin and Grace Halsell's social experiments if we understand their claims as having come to understand what it is like to be a black person and we take their motives for this as the pursuit of self-esteem.

3.2.2 Tanesini on hyper-autonomy arrogance

As already noted, Alessandra Tanesini distinguishes two varieties of arrogance, although the one that is given the label 'intellectual arrogance' is said to be a deeper, more entrenched, or more wholly realised form of arrogance, examples of which 'do not concern an agent's relation to other epistemic agents' (2016a: 82).[11] To explain, Tanesini gives the

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[10] Adam McKay's 2018 film *Vice*, which documents Dick Cheney's rise to political power, certainly suggests that Cheney, once in office, took himself to be of a higher moral status than those outside of the President's inner circle.

[11] Tanesini (2021: 106) writes, 'I think of arrogance as a deepening or exacerbation of tendencies that are already found in *superbia*.'

example of a scientist who is arrogant in the way in which he conducts his research, even when doing so alone. The scientist is 'stuck in his ways', unwilling to consider alternative techniques and 'unwilling to contemplate that he has made a mistake' when his experiments produce results that aren't credible (2016a: 82). These behaviours are said to be signs of intellectual arrogance but do not 'necessarily involve a sense of superiority or disrespect for other epistemic agents' (82). For this reason, Tanesini labels this form of arrogance 'intra-personal' rather than interpersonal (2016a: 82). To distinguish it from other accounts of epistemic arrogance, I call this form of arrogance *hyper-autonomy arrogance* (following Tanesini's lead in relating it to Roberts and Wood's (2007: 236) discussion of hyper-autonomy). *Hyper-autonomy arrogance*, then,

> is characterised by a sense that one has no intellectual debts to anybody else so that one's achievements are wholly creditable to oneself. It is also manifested in an excessive form of epistemic self-reliance understood as an unwillingness to take any other epistemic agent to be trustworthy. The wholly arrogant individual gives no evidential weight to the beliefs held by others, whilst putting a lot of trust in his own views. (Tanesini, 2016b: 514)

Like the bankers whose gambling with other people's money led to the 2008 financial crisis, the hyper-autonomously arrogant think of themselves as 'invulnerable to threats' (2021: 106). And whereas the haughty think of themselves as superior, the hyper-autonomously arrogant 'feels that he is the standard by which worth is measured… the measure of all things' (2021: 106), as if 'unique, as if he were the only agent who is unquestionably and always intellectually trustworthy' (2016b: 518). Whereas Roberts' and Wood's false inference account takes a 'feeling of superiority' to rely upon comparative beliefs of individuals in relation to others, then, it looks like Tanesini wants to claim something deeper.[12] That is, Tanesini takes genuine (epistemic) arrogance to consist not necessarily in feeling *superior* but in feeling *different*. In particular, she suggests that the arrogant take themselves to be unaccountable epistemic agents insofar as they consider

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[12] It is not clear that Roberts and Wood (2007) do consider superiority as consisting only in comparative attitudes or feelings towards others, however. As such, I leave it an open question the extent to which their view is compatible with my reading of Tanesini's hyper-autonomy account.

themselves unaccountable asserters. They can assert whatever they want and do not expect to be held accountable for doing so (Tanesini, 2016a: 83-85).

David Cameron's assertion directed at Angela Eagle denotes his epistemic arrogance, for Tanesini (2016a). Bush and his colleagues appear excessively epistemically self-reliant in their decision-making around the invasion of Iraq, too. And Alex Jones' contemptuous attitude toward truth and unaccountable assertions regarding conspiracy theories may make him hyper-autonomously arrogant also. It is unclear, however, to what extent Banks and Spacey would fulfil the requirements of hyper-autonomy arrogance. Whilst it looks like they do, to an extent, demonstrate a level of taking themselves to be unaccountable asserters insofar as they lay claim to excessive epistemic credibility, there is no reason to suppose that they would not defer to others about, for example, what medicines to take or where to invest their money. In this sense, the granular or domain-specific nature of Banks' and Spacey's putative arrogance appears somewhat at odds with how Tanesini describes *hyper-autonomy arrogance*, which seems to demand a more entrenched and general tendency towards epistemic unaccountability. On this view, Banks and Spacey would have to go much further than just making unwarranted claims to be described as intellectually arrogant. This is a dynamic that I will discuss further in the next chapter, but for now it is worth noting that Tanesini's account does not seem to cater for these kinds of cases.

4.   Arrogance, superiority, and interpersonal relations

Having considered a variety of cases of arrogance and introduced several prominent philosophical accounts, I now turn my attention to two questions that fall out of these accounts. First, I will consider the question of whether Dillon and Tanesini are right in their proposal that *unwarranted claims* and *hyper-autonomy arrogance* do not involve interpersonal relations and so can be considered non-interpersonal accounts. Here, I will argue that arrogance necessarily involves interpersonal relations; that it is an essentially interpersonal vice. Specifically, I suggest that arrogance will plausibly always involve the

arrogant having some mental state with interpersonal contents that reflect an underlying disregard for other agents.

The second question I pose and seek to answer in this section asks what, if any, comparative judgment regarding one's place or position amongst one's community is necessary for arrogance. As we have seen, typically the arrogant are seen to think of themselves as superior, but in some cases need not. Must they think of themselves as unique or special among their peers? Or, rather, can arrogance also be found in instances where individuals feel a closeness or similarity with those around them?

4.1 Defending the essentially interpersonal view of arrogance

Although I think that Dillon's and Tanesini's accounts and analysis have greatly enriched the debate around the nature of arrogance and aptly highlight its significant harms, I want to reject the view that these accounts are non-interpersonal. I accept that both accounts locate substantial differences in the internal mechanics of arrogance but here I argue that such differences can be embraced without losing sight of the important ways in which such arrogance is nevertheless interpersonal.

The root of the claim that these accounts of arrogance are non-interpersonal, I think, is to be found in the lack of comparative superiority claim, belief, or feeling. In both, the arrogance at issue appears to bypass what Tiberius and Walker, and Roberts and Wood see as an essential feature: a view of oneself as either superior *in general* or, at least, in particular ways (from which, for Roberts and Wood, entitlements are inferred). Instead, in cases of *unwarrantable claims* and *hyper-autonomy arrogance*, the arrogant need not hold a view of their comparative worth to others (including their comparative share of epistemic goods like credibility or epistemic authority). Insofar as Tanesini sees this form of arrogance as a deep or entrenched form of superbia, it could be the case that the arrogant individual has so "successfully" habituated a view of his self-worth and epistemic abilities that he no longer has the need for such comparative judgments. He is so arrogant that he

gives no mind to anyone else's worth and so does not have a view about their comparative worth in relation to him. Dillon does not suggest a similar transition between *status arrogance* and *unwarranted claims arrogance*, though a distinctive feature of the latter account suggests that arrogance can be displayed in cases in which the arrogant individual shows little sign of having a view of his comparative worth in relation to others. *Unwarranted claims arrogance* involves making claims in light of an inflated and unrealistic view of one's abilities, skills, or qualities, but this need not be in comparison to the abilities, skills, or qualities of other people.

The observation that arrogance need not include an understanding of oneself as superior to others is, in my view, persuasive. It seems to me quite plausible that arrogance can involve an understanding of oneself as exceptional, unique, different from or even – as I will argue in the next sub-section – similar to or alike others, rather than merely superior. But this does not imply that there are non-interpersonal varieties of arrogance. To explain why this is so, I will first consider the interpersonal effects of arrogance before arguing that, beyond these, the mental states that underpin arrogance have interpersonal content, even in cases that are claimed to involve a non-interpersonal form of arrogance.

First, and perhaps more obviously, putatively non-interpersonal forms of arrogance will have profound and often unjust interpersonal *effects*. The arrogant making of unwarranted claims plausibly leads to unjust and unequal social relations. Those who *mistakenly and unwarrantedly* take it as their right to, for instance, occupy a piece of land, make demands on others' labour, or receive special privileges, thereby harm those around them who are negatively impacted by these illicit claims. Further, those who are so epistemically arrogant – in the hyper-autonomous sense – that they give no mind to the worth (moral, epistemic, or otherwise) of other people will invariably disregard and ignore the interests, rights, and capabilities of those around them in ways which fail to demonstrate an appropriate (or any) level of respect for those people. They will also plausibly produce and allow the proliferation of ignorance, which will damage the possibility of epistemic communities accessing truth, knowledge, or related epistemic goods. Drawing upon our examples, the harmful effects of *unwarranted claims arrogance* and *hyper-autonomy arrogance* appear to be felt variously by Cameron's parliamentary opponent

Angela Eagle, communities impacted by Jones' conspiracy theories, and most, if not all, of the Iraqi population. These effects are essentially interpersonal, and it is difficult to imagine scenarios in which other similarly unwarranted entitlement claims would not have similar interpersonally damaging effects.

However, I take it that the argument for interpersonal effects does not offer conclusive reasons for thinking of arrogance as essentially interpersonal. This is because these interpersonal (and harmful) effects are distinct from the content of the arrogant person's attitudes or other mental states, which have so far been our focus. Tanesini in fact acknowledges that *hyper-autonomy arrogance* will often have such effects, stating that interpersonal harms are 'likely consequences of arrogance [but] they are not an essential part of it, since an arrogant individual can become so aloof that he refrains from engaging with others' (2016a: 85).[13] Here, the idea is that the attitudes that underpin arrogance sometimes have no interpersonal content because the arrogant feels no need at all to compare themselves to other people, favourably or not, and that this could plausibly result in a near total disengagement from interpersonal relations. What reasons do we have, then, for thinking that arrogance necessarily involves mental states with interpersonal content? I will offer two: first, that the kinds of goods claimed by the arrogant are interpersonal goods and thus claiming them involves mental states with interpersonal content; second, that arrogance necessarily involves mental states that reflect a certain reckless regard or wilful disregard for other agents and so, in this sense, contain interpersonal content.

When we pay proper attention to the kinds of entitlements or goods that the arrogant take themselves to be owed, it is highly implausible that these do not involve an agent's relation to other (epistemic) agents. That is, the goods to which the arrogant take themselves to be entitled are interpersonal goods. In more obviously moral cases of arrogance, these goods could include land, rights, or power, whereas in epistemic cases they could include epistemic authority, reliability, credibility, trustworthiness, or

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[13] This observation prompts Tanesini to describe the harmful *intrapersonal* effects that hyper-autonomy arrogance has on the epistemic characters of the (hyper-autonomously) arrogant, who deny themselves the possibility of fully exercising their capacities as informants and thus harm their ability to function as epistemic agents (2016a: 85). This seems plausible to me, though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a fuller discussion of this and, regardless, the observation is not in tension with the interpersonal characterisation that I argue for here.

autonomy. Plausibly, all of these goods are interpersonal in the sense that possessing them will be socially advantageous and lacking them will be socially disadvantageous. Those who therefore successfully claim such goods will have claimed a social advantage and thus will find themselves in a comparatively better position than those who have not had the same success. Those unaccountable asserters who claim epistemic authority are thereby claiming an interpersonal good that constitutes a social advantage. The mental states related to such claims – whether these take the form of beliefs, attitudes, suppositions, or assumptions – therefore plausibly have interpersonal content insofar as they relate to interpersonal goods. If we accept that arrogance necessarily involves certain mental states that make such claims, then, it seems that arrogance necessarily involves interpersonal content and is therefore essentially interpersonal.

This is not the only reason we have for thinking that arrogance is essentially interpersonal, however. To explain why, consider again the totally aloof arrogant character that Tanesini describes as displaying an intra-personal kind of arrogance, as well as the scientist who lacks comparative attitudes to others but is nevertheless stuck in his ways, unable to consider the possibility of having made a mistake or the need to engage with alternative techniques. These examples illustrate how, for Tanesini, 'it would seem possible to stand in perfect isolation, absolutely indifferent to the behaviours of others, and yet be arrogant' (2016a: 82). There are at least two things to say about this view. First, it is arguable and, in my view, implausible that total aloofness and complete withdrawal from epistemic relations with others will not itself have some harmful interpersonal consequences. Individuals are always part of a community, with connections and relations to others that hold at least some value, and the loss of an individual from participation in such a community will always have some effect. This casts doubt on the idea that there are forms of arrogance that lack any interpersonal effects, which Tanesini suggests is at least a theoretical possibility.

Secondly, and relatedly, the possibility that arrogance could be related to such aloofness and withdrawal from being in epistemic (or other) community appears itself to require some mental state with interpersonal content. An implication of the *hyper-autonomous arrogant* individual being totally epistemically self-reliant is that he has a

complete lack of epistemic reliance on others, who are often well-placed to offer a reliable source of support, assuming that they are in fact trustworthy and reliable epistemic agents. Denying or ignoring the epistemic strengths of others in one's community is a necessary feature of this kind of arrogance that is plausibly constituted by a mental state that reflects this form of interpersonal disrespect. In the case of *unwarranted claims arrogance*, having a total belief in one's skills, abilities, or qualities and making unwarranted claims as a result similarly implies a lack of trust in the skills, abilities, or qualities of others.

This dynamic, observable in cases of both *hyper-autonomy* and *unwarranted claims* arrogance, reflects a reckless regard for one's own agency and a wilful disregard for other agents' interests and agency constituted by mental states with this interpersonal content. In this sense, arrogance is not only interpersonal in terms of its effects but also in terms of the mental states that constitute it. This is not only true considering the kinds of (interpersonal) goods that the arrogant lay claim to, but also in light of this reckless (dis)regard that also appears to underpin it. For example, a key part of the Bush administration's epistemic arrogance is the epistemic (and moral) recklessness that their unwarranted confidence in their military ability constitutes – a recklessness that involves an exaggerated view of their epistemic abilities and a wilful ignorance of the more expert epistemic abilities of those around them. Tyra Banks betrays a reckless exaggeration of her agency and undermines and devalues the epistemic agency of others in taking herself to be able to know what it's like to be fat rather than running a special feature following the real lives of fat people in order to highlight their marginalisation. The same can be said of the cases of Spacey, Griffin, and Halsell. In laying claim to a particular form of knowledge or epistemic credibility they thereby deny or at least damage the credibility of those who are legitimately entitled to it. The unwarranted entitlement claims at the heart of Dillon's putatively non-interpersonal account therefore appear to necessarily involve a damaging interpersonal disregard in relation to the agency of others.

This analysis offers reason to return to Tiberius and Walker's original claim that arrogance is essentially interpersonal – though not, or not always, in the sense in which these authors originally stipulated. Even forms of arrogance in which no comparative belief or feeling of superiority to others resides involve mental states with interpersonal

content that claim interpersonal goods and necessarily reflect a reckless regard toward the agency of oneself and a wilful disregard for the agency of others. It is these antagonistic interpersonal dynamics that are at the heart of arrogance that substantiate the view that arrogance is essentially interpersonal.

4.2 Comparative entitlements: arrogance in feeling similar

Separate from the question of whether arrogance is essentially interpersonal is the nature of the comparative judgments that can constitute it. As we have seen, Tiberius and Walker suggest that thinking of oneself as normatively superior – that is, superior in general as a human – is an essential feature of arrogance. But Roberts and Wood convincingly argue that a more limited or domain specific sense of superiority can suffice. Further, and as formed part of the preceding discussion regarding the interpersonal character of arrogance, Dillon and Tanesini both have views that suggest that people can demonstrate arrogance without necessarily thinking of themselves as superior to other people even in some limited respect. Tanesini is perhaps most explicit in characterising this relation in writing that the 'person who is haughty feels that he is superior to other people, but the arrogant person feels that *he is the standard by which worth is measured'* (2021: 106; my emphasis). For Tanesini, then, hyper-autonomy arrogance is more closely aligned with feeling unique, or uniquely endowed with a particular value by which others' worth is measured, than it is with feeling merely superior.

I accept that arrogance need not involve feeling superior and can often, instead, involve the sense of uniqueness that Tanesini describes. However, it seems that some of the cases introduced earlier – cases that have been typically thought of as demonstrations of arrogance – do not involve feelings of superiority or uniqueness but, rather, *similarity* with others. I want to critically assess such cases to defend the view that they constitute genuine examples of arrogance and subsequently argue that arrogance can also sometimes involve feelings of similarity, closeness, or connection with those toward whom one is arrogant. This is a dynamic of arrogance implied by but not explicitly argued for by the

authors whose examples I draw upon here. As such, it constitutes a previously unacknowledged feature of arrogance.

The cases in question include those given by Liebow and Ades (2022), Lorde (2017), and Ortega (2006). As Liebow and Ades set out, Tyra Banks and Kevin Spacey demonstrate what they call 'synecdoche epistemic arrogance' by assuming to know what it is like to be oppressed in a particular way based on limited experience that they mistakenly take to be sufficient for claiming such knowledge. I have also offered two further examples of this kind of arrogance, in introducing the journalistic experiments of John Howard Griffin and Grace Halsell in which they changed their appearance so they could "pass" as black people. In none of these cases is it plausible to think that the individuals' arrogance stems from feelings of superiority and, while perhaps there is a sense in which they think of themselves as having a special kind of credibility, it also appears unlikely that they think of themselves as uniquely endowed to have this kind of credibility. On the contrary, the individuals in question appear to think of themselves as having had the same or similar experiences as those towards whom their arrogance is directed, which results in a feeling of connection or closeness with this group. The problem is that they are mistaken in thinking of their experiences as warranting their assumed epistemic authority on particular subjects and so this feeling of connection or closeness is unwarranted: whilst they might reasonably recognise that aspects of their experience are relevantly similar, there appears to be an arrogance in assuming *too much* of a common identity or similarity of experience with the groups whose experience they claim to have a special knowledge or understanding of.

A similar dynamic can be observed in the other cases mentioned. Lorde claims that there is a particular 'academic arrogance' in assuming a discussion of feminism without acknowledging the multiple differences between women and without input from women of other intersecting marginalised identities (2017: 89). I understand this arrogance to consist in (wrongly) assuming that, because one is a woman, one is authorised to speak on behalf of *all* women and as if all women's experiences are more or less identical to one's own. As Ortega comments, Lorde 'wonders how the audience deals with the fact that while they are attending a conference on feminism, women of color are cleaning their

houses and taking care of their children; she wonders about academic arrogance' (2006: 57). The point is that those women who are providing domestic labour for the more privileged (mostly white) women able to attend the feminism conference in fact have very different experiences that must be acknowledged – and to embark on a discussion of feminism without acknowledging this or including these individuals demonstrates a kind of arrogance. Again, the arrogance that Lorde highlights is not obviously related to people feeling superior to others but in (unwarrantedly) feeling similar to particular groups in ways that lead to the assuming of particular entitlements or abilities.

Ortega's critique of Donna Haraway's (1990) analysis of the way that some women of colour have reappropriated the myth of *La Malinche* or *Malintzín*, 'the indigenous woman who was Hernán Cortés's lover and translator and who has come to symbolize treason in Latin American popular culture' (Ortega, 2006: 63), illustrates a similar dynamic. In this case, Haraway does acknowledge and engage with the work of women of colour and so 'does not perceive women of color strictly in an arrogant way' (2006: 64). Yet, for Ortega, the analysis 'has the vestiges of arrogant perception' insofar as it involves the 'appropriation of the contested story of La Malinche and because of the more subtle but still present overgeneralization of the perspectives of women of color' (65). Whilst this analysis does not appear to make a strong charge of arrogance against Haraway, it does suggest an aspect of arrogance at play in the way in which Haraway assumes it acceptable to appropriate a myth for her own ends and present the work of other women in a way that exaggerates and misrepresents the actual reading of such a myth within Latinx communities. If this analysis is right, it seems to illustrate a case in which, again, an individual demonstrates a form of arrogance not through feeling superior but via feeling overly similar, close to, or acquainted with a particular group of people and their ideas – a feeling of familiarity which leads to an individual making claims or propounding things that misrepresent the subjects or ideas of those towards whom they feel familiar.

One objection to the idea that arrogance sometimes involves feelings of similarity could suggest that these cases are instances in which faults or epistemic defects are rightly highlighted, but they are not instances of arrogance. Whilst I accept that these cases do not describe a sufficient level of systematically defective behaviour to warrant thinking of

those in question as *wholly* arrogant individuals, I think the application of the concept of arrogance is the most suitable.[14] It does not seem *merely* closedminded, ignorant, or a matter of wishful thinking for Banks and Spacey to assume 'what-it's-like' knowledge of oppression, for white feminists to proclaim a general understanding of womanhood that excludes those of other marginalised identities, or for authors to misrepresent the thinking that has developed in communities of colour for their own ends – it seems arrogant. Moreover, Liebow and Ades, Ortega, and Lorde – those critics who author the examples cited here – appear to agree, framing their critiques explicitly in terms of arrogance, rather than other vices. Such an observation need not, in my view, require identifying individuals that seem arrogant *in general*. The idea that these behaviours appear to warrant the label of arrogance seems to imply the suitability of this concept to their understanding of the cases. This does not imply that any instance that seems *to some person or group of people* to warrant the label 'arrogance' will necessarily be so, because there are all sorts of ways in which our understanding of behaviour and situations can be mistaken, but that if we accept the analysis and reading of the cases then we should at least see the 'vestiges' of arrogance. This finding offers further reason to think that arrogance need not involve conscious beliefs but that individuals may be arrogant via the assumptions or suppositions that they make. I will develop this thought in much greater detail in the next chapter.

5.   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to animate discussions regarding philosophical accounts of arrogance by first introducing several cases that illustrate our folk conceptions of the trait. I then offered a two-pronged taxonomy of prominent accounts, distinguishing between interpersonal and putatively non-interpersonal views. Following this mostly descriptive work, I argued that contrary to Dillon and Tanesini's positions arrogance is essentially interpersonal, despite it sometimes not involving comparative attitudes of superiority. This led me to consider, and argue for, the idea that arrogance can also sometimes involve the opposite of feeling superior to those towards whom one is arrogant:

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[14] It should be noted that none of the thinkers discussed make the charge of a wholesale *characterological* arrogance either – with Ades and Liebow specifically referring to *synecdoche epistemic arrogance* as a 'thinking vice' (2022: 3). I will have more to say about this distinction in the next chapter.

feeling similar to or the same as them. Although such a finding might, on first appearance, look unusual, I argued that it nonetheless appears to hold true in these cases – representing a novel and previously unacknowledged aspect of the nature of arrogance.

Whilst I have here considered some crucial questions regarding arrogance, a number remain. If Dillon and Tanesini are right, then arrogance always involves a motivation to defend or inflate one's self-esteem. If Roberts and Wood are right, then related motivations of self-aggrandizement are typically, but not always, present in the case of arrogance. The question of what, if any, motivations are essential for arrogance therefore needs dealing with. Further, I am yet to consider the question of whether arrogance is always a vice. Though much of the preceding discussion points towards the negative effects of arrogance, a more systematic review of the arguments, and counter arguments, ought to be considered. Finally, while I have intentionally merged and combined cases and accounts of arrogance *simpliciter* and epistemic arrogance in the interests of a broader understanding of the trait in this chapter, it has so far been somewhat unclear specifically what differentiates its epistemic and non-epistemic manifestations. Disaggregating between these kinds of arrogance will also, I hope, illuminate the nature of the vice. As well as responding to these issues, in the next chapter I seek to refine the account of arrogance to bring in to focus its essential components. For now, what I hope to have shown here is the variety of ways in which epistemic and non-epistemic forms of arrogance can be, and have been, realised.

3

Arrogance as undue assumption of license

1.   Introduction

In the previous chapter I described and critiqued aspects of other philosophers' conceptions of arrogance: the main aim of this chapter will be to put forward my own understanding of the vice. This will contribute towards the wider aims of this thesis by offering an account of arrogance that can be successfully and, I hope, illuminatingly extended from individuals to collectives. This is not to say that other accounts cannot be applied to group-level cases but that establishing a robust understanding of arrogance in relation to individuals will allow for a more rigorous understanding of the application of the concept to cases in which groups are said to be demonstrating arrogance.

Three central questions will be the focus of this chapter. The first asks what sort of motivations, if any, are essential for a general account of arrogance. This question follows a foundational debate in the field of vice epistemology around the role of motivations in the structure of epistemic vice and the extent to which defective epistemic motivations are necessary features of epistemic vice. Jason Baehr describes "motivationalism" as 'the thesis that *defective intellectual motivation is a necessary condition for the possession of an intellectual vice*' (2020: 29; emphasis in original). *Motivationalist* approaches to arrogance therefore demand a view of the kind of defective intellectual motivations necessary for the possession of epistemic arrogance. Robin Dillon (2007; 2021) defends a *motivationalist* position regarding arrogance *simpliciter* – suggesting that the characteristic defective motivation found in the arrogant is a 'self-esteem motive' – as does Alessandra Tanesini (2018a; 2021) in relation to epistemic arrogance. Tanesini appears to agree with Dillon's understanding of the self-esteem motive as the ultimate non-epistemic motivation but expands upon this by offering some distinctive ultimate epistemic motives that relate to *epistemic* arrogance.[1] Importantly, for both authors it appears that it is the disvalue of these

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[1] I use the terms 'motive' and 'motivation' interchangeably throughout this chapter, as I take them both to refer to the same psychological properties.

motivations that grounds the disvalue of the trait of arrogance itself. *Anti-motivationalist* approaches propose that epistemic vices can be possessed without the presence of defective epistemic motivations. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood (2003; 2007) have proposed that arrogance can operate without defective motivations, albeit only in fringe cases, whilst others have argued, more generally, that epistemic vices need not consist in defective ultimate epistemic motivations (Crerar, 2017; Cassam, 2019). In this chapter, I will therefore critically evaluate this claim and consider arguments from the wider debate to establish what motivations, if any, are necessary for the possession of arrogance.

The second question that this chapter seeks to answer is why we should think of arrogance as a vice at all. It is commonly assumed that arrogance is a vice – a paradigmatic vice, even – but in this chapter I will review the established accounts and offer my own view for why arrogance should be considered a vice. For those who defend a *motivationalist* position of arrogance (Dillon and Tanesini), the disvalue and so vicious status of arrogance is intrinsically linked with its characteristically defective motivations. In this way, the second question is closely related to the first. Those who take an alternative position with regards to the significance of defective motivations must offer an alternative framework for grounding the disvalue of arrogance. By expanding upon the way in which what I take to be a neutral and plausibly universal motivation for self-esteem can interfere with or impede our moral and epistemic activities in harmful ways, I argue that what makes arrogance a vice is the systematic error or disfunction that is at its core. Here, then, I introduce my account of arrogance, conceived as consisting of the disposition to unduly assume a license to act in various and necessarily harmful ways.

The third question that I seek to answer in this chapter considers how we distinguish epistemic and non-epistemic forms of arrogance. Much of the recent literature on arrogance appears to be disproportionately concerned with epistemic (or intellectual) arrogance, rather than with arrogance *simpliciter*. Few would argue, however, that the vice does not at least commonly result in moral harms - with some claiming that arrogance is plausibly a 'moral-epistemic vice' (Mason & Wilson 2017). I aim to consider the relationship between moral and epistemic vice and offer, based on my view of arrogance, a clear distinction of the two varieties. I also seek to show how moral and epistemic

arrogance will often overlap and interact and that some forms of arrogance will demonstrate both moral and epistemic arrogance.

The chapter proceeds first by tackling the question of the necessity of motivations in cases of arrogance (section 2). I will recap the suggested motives described by Roberts and Wood, Dillon, and Tanesini, all of which, I suggest, can be considered within the category of self-esteem-boosting motives. I then re-consider Roberts and Wood's putatively unmotivated and fringe case of arrogance (the case of Aristotle) before also considering other related cases raised in the wider literature on this subject. In the third part of this section, I recount Tanesini's defence of the *motivationalist* stance in response to such cases and ask where this position leaves us. I argue that Tanesini's view, though plausible, ultimately fails to overcome the impasse between *motivationalist* and *anti-motivationalist* positions. I therefore conclude with scepticism regarding the promises of *motivationalist* approaches at satisfactorily capturing the essence of arrogance.

This leads me to introduce my positive account of arrogance as undue assumption of license (section 3). Here I draw upon the work of Lewis Gordon to capture what it means to consider oneself as *licensed*. I also draw upon philosophical work regarding the concept of *assumptions* to clarify how a focus on this cognitive mechanism helps fittingly account for the disvalue of arrogance. This is therefore also where I make my argument for why arrogance is necessarily vicious. I consider but ultimately reject Dillon's (2021) position that arrogance can be virtuous in certain contexts, while also highlighting the grounds on which other philosophers have determined that arrogance is justifiably labelled a vice.

In section 4, I draw upon my account of arrogance to show how it can help disaggregate moral and epistemic forms of the vice. I suggest that epistemic arrogance relates to cases of arrogance in which the kinds of license assumed relate to epistemic activities, rather than more general non-epistemic activities. Here, I also consider the idea, argued for by Quassim Cassam (2019), that some epistemic vices are best described as thinking- or attitude-vices, rather than character traits. Contra Cassam's taxonomy, I argue that we can just as easily theorise arrogance as occurring in sometimes highly domain-specific scenarios that are heavily influenced by political and social dynamics but

are nevertheless characterological. In other words, I argue that even so-called *attitude-* and *thinking-vices* are aspects of peoples' characters; they are character vices. This finding leads to further questions regarding the way that many forms of arrogance appear to be socially produced, and thus demands a view of how groups themselves could be said to be arrogant (as, we will see, many have proposed). These questions will be the focus for the remainder of the thesis.

2. Arrogance and motivation

As noted in the introduction, the question of whether epistemic vices like arrogance require vicious or otherwise defective intellectual motivations has been a central point of discussion in the burgeoning field of vice epistemology. As I will discuss in more detail later, the question of motivation is especially significant because, for some, it is this motivational orientation that grounds the disvalue of vices – with epistemic vices on this view taken to involve bad ultimate epistemic motivations. As outlined in the preceding chapter, some extant accounts propose that an essential feature of arrogance is that it is motivated in particular ways, whereas others do not. Roberts and Wood, however, claim that in cases 'on the outer edges of the class, the "arrogant" behaviour is not motivated viciously' (2007: 247). In this section, I will recap the *motivationalist* positions taken by Robin Dillon, Alessandra Tanesini, and Roberts and Wood – views that have much in common regarding the motivational content of arrogance – before offering a critical discussion of Roberts and Woods' *anti-motivationalist* claims, with reference to the case of Aristotle. Here, I will return to similar cases raised in chapter 2 to clarify the kind of arrogance at issue here. I then relate this to the wider debate and apply Tanesini's (2018a) defence of the *motivationalist* position to Aristotle-like and other cases in the final part of this section, in which I also evaluate what the *motivationalist* position means for accounts of arrogance.

2.1 Self-esteem motives

To briefly re-cover ground from chapter 2, it will be useful here to remind ourselves of the *motivationalist* positions occupied by philosophers whose accounts have already been described. Robin Dillon asserts that both *status* and *unwarranted claims arrogance* are

motivated by the "self-esteem motive" – 'the powerful desire to value oneself ever more highly, especially through being highly valued by others' (2021: 210). For Roberts and Wood – though they do not go so far as to make it a necessary condition – arrogance is motivated by 'self-exaltation' in 'the most characteristic cases' (2007: 247). For Alessandra Tanesini, the attitudes of haughty or arrogant individuals 'have been formed and are maintained to serve… the need to defend the self against alleged threats' and so are associated with 'defensive or fragile high self-esteem' (2021: 97). Drawing upon psychological research, Tanesini argues that 'the motivation to defend the ego against threats' is a central feature of haughtiness and arrogance (2021: 105). Moreover, haughty and arrogant individuals are said to base their self-evaluations not on 'the motivation to know one's strengths and weaknesses' but 'purely as a means to boosting self-esteem' (2021: 118). In another case of intellectual arrogance – that of Galileo (discussed further below) – Tanesini suggests that the operative bad ultimate *epistemic* motive is 'an aversion to others' epistemic achievements' (2018a: 365). These various but related views find a common motivational outlook in the self-esteem motive, though Roberts and Wood do not offer an additional bad ultimate epistemic motive, whereas Tanesini (in some instances, at least) does.[2] Of course, epistemic motives are largely irrelevant for Dillon, whose focus is on arrogance simpliciter.

It ought to be clear, based on this summary, that self-esteem motives have typically been understood as playing a central role in arrogance. Although Roberts and Wood use the language of 'exaltation' rather than 'esteem', the point is that the motivation is one that aims to elevate and inflate one's sense of importance or self-worth. Such a view helps explain why arrogant individuals commonly appear to have such inflated egos and high opinions of themselves – because they are driven to maintain this self-image at all costs and regardless of evidence to the contrary. To consider a handful of cases from chapter 2, it is very plausible that Kissinger's arrogance is motivated by a sense of elevating and maintaining an elevated sense of high self-esteem. The same could be said also of Alex Jones and Chris the footballer. Could Tyra Banks and Kevin Spacey's *synecdoche epistemic arrogance* be attributed to a motivation for self-esteem and how would their actions be explained by this (Liebow & Ades, 2022)? In both cases the individuals are said to

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[2] I take it that the self-esteem motive is non-epistemic in the sense that it does not relate directly to epistemically valuable or disvaluable criteria.

exaggerate their epistemic credentials in claiming to know what it is like to be a member of an oppressed social group. Although for some it might appear to diminish one's sense of self-esteem to align oneself with oppressed groups, the knowledge claim broadens the domain over which these individuals view themselves as having valid knowledge and in this sense can be seen as boosting their self-esteem.

One feature to note about this view is that the motivation in question in the case of arrogance appears to be a potentially universal feature of human psychology. Dillon acknowledges this, writing that

> [m]ost [psychological] researchers accept it as an axiom that the desire to maintain and enhance self-esteem is an enormously powerful, ubiquitous, even universal motivation (albeit one whose operation is shaped by social and cultural context); some consider self-esteem to be the master motive in personal and interpersonal relations. (2021: 225; footnote 5)

The question, if self-esteem plays such a central role in many of our social interactions, is how to delineate between *effective* and *defective* motivational outlooks, where self-esteem is the object of motivation – because presumably not all self-esteem motives will necessarily lead to individuals manifesting arrogant dispositions. In many cases in which self-esteem motives are operating, they might in fact help rather than hinder interpersonal relations (e.g., in cases where people's low sense of self-esteem is boosted by engaging in productive social activities, like growing a community garden for instance). Problems seem to arise in cases where individuals are motivated to inflate their sense of self-esteem inordinately, and *over and above other competing objectives*. In epistemic cases, epistemic goods like truth, reality, or knowledge could be sacrificed to serve such a motivation, thus securing its status as epistemically defective. In non-epistemic cases, things of moral rather than epistemic value may be on the line, where the rights or interests of others are sacrificed in the interests of the self-esteem of the arrogant. I return to these considerations in section 2.3. For now, however, we should consider the case of putatively unmotivated arrogance offered by Roberts and Wood.

2.2 Arrogance without a motivation

Roberts and Wood claim that, in fringe cases that lack the characteristics of viciously self-exaltingly motivated arrogance, some arrogant behaviour is not motivated viciously at all (2007: 247). They use the example of Aristotle's 'intellectual policy' towards slaves and women to demonstrate how Aristotle's wider beliefs in human nature – which viewed slaves and women as inferiors – led him to discount their testimony when pursuing ethical and political enquiries. Roberts and Wood claim that Aristotle's policy is 'not obviously self-exalting, or motivated by sensuality, greed, or any other vice' (250). They conclude that Aristotle's is only 'third-tier' arrogance, meaning that it is not viciously motivated.[3] Importantly, Aristotle is said to show signs of arrogance despite the fact that his approach to knowledge acquisition showed signs of *humility* in other areas: he is said to have carefully considered the opinions of those who, according to his judgment, were most likely to know about subjects in a particular field and so cannot be seen as an 'epistemic Lone Ranger' (2007: 249).

Although I think there is some reason to doubt Roberts and Wood's claim that Aristotle's behaviour is not obviously self-exalting, let us accept for now that this is the case. The thought is that his intellectual stance regarding the testimony of women, slaves and workers can be described as arrogant, while Aristotle simultaneously showed signs of humility in other areas of his epistemic activities. We could (and, as I will discuss later, should) see this as an instance of domain-specific arrogance within a character who we might also describe as having virtuous dispositions in other areas, but this does not settle the question of whether arrogance always involves certain motivational states.

Later in the same paper, Roberts and Wood give an additional example of putatively unmotivated arrogance that is drawn upon by Charlie Crerar (2017) to make a wider argument that epistemic vices can but need not involve defective ultimate epistemic motivations. The case in question is that of scientist Galileo Galilei, who, Roberts and Wood describe, is said to have disregarded the objections of fellow scientists, overestimated the strength of his arguments, and 'underestimated the justification of those

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[3] For Roberts and Wood, first tier arrogance involves vicious self-exalting motivations and second tier arrogance involves vicious but not viciously self-exalting motivations. In the interests of concision, I do not discuss their idea of second tier arrogance here.

who hesitated to accept [Galileo's] hypothesis' because of his 'sense of intellectual superiority' (2007: 254). Crerar draws upon this example, and comments that

> Galileo's towering intellectual achievements were undoubtedly made possible only by a significant degree of intellectual virtue. However, no one's character is blemish free, and Galileo's dealings with other scientists paint the picture of an archetypal arrogant genius, keenly aware of his own intellectual superiority and thus closed-minded in his dealings with others. (2017:7)

Galileo's character is thus described as at once intellectually virtuous and yet also arrogant. Crerar insists that it is far from obvious that Galileo's arrogance lies in his 'ultimate [epistemic] ends' (i.e. his ultimate motivations) and that, on the contrary, he is 'genuinely motivated by epistemic goods yet nonetheless intuitively warrant[s] the ascription of epistemic vice' (2017: 9). The case is therefore described as one in which epistemic arrogance is found without defective ultimate epistemic motivations and alongside the presence of epistemically good motivations. As such, it constitutes a challenge to the *motivationalist* position and evidence for (what I call) an *anti-motivationalist* stance: the position that holds that defective epistemic motives are not necessary conditions of epistemic vice. Although Roberts and Wood do not offer an argument for their claim that Aristotle's arrogance appears to lack a vicious motivational component, perhaps the same analysis applies in this case, too. That is, Aristotle might be said to be motivated towards attaining epistemic goods and yet he also demonstrates an arrogant disposition with regards to his intellectual policy that ignores the testimonies of the most marginalised social groups of his time. This characterisation therefore makes Aristotle's case a further challenge to *motivationalism*.

If this is right, then these cases offer reason to question Dillon and Tanesini's *motivationalist* accounts of arrogance. The same might also be true of the cases of Grace Halsell and John Howard Griffin described in the previous chapter. In both cases, it could be argued that Halsell and Griffin's pursuits were driven by good epistemic ends in that both of their enquiries were investigative journalistic endeavours to learn what it is like to live as a black person in the USA. We might accept that both were somewhat delusional about the possibility of gaining such knowledge or understanding, but nevertheless accept

that their motivations were not epistemically defective. In other words, they were aiming at truth and motivated to seek out knowledge – epistemically good, worthwhile ends – but, perhaps, their inflated sense of self-esteem or general arrogance led them astray in *how* to pursue these ends and the way in which they have strayed from a potentially epistemically virtuous path is legitimately criticisable as epistemic arrogance. If this is right, then the *motivationalist* position might fail to include cases like this in the realm of what can be deemed arrogant.

2.3 *Motivationalism* and 'mere explanation'

In reply to Crerar's *anti-motivationalist* position, Tanesini has defended *motivationalism*, arguing that epistemic character vices 'involve non-instrumental motives to oppose, antagonise, or avoid things that are epistemically good in themselves' (2018a: 350). The argument proceeds in two parts: the first offers an alternative characterisation of Galileo's motivational outlook, while the second aims to offer independent reasons in favour of the *motivationalist* position via a clarification of the kind of explanations that vice attributions most commonly relate to.

Tanesini first suggests that Crerar's is a 'sketchy characterisation' of Galileo's psychological framework that is 'largely under-described', 'open to question', and that, given his description of Galileo as arrogant and closedminded, 'it is extremely implausible that he would be motivated by a desire that the truth be discovered no matter by whom, and that he simply thinks he is best placed to discover it'. (2018a: 360). Instead, Tanesini argues that Galileo displays a certain epistemic selfishness in being motivated only to discover truths if it is he who discovers them, therefore making him 'only instrumentally motivated by a desire for epistemic goods' (2018a: 361). This is consistent with Tanesini's account of arrogance insofar as this instrumental motivation is consistent with Galileo being 'ultimately motivated by a desire to further inflate his own inflated self-conception' (361). The self-esteem motive is Galileo's ultimate aim, then, but what about his ultimate (non-instrumental) *epistemic* motive? This is important insofar as what grounds the viciousness of *epistemic* vices, for *motivationalists*, is defective ultimate epistemic motivations. Tanesini's suggestion is that Galileo's ultimate epistemic motive is 'an aversion to others' epistemic achievements' (2018a: 365). Galileo is said to see other

people's successes as 'obstacles' and to dislike 'the idea that others have [epistemic] achievements to their name' (2018a: 359). Insofar as we agree that epistemic achievements are good in themselves, Tanesini argues, it is plausible that this motivational outlook constitutes an epistemically bad motivation (359).

Perhaps we could say something similar in the case of Aristotle? It seems plausible that Aristotle's intellectual policy towards women, slaves, and workers might also have been driven by a self-esteem motive, insofar as the policy bolstered Aristotle's sense of self-importance (by placing men like him at the top of the social hierarchy). Moreover, considering the intellectual policy we might postulate ultimate epistemic motives like that of Galileo. Perhaps Aristotle was motivated towards the suppression of the epistemic standing of those groups whom his policy ignored, for instance. Perhaps his ultimate epistemic motive was to elevate the epistemic position (and power) of citizens like himself and diminish the epistemic value of those from these putatively lower social orders. Of course, Aristotle could have more rigorously deliberated over precisely *who* ought to be considered within our ethical and political decision-making, yet he did not. He showed considerable skill in other enquiries and deliberations, but not in this domain – despite access to contrary views (Plato famously supported the inclusion of philosopher queens in his *Republic*, for example)[4]. But Aristotle's intellectual policy, on this view, is explained by his motivation to 'do down' the epistemic merits of these groups of people and to therefore inflate his self-esteem. Whilst we do not have anything like a full psychological picture of Aristotle at our disposal, these considerations offer at least some reasons to question Roberts and Wood's claim that, because Aristotle appeared intellectually virtuous in other ways, his arrogance lacked vicious motivations.

While I find Tanesini's depiction of Galileo's ultimate motivation (self-esteem) plausible, the ultimate epistemic motivation described appears to be just one possible interpretation of Galileo's outlook, that is therefore more contentious. It is not clear or obvious that Galileo really was ultimately motivated by an aversion to others' epistemic successes, despite Tanesini's claims. Galileo could have disregarded his peers and overestimated his abilities for different reasons: perhaps he was simply utterly convinced

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[4] For an account that outlines and analyses Plato's equivocal view of women in his work, see Okin (1977).

of his own arguments and so had found cognitive closure (something for which he need not have a high need for) on the issues in a way that meant, for him, that there was no need to collect further information by listening to the objections of others. This would explain how Galileo's arrogance was related to him being closedminded (closedmindedness being highly correlated with a need for cognitive closure) – a relation highlighted by Crerar (2017: 7) – without stipulating a motivational component to his outlook.[5] Moreover, even if we do not imagine Galileo as being motivated via an aversion to the epistemic achievements of other people, his actions remain criticisable in a manner that make attributions of epistemic arrogance appropriate. We can say that Galileo is wrong to have prematurely closed his mind to the possibility that objections to his theories and ideas might be valid – objections that would have been epistemically helpful if they were properly received. As Crerar suggests, the ascription of epistemic vice certainly implies that the vicious 'should have known better' but this need not necessitate the ascription of epistemically defective motivations because 'there are other ways to ground the badness of vice' (2017: 11). I do not take this as definitive, but to at least provide some preliminary evidence against the view that a *motivationalist* approach to epistemic vice, and in particular arrogance, is necessary in order to tell the full story regarding the relevant defects that ground the disvalue of vices like arrogance.

Tanesini acknowledges a problem with the methodology of merely providing an alternative characterisation of Galileo: that it simply involves offering an alternative framing of individuals' psychological outlooks, disagreements about which will be difficult to settle and so naturally lead to a 'stalemate'. To avoid this 'trade in intuitions', Tanesini aims to offer independent reasons in support of the *motivationalist* position over *anti-motivationalism* (2018a: 362). This argument rests on the way in which the practice of attributing vices aims to explain a person's beliefs or actions. Whereas *anti-motivationalists*, Tanesini suggests, take aim at a view of motivations that *rationalise* an agent's behaviour, motivations properly understood ought to be considered more commonly 'mere explanations' rather than rationalisations. This view expands the notion of motivation in a way that makes the psychological states that lead to the beliefs or actions of the vicious intelligible.

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[5] For further discussion of the relation between arrogance and closedmindedness, see Heather Battaly (2020).

Drawing upon work in the philosophy of action, Tanesini describes three kinds of explanations: justifications, rationalisations, and 'mere explanations' (2018a: 362-364). Justifications adduce considerations that act as normative reasons in favour of certain beliefs or actions and are not psychological explanations (and therefore not vice explanations). Rationalisations are psychological explanations that adduce 'the reasons *that the agent takes* to support her beliefs or actions', whereas a mere explanation (which is also a psychological explanation) only offers 'reasons that make the agent's actions or beliefs intelligible without either justifying or rationalising them' (363; my emphasis). Rationalising explanations aim to describe the agent's self-conscious reasons for their actions or beliefs whereas mere explanations offer reasons that the agent themselves might be unaware of but nevertheless describe psychological states that the agent possesses that help explain their actions or beliefs. To illustrate, Tanesini uses the example of Othello's killing of Desdemona in Shakespeare's story. A rationalisation of Othello's actions says that Othello kills Desdemona because he takes her to have been unfaithful towards him. A mere explanation would suggest that Othello kills Desdemona because he is jealous. While Othello would not take his jealousy to be his motivating reason for his behaviour, 'it is the psychological state that explains both his deliberation and his actions' (363). Tanesini suggests that, while vice explanations might sometimes be rationalisations, they will more commonly function as mere explanations: they will supply psychological motives that explain but do not rationalise agents' actions or beliefs; motives that agents are 'typically unaware of possessing' (364).

Anti-motivationalists, according to Tanesini, 'neglect' the distinction between different kinds of explanations, focussing discussions on agents' 'motivating reasons' that relate to *rationalising* explanations, and thereby failing 'to consider the motives presented in mere explanations of actions and belief' (2018a: 350). The implication is that if *anti-motivationalists* can accept the idea of motives in relation to mere explanations then the question of the necessity of non-instrumental epistemically defective motivations in cases of epistemic vice can be settled. The problem with this analysis is twofold. First, it is unclear and highly questionable that *anti-motivationalists* really do place rationalising 'motivating reasons' of the kind Tanesini suggests at the heart of their critique. Tanesini offers no support for the view that they do. Second, even if they do, it seems that there are

plausible conceptions of epistemic vice that can provide alternative readings of 'mere explanations' that deny that these must have defined motives attached to them; a finding that would debunk Tanesini's claim that the distinction between explanations offers independent reasons in favour of *motivationalism*.

The idea of vice explanation as mere explanation seems to hold true in many cases of vice attribution. When we describe a situation in which a detective ignores potentially vital informants because she is prejudicially closedminded, we are not suggesting that if we asked the detective why she ignores these informants that she would tell us that it is because she is prejudicially closedminded. The detective might offer some alternative reasons – that she does not think that those people are trustworthy sources, or that she has asked people "like that" for information in the past and that they have always been unreliable – but those who seek to explain her behaviour through attributing vices implicitly disagree about these rationalisations and so use vice explanations to provide greater intelligibility in these cases. The problem, for Tanesini, is that this view of vice attribution appears compatible with, rather than contradictory to, *anti-motivationalist* approaches. For it would seem reasonable for the *anti-motivationalist* to accept this view of vice explanations whilst insisting that these need not involve motives but, rather, some other psychological state without an obvious motivational component. The implication here is that it seems we can make 'mere' explanations without the need for positing motives (even those that agents need not be aware of).

Tanesini insists that 'there is a plausible conception of vice according to which it is part of the very concept of vice that it is correctly attributed only to individuals whose non-instrumental motivations include aversion to things that are in themselves epistemically good' (2018a: 362). But, even so, this does not imply that motivational approaches to vice have a monopoly over practices of vice explanation as mere explanation. We have other options, even if they do come with some strings attached. For example, in the alternative characterisation of Galileo's cognitive outlook depicted above, I suggested that he need not have been motivated via an aversion to others' epistemic achievements but might, instead, have simply considered the objections of his scientific peers irrelevant given that

he had found cognitive closure on his scientific theories in question.[6] I take it that this is an explanation of Galileo's arrogant behaviour (his failure to listen and respond to the genuine objections of his scientific peers) that ought to be considered a mere explanation. It seems, however, that this explanation does not provide any non-instrumental epistemically deficient motivation on the part of Galileo. In other words, the explanation appears to fit the parameters defined by our practices of vice attribution without the need for the identification of motivations associated with the psychological states defined by these mere explanations.

The "strings" attached to this view refer to a question that it leaves unanswered: what grounds do we have for criticism of a vicious agent, if not defective (epistemic) motivations? For Tanesini, 'what grounds criticism of vicious people are the psychological states that motivate their behaviours, even though these states are not their reasons for their actions' (364). In other words, the viciousness of vice is explained via bad epistemic motives. It is therefore incumbent on those who defend *anti-motivationalist* views to specify the behavioural defects of agents that warrants criticism of their characters and the attribution of vices. Whilst I will not, here, defend a strict *anti-motivational* position, my analysis in the next section will suggest a path forward regarding the question of grounding the viciousness of arrogance without direct reference to defective ultimate epistemic motivations.

Before we get there, let us return to the central question that I have sought to answer in this section regarding whether there are any distinctive motivations necessary for arrogance. I first discussed the idea of the self-esteem motive, around which there is considerable, though not universal, support. I think that the self-esteem motive is plausibly operative in all cases of arrogance. The problem, however, is that, given the ubiquity and potential universality of self-esteem motives, it is not possible that such a motive is *necessarily* vicious. While we will likely *always* be able to tell a story that makes individuals' harmful behaviour intelligible in ways that attribute those individuals with self-serving motives, there will be many other occasions where we might see self-esteem motives operating in neutral or even very positive ways for both the individuals concerned and

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[6] In my view, Galileo need not have a high need for cognitive closure in order to have found cognitive closure on this topic. It could be suggested that having a high need for cognitive closure is a motivational orientation, but I do not consider the fact of reaching cognitive closure to imply a high need for it.

their communities (as in the case of the self-esteem-boosting community gardener, for example). Distinguishing between non-vicious and vicious self-esteem motives requires more analysis, but this is not a reason to deny that self-esteem motives are very plausibly a necessary component of arrogance simpliciter.

As I have argued here, the idea that epistemic arrogance necessarily involves non-instrumental defective epistemic motivations has far less support, as there seems to be different ways of framing the behaviour and motivational outlooks of the arrogant that do not necessitate such defective epistemic motivations. I suggested at the end of section 2.2 that epistemic arrogance appears to consist in *how* the arrogant seek to achieve particular epistemic ends, rather than in the kinds of epistemic ends themselves that are sought. Aristotle, Galileo, Halsell, and Griffin all have plausibly positive epistemic ends, but the process via which they seek to achieve them suggests something arrogant about their enquiries. Perhaps, then, a general account of arrogance needs to pay close attention to the process via which the judgments of the arrogant falter, rather than simply seeking to ground the viciousness of arrogance in defective motivational outlooks. My contention is that the error that the arrogant make in this process can do the explanatory work in justifying the status of arrogance as a vice, without recourse to talk of good or bad motivations. Ultimately, as I seek to show in the next section, even those plausibly motivated by epistemically good ends can be shown to be epistemically arrogant in virtue of their defective, or simply absent, reasoning.

3.   Undue assumption of license: a process-oriented approach

In this section I will argue that a distinctive and compelling way to understand arrogance is that it involves a disposition to unduly assume a license to act in harmful ways. I develop this view with a focus on arrogance as a form of bad faith and consider Lewis Gordon's existentialist analysis of Sartrean bad faith in order to expand upon the internal mechanics of the trait. Although the account has various points of similarity with Roberts and Woods' 'false inference' and Robin Dillon's 'unwarranted claims' accounts, I suggest that my focus on assumptions as the hallmark of arrogance offers some distinctive explanatory benefits. Here, I will also discuss the role of the self-esteem motive in

arrogance and consider what grounds the disvalue (badness or viciousness) of arrogance, according to this account.

Next, I return to the arrogant exemplars discussed in the previous chapter to show how my account is applicable to a diversity of cases and is able to cater to highly domain-specific instances of arrogance. Here, I pay particularly close attention to the cases of arrogance in which the arrogant see themselves as similar, as opposed to superior, to those toward whom they are arrogant. I argue that my account is able to explain the arrogance of such accounts in a way that other accounts struggle to.

In the final sub section, I introduce an argument recently pursued by Robin Dillon that claims to locate examples of virtuous arrogance. The idea of virtuous arrogance, if plausible, would cast into doubt my claim that arrogance is plausibly *always* a vice. However, I argue that Dillon's cases fail to meet the criteria of my account and so cannot be said to truly constitute examples of arrogance, although the role of self-esteem motives in the cases usefully highlights how such motives can be epistemically effective and so not always vicious. This leads me to clarify the distinction between arrogance simpliciter and epistemic arrogance in the final section (4).

3.1 Arrogance and bad faith: undue assumption of license

Arrogance, as I understand it, consists in a deep problem concerning an individual's understanding of their agency and self – an understanding that fundamentally misperceives what action is warranted and what is not. My suggestion is that this confusion of the self is well-characterised as an *undue assumption of license*. The arrogant are disposed to assume a license to behave in harmful ways, and this assumption is undue. In other words, the arrogant are mistaken in their assumption of license, in the sense that the assumption is epistemically unwarranted. The arrogant can assume this license because they take themselves to be either superior, unique, or simply different from others in a license-legitimating way. But they sometimes make an undue assumption of license because they (often mistakenly) understand themselves or their experiences to be similar to others in a way that licenses them in certain domains. The arrogant may be right that

they are superior, unique, different, or similar to others, but they are wrong to assume the licenses that they think these properties legitimate.

The motive that is plausibly operative in all cases of arrogance is the self-esteem motive. The arrogant desire esteem for themselves – a motive that, as I have argued, is not essentially vicious in and of itself. Problems arise when the desire for esteem – which will often go unrecognised by the arrogant themselves – is correlated with a desire for the kinds of *license* for which there is no warrant. In other words, the arrogant over-reach in terms of the kinds of agency that they afford themselves: they assume they are licensed to behave in ways that in reality they are not.

The idea of arrogance relating to this agential over-reach is in my view explained by the way in which arrogance ought to be understood as a form of bad faith. Michael Patrick Lynch claims that epistemic arrogance 'almost always involves a degree of self-deception, an act of epistemic bad faith' (2018: 286). In particular, Lynch suggests that the arrogant are self-deceiving regarding the basis of their confidence or, more specifically, 'the connection between truth and their self-esteem.' Although Lynch does not pursue a deeper analysis into the nature of bad faith concerning the arrogant, its relationship with arrogance may be identified when we do so. When asked about US rapper Kanye West's allegiance with Donald Trump, philosopher Lewis Gordon – author of *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (1999) – offers insightful analysis:

> [Kanye West and Donald Trump] want license. They want absolute power. With license you have absolute liberty. It means you can do anything you want without accountability. It means you can kill people without accountability. Trump boasted that he could shoot someone in broad daylight in Manhattan and he'll be fine. That is license. Because a god can do whatever a god wants. (Gordon & Erizanu, 2018)

Here, Gordon describes West and Trump – two individuals noteworthy for the number of arrogance-ascriptions to their names – as desiring license, power, and absolute unaccountability. Both do have a certain amount of power but lack the license and position of unaccountability that they desire, though this does not stop them thinking that they have these, too. As Gordon explains in *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism*, this outlook relates

to Sartre's existentialist theory of desire, which sees the human condition as 'constantly on the threshold of bad faith' insofar as it 'seeks its own denial' in seeking 'to know itself fully' – an impossibility given that, for Sartre, 'there is no complete *existing* self' (1999: 19-21; emphasis in original). This is 'the desire not to be what one is and to be what one is not, the desire to be God' (1999: 21). Trump and West's desire for, or perhaps assumption of, license is in bad faith because it reaches for the kind of agency that could only be applicable to gods; that is, an idealized form of agency that no human is capable of attaining. Of course, neither West nor Trump are gods (thankfully) and so neither has the kind of license that they may, if Gordon is right, desire. However, this does not prevent them from deceiving themselves that they *do* have such license, as demonstrated by Trump's boast described by Gordon. This self-deception – the assumption of an entirely unwarranted form of agency – is the kind of bad faith that, in my view, constitutes arrogance.

To assume oneself to have license, then, is to assume an unaccountable status. And when an individual assumes a license that is beyond justification – beyond the realms of justifiable behaviour (including epistemic behaviour) – we should describe that individual as arrogant. The relevant sense of accountability, here, does not regard whether people can, in fact, hold one to account but regards what position one takes as to what they owe other people. Being accountable, on this view, means being open to challenge and willing to give reasons, especially to those one is in close contact with or who are affected by one's behaviour.

The Sartrean idea that humans are always prone to bad faith relates, in my view, to the ubiquity and potential universality of self-esteem motives. This is not to say that all bad faith is arrogance or that all actions pursued in the interests of self-esteem are done so in bad faith, but that there is always a risk of over-reaching for license by way of assumption and in light of self-esteem motives, and therefore always a risk of manifesting arrogance. The fact that arrogance is a label commonly attributed to those with more political, social, or cultural power should therefore not come as a surprise, as people in these groups will typically face less resistance or incur fewer costs for their undue assumptions of license.

Notably, and in a way that resonates with my analysis, Elizabeth Anderson (2014) also remarks on the arrogant conflation of the self with gods when describing the psychologies of transatlantic slave traders and their proponents. In her discussion of the slavery-supporting Scottish essayist Robert Carlyle, Anderson writes that Carlyle claimed that it was the duty of black people to 'toil unremittingly' for whites and that this exemplifies 'the narcissism of the powerful', who 'confuse their own depraved and selfish desires with divinely ordained morality, and make themselves gods in imposing oppressive laws on their subordinates' (2014: 22). I understand the suggestion of the powerful 'making themselves' gods to be ironic, here, insofar as I take Anderson to be suggesting that the powerful assume the kind of license that could only ever be justifiably possessed by gods, which is at least part of the reason why the assumption of this license is *undue* (because, after all, they are not gods). Anderson also makes explicit the relationship between arrogance and power. Individuals in positions of power are 'liable to confuse their own power with moral authority, and thereby confuse the self-serving orders they give to others with what others are morally obligated to do' (2014: 8). While there is not sufficient space here for a developed analysis of this relation, this is a matter I will return to in chapter 4 when examining the arrogant tendencies of dominant social groups. It is worth noting, however, that not only do West and Trump hold significant (if quite different) positions of power, but so, too, do the arrogant exemplars in the test cases above, including those in groups with more social power who claim to understand the experiences characteristic of those groups with relatively less power. This lends support to the claim, made most notably by José Medina (2013: 31) but also by Anderson (2014) and more recently by Tanesini (2021), that the powerful are especially liable to displaying arrogance.

To recap, I understand arrogance to consist in an undue assumption of license. This differs from Roberts and Wood's *false inference* account in that the arrogant need not think (or feel) themselves superior to those towards whom their arrogance is directed. Indeed, they may feel similar to these people and, on this basis, unduly assume license. In my view, arrogance is always a form of bad faith (though not all actions done in bad faith are arrogant) insofar as it involves an agential over-reach that, *in extremis*, involves a desire to be a god and hence the desire for the kind of license that only a god could have. Further, the sort of license that arrogant people assume serves to boost their self-esteem. This is not to say that all arrogance involves the desire to be a god, but that all arrogance involves the

mistake of assuming a license that is beyond what one is due, given one's position. This explains how in different cases we might think behaviour is more or less arrogant than in others; that arrogance is often demonstrated as a matter of degree and can manifest in more or less pathological ways. There appears to be broad support for this idea, as implied in the way in which Mariana Ortega refers to the 'vestiges of arrogant perception' (2006: 65), Roberts and Wood refer to Aristotle's behaviour as 'something like the vice of intellectual arrogance' (2007: 250), and José Medina describes 'radical cases' where an 'extreme form' of epistemic arrogance manifests (2013: 31). This is also why, in my view, philosophers have been inclined to think of subtler or more context-specific forms of arrogance as an attitude- or thinking-vice as opposed to a character vice (Cassam, 2019; Liebow & Ades, 2022). I think this taxonomy of arrogance is mistaken, however, and I will return to this in section 4.

3.2 Assumptions and License

I have explained what I mean by license and how this is related to the concept of bad faith, but what do I mean by an assumption? Although I think our everyday understanding of the word is, for the most part, sufficient here, it is worth going into a bit more detail in order to illuminate a subtly different framing of the cognitive mechanics involved in arrogance than that of other accounts. In everyday language, assumptions are thought of as things – perhaps propositions – that are simply accepted as true, usually without proof. We tend to assume, for instance, that the main reason for cooking food is to eat it or that when we turn the key in a car's ignition the engine will start. Interestingly, the act of *assuming* can also mean the taking on of power or responsibility, which is perhaps importantly related to Anderson's claims above, though this is not my focus here.

P.S. Delin, P. Chittleborough, and C.R. Delin (1994) offer a more detailed explication of what assumptions are. They consider but ultimately reject the thought that most or many assumptions are what they call 'stored-propositions', explaining that the way we usually talk about assumptions is misleading insofar as it suggests that assumptions correspond with the presence of some entity in the brain (1994: 117-119). If this were true, we would have to imagine potentially infinite numbers of these stored propositions to account for the infinite possibilities that we take for granted will not happen

when we embark in everyday tasks. For example, when boiling an egg, we assume that the egg will not melt or explode, that it won't turn into a wombat or crow, etc. To formulate the infinite number of stored propositions could take an infinite amount of time, so instead Delin et al. propose to think of assumptions as not the presence but the 'absence of some conception… not a positive proposition, but some sort of limitation or circumscription of the thinking process, or the field that the thinking process concerns itself with' (117). This view takes the making of assumptions as a matter of limiting our thinking 'to a universe in which such-and-such is the case' (118). Following this, we can view arrogance as a matter of limiting one's thinking to a universe in which the arrogant have a legitimate claim to the kinds of license that they desire. The problem is that their assumption of this license is *undue*. This suggests that arrogance involves a form of closed-mindedness, and so the two traits will often be found together.[7]

Two distinct questions arise in trying to identify undue assumptions of license. First, does the agent have authority to do X? And, second, is the agent warranted in limiting their thinking to worlds in which they have that authority? In my view, almost all cases of arrogance will involve agents who are not licensed to X and whose assumption that they are licensed to X is unwarranted. However, it is plausible that there could be cases of arrogance in which an agent *is* licensed to X but where their assumption that they are licensed to X is unwarranted. Cases like this expose how it is the *assumption* of license – not the fact of whether or not one is licensed – that grounds the mistaken judgment at the root of arrogance.

To demonstrate this, we can re-imagine the case of Galileo, the 'arrogant genius' (Crerar, 2017: 7). Galileo unduly assumes a license to ignore his scientific peers and, for this reason, demonstrates arrogance. Galileo's peers had well-reasoned and thoughtful objections to his work that, if considered, would have strengthened it. We can imagine an alternative reality, however, in which Galileo's scientific peers offered only fallacious counter arguments and ill-judged objections to his scientific theory; a situation in which Galileo's peers really did have nothing epistemically valuable to offer. In such a situation we might grant that Galileo would be licensed to ignore his peers. But this does not warrant the *assumption* of this license: Galileo ought not to just assume that he can ignore the

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[7] For a fuller discussion on the relationship between arrogance and closed-mindedness, see Battaly (2020).

objections and feedback of his peers because accountability would demand an openness to such objections and feedback; it is possible that he could be licensed to ignore them, but the license can only be justified because his peers' arguments bear no intellectual merit or worth. The act of *assuming* license to ignore his peers is unwarranted, because Galileo lacks epistemic justification for such a license. Thus, in this alternate reality, Galileo would demonstrate arrogance in unduly assuming a license to ignore *despite having the possibility of justification for a license to ignore*. The assumption of license disrespects Galileo's peers, whose objections ought to be approached as holding the possibility of having intellectual merit even if, after the fact, we discover that they do not.

One implication of this view is that individuals who demonstrate arrogance can do so whilst still achieving certain epistemically good ends, though in general arrogance will tend to obstruct epistemic goods.[8] The arrogant can sometimes be lucky and get the epistemic goods, but they remain arrogant. To further demonstrate this let us imagine another case, drawing from the contemporary "debate" between those (the Remainers) who hoped to keep Britain in the European Union (EU) and those (Brexiteers) who wanted Britain to leave. Although arrogance charges may be levelled at members of both groups, in this instance it is a Remainer who demonstrates the vice. The Remainer, let us assume, is right about many aspects of the economic and social implications of Brexit and the Brexiteers arguments for Brexit are ill-judged and have scant, if any, support. Upon knowing this, we might say that the Remainer has license to ignore the Brexiteers arguments regarding this matter. However, it seems plausible that some Remainers assume this license to ignore their opponents without epistemic justification. They assume that all Brexiteers are stupid and do not engage with or consider their arguments as a result. The license to ignore has epistemic justification, once the Brexiteers bad arguments have been considered, but an *assumption* of license is unwarranted: the Remainers disrespect and wrong Brexiteers when they assume, without warrant, that the assertions of Brexiteers could not hold any epistemic value. In this case, however, the license to ignore could in fact be warranted if the proper process for justification is followed. Moreover, the Remainers are lucky in that the conclusions they reach whilst failing to critically engage with others are the right ones. Nevertheless, they are arrogant and, in other scenarios, will

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[8] In other words, arrogance will not *necessarily* lead to epistemically bad ends (ignorance, misinformation, etc.) though in my view it will have a strong tendency towards such ends. The analysis here merely attempts to illustrate the possibility that arrogance will not always block epistemic goods.

likely not be so lucky. They limit their thinking to a universe in which their political opponents are utterly incapable of being reliable epistemic agents and in which they do not owe them the consideration of listening to their arguments or reasons. In cases like this, the epistemic goods can still be gained whilst arrogantly denying consideration to competing reasons, when such reasons have little epistemic value.

To be clear, my point is not that we should *always* listen to or engage with those whose reasoning is poor and arguments fallacious, but that the practice of *assuming a license* to ignore others is unwarranted. We often have very good reasons to ignore and avoid engagement with individuals and groups who profess cruel, unjust, and harmful views. People who seek to de-platform those who spout harmful (racist, sexist, xenophobic, transphobic, etc.) views often do so with sound justification. Their license is warranted and is not simply assumed. It is warranted because they *have* considered the impacts of giving those with these harmful views a platform and have robust reasons against this. They have not limited their thinking to a world in which people with different views to their own ought to be ignored and de-platformed, they have developed their thinking with regards to how harmful and misinformed opinions proliferate and have responded with strategies of disengagement from those who seek to popularise such opinions.[9]

This distinction marks one important way in which my account differs from Dillon's *unwarranted claims* arrogance, despite being somewhat indebted to it. In the previous chapter I discussed *unwarranted claims arrogance* as characterised by a sense of entitlement and a disposition to lay claim to goods '*without warrant and despite good reason not to'* (2007: 107; my emphasis). Although it could be suggested that my account simply replaces the idea of entitlement with that of 'license', this interpretation would fail to acknowledge that the error of judgment that I take to constitute arrogance lays in the *assumption* of license being unwarranted, rather than the *license* itself being unwarranted. Dillon argues that the unwarrantability of the entitlement claim grounds this form of arrogance, whereas my focus is on the unwarrantability of the assumption of license (or,

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[9] I take the de-platforming of Alex Jones (Hern, 2018) and Andrew Tate (Sung, 2022) from (some) social media platforms to be good examples of cases in which there is sound justification for this approach. In these cases, the license to ignore is not simply assumed but is justified in accordance with policies against hate speech and inciting violence. Such strategies are unlikely to be sufficient for silencing harmful attitudes, but they do help clarify how a license to ignore can sometimes be justified and so how not all forms of silencing or disengagement will be epistemically arrogant, according to my account.

for the sake of clarity, entitlement claim). My view also differs from Dillon's, as I have already argued in chapter two, section 4.1, with regards to the essentially interpersonal character of arrogance. This is not to say that my account does not have much to owe Dillon's discussion of arrogance. Dillon notes the way in which the arrogant 'assume that they have the right to do whatever they want' and discusses the ways in which arrogance usually takes 'more subtle and stealthy' forms that can be 'a matter of inexplicit assumption' (2021: 211; 2007: 108). The idea that arrogance involves an undue assumption of license owes much to Dillon's work, then, though it should not be confused with it.

Finally, the question of the warrantability of the assumption of license will depend, as Roberts and Wood have noted in relation to arrogance ascriptions more generally (2007: 249), upon the moral framework or outlook which we employ. Here, I assume an egalitarian outlook – as should be clear from many of the cases discussed. I take it that the warrantability of the assumptions of license in these cases will be uncontroversial, for those with a similar outlook. But one implication of the relationship between the perception of arrogance and one's moral outlook is that the kinds of license that are commonly assumed by different people or communities will reflect the moral framework under which they operate. This is helpful insofar as it brings us closer to identifying problematic moral frameworks (that may go unacknowledged) while still driving the actions or thinking of such individuals or communities.

3.3 Arrogance as a vice

If the self-esteem motive is neutral, as I claim it is, what makes arrogance (always) vicious? In chapter 2, I defended the view that arrogance is essentially interpersonal on the grounds that, even in cases where people become entirely (epistemically) self-reliant – cases in which their arrogance does not involve feeling superior to, but unique from, other people – it involves a moral or epistemic recklessness that necessarily disrespects interpersonal relations and the value of others. These essential interpersonal characteristics of arrogance constitute one way in which arrogance is plausibly necessarily vicious: it will always involve disrespecting other people and their capacities as (epistemic) agents.

A second reason to think of arrogance as vicious is that this necessary disrespecting relation will typically result in harmful effects. Arrogance can erode its victims' ability to accurately estimate their worth, including their epistemic worth. It can upset, anger, and annoy, as it can entrench ignorance and systematise neglect. The harms produced by arrogance are often easy to locate and, though possible, it seems that cases in which it does not produce these harms will be very rare. The harmful effects therefore offer a further reason to think of arrogance as a vice, and I will highlight these further in relation to the arrogant exemplars of chapter 2 in the next sub section.

A further reason why arrogance is a vice involves not the self-esteem motive itself, but the role it plays in shaping the error of judgment – the undue assumption of license – that arrogance involves. The self-esteem motive is plausibly neutral and so cannot alone ground the viciousness of arrogance. But I think the role that this motive plays in causing the error of judgment – the undue assumption of license – that constitutes arrogance, does serve as reason to think of arrogance as necessarily vicious. This is because arrogance will always involve placing a desire or motive for self-esteem above and beyond other things of moral or epistemic value. The self-esteem motive, in cases of arrogance, trumps all other considerations and necessarily leads to the arrogant circumscribing a view of their own agency that is misaligned with reality. The way in which arrogance necessarily involves a mistaken perception of one's agency in the service of self-esteem therefore provides a further reason to think that arrogance is always and necessarily a vice.

3.4 Exemplars of arrogance

Now let us return to the exemplars of arrogance discussed in the previous chapter to see how my account can accommodate these cases. As previously argued, these cases are all plausible manifestations of arrogance. If this is the case, then my task now is to show how they consist in an undue assumption of license. It will also be useful to demonstrate the necessarily harmful and vicious nature of arrogance, here.

David Cameron demonstrates a kind of arrogance when he patronisingly tells his parliamentary opponent, Angela Eagle, to 'calm down, dear' (Tanesini, 2016a: 71). In doing so, he demonstrates that he unduly assumes a license relating to his discursive

practice; a license to patronise, in this case using a sexist trope. This assumption is undue because Cameron should regard Eagle as a peer whose views ought to be heard and assertions respected rather than limiting his thinking to a universe in which she is irrationally angry and lacking credibility or justification for her assertions. Cameron thereby harms Eagle insofar as he attempts to silence her, as Tanesini illuminatingly discusses (2016a: 72). Donald Trump's boast to be 'the least racist person in the world' betrays an assumption of license to make assertions with total unaccountability, given that there is ample evidence against Trump's claim (Battaly, 2020: 53). Assuming a license to assert without accountability necessarily disrespects others and causes harm insofar as it fails to recognise that others are minimally owed accountable assertion.[10] The assumption is unwarranted not only because Trump's position demands that he ought to be especially accountable for his assertions but that a norm of accountable assertion is arguably essential for the possibility of dialogue and discourse. Neither of these cases, based on this evidence alone, strike me as conclusive with regards to arrogance as a global character trait of Cameron or Trump, but hopefully the undue assumption of license framework can at least point towards how their behaviour can be plausibly regarded as arrogant – or, perhaps, how their behaviour may be consistent with domain-specific arrogant dispositions.

Next, the Bush administration demonstrate arrogance in unduly assuming a license to ignore the experts (their senior military advisors, whose evidence contradicted the Bush administration's verdict) with regards to their decision-making process for the 2003 Iraq invasion. This is an unwarranted assumption because it neglects the fact that experts typically have much of epistemic value to offer and so the Bush administration ought to have listened to and carefully considered their testimony. Instead, they limit their thinking to a universe in which their inflated opinions of their military abilities stand as unquestionable fact. Their decision caused extraordinary physical and emotional harms, most of all to the Iraqi people but, additionally, it arguably disrespected epistemic obligations (of doing due diligence and effective enquiry) towards their colleagues and the nation they represent.

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[10] Tanesini (2016a: 83-85) discusses in detail the way in which arrogance can involve unaccountable assertion. Though our views differ somewhat, as detailed in section two of this chapter and section 4.1 of chapter 2, we are in agreement here.

Kissinger's behaviour demonstrated an undue assumption of license to treat those whom he considered to be of a lower status than him with disdain or contempt – a license that we might think to never be warranted, and the assumption of which is surely not (at least for those committed to more egalitarian moral frameworks). Chris the footballer and Alex Jones appear to make similar straightforwardly undue and harmful assumptions of license. Chris assumes that he is licensed to jump the restaurant queue, turn up late to training, ignore his manager, and flout his commitments to his partner. These assumptions are undue because Chris lacks justification for thinking that he has no obligation to respect the interests of others and to live up to his commitments to them. Chris unduly limits his thinking in ways that ignore the possibility of there being a world in which people's complaints about his behaviour might be legitimate. Jones assumes that he is licensed to treat others with disdain and derision but also to ignore the assertions of others and to "know" and assert "truth" without epistemic justification (hence his conspiracy theorising). Again, these assumptions are plausibly never warrantable because of the ways in which they disrespect and damage the (epistemic) interests of the communities of people in Jones' orbit. The harms caused by such assumptions of license will mostly be self-evident, but Jones' behaviour also has noteworthy epistemic harms attached. Assuming a license to ignore others and to assert without justification in my view constitutes a fundamentally disrespectful attitude to the status of others as epistemic agents and further risks epistemic damage insofar as unjustified assertion can cause a proliferation of misinformation that often results in further harms. Jones' public platform amplifies the need for him to act as a responsible epistemic agent, but he disregards this responsibility in his arrogant assumptions of license.

The kind of arrogance demonstrated by Aristotle may be said to involve a similar undue assumption of license to ignore relevant others. The assumption is undue because relevant others have a lot to offer and are worthy of respect. In Aristotle's case, the relevant others are the women, workers, and slaves whose testimonies could have vastly improved his ethical outlook and writings, had he not limited his thinking to a world in which such testimonies were without value. Alan Turing's (initial) behaviour towards his colleagues demonstrated a similar assumption of license to ignore others – seeing himself as the only one qualified to break the enigma code – as does Galileo's behaviour towards his scientific peers. In each of these cases, the arrogant plausibly see themselves as superior to those

they ignore and make their undue assumptions on this basis. Their view of themselves as superior is unwarranted, unsupported by evidence, and hence the assumptions are undue. The assumptions also appear to function to bolster their sense of self-esteem. The harmful effects of these assumptions of license are both epistemic and moral. Aristotle's ethical conclusions and Turing and Galileo's scientific conclusions could have been improved (or, in Turing's case, realised quicker) had they not made their assumptions of license. In other words, assuming a license to ignore relevant others damaged their enquiries. But they also plausibly damaged their relationships and their moral status as agents with certain minimal epistemic debts to others. In this sense, their arrogant behaviour resulted in moral as well as epistemic harm.

The cases of Tyra Banks and Kevin Spacey are said to demonstrate *synecdoche epistemic arrogance*, which philosophers Nabina Liebow and Rachel Levit Ades (2022) explicitly formulate in relation to the act of assuming.[11] In particular, Banks and Spacey are said to assume that they can know what it is like to be oppressed with regards to being labelled fat and working under conditions of financial precarity, respectively, based on limited experience. Relating this account with mine is quite natural, then, in that we can say that Banks and Spacey unduly assume a license to "know" or understand the experiences of socially marginalised people. The assumption is undue because Banks and Spacey lack the breadth and depth of experience necessary to warrant such license. They limit their thinking to worlds in which their inflated sense of epistemic agency is justified and appropriate. I expanded upon these cases in chapter 2 with the examples of John Howard Griffin and Grace Halsell, who both pursue journalistic projects in which they took on black identities to gain (they thought) this sort of knowledge or understanding. Griffin and Halsell therefore make a similar assumption, demonstrated in their claims in the books that followed their short-lived endeavours to "pass" as black people in the United States.

As discussed previously, what differentiates these cases from others is that the undue assumptions of license of these exemplars appears to flow from a feeling of

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[11] Liebow and Ades write, '*Synecdoche epistemic arrogance* occurs when person P who has privilege along a particular axis A assumes that she can know what it is like to be oppressed with regard to A; and this assumption is based off of limited experiences P has had that P inaccurately (consciously or unconsciously) believes enables her to know what it is like to be oppressed with regards to A.' (2022: 2; emphasis in original).

similarity with, rather than superiority over or seeing oneself as unique and different from, oppressed social groups. I take it as an advantage of my account that it can clearly identify why these cases appear to demonstrate arrogance without reference to feelings of superiority, in that the undue assumptions of license can also follow on from feelings of similarity and be nonetheless harmful. These assumptions of license result in the exemplars creating the false impression that they are more closely related to individuals from oppressed social groups than they really are and that the kind of experiential knowledge that they claim to have gained through their limited experiences is more accessible than it really is. In this sense, it also underappreciates and undermines the ways in which living as a person with a marginalised social identity can shape one's experience. I therefore take it that this undue assumption of license is harmful insofar as it diminishes such experiences and mistakenly aligns agents with greater social power with those with less.

In the cases of Banks, Spacey, Griffin, and Halsell, the feeling of similarity with the oppressed is unwarranted. It is worth noting, however, that those whose feelings of similarity *are warranted* can also demonstrate arrogance in making a different kind of undue assumption of license. This is demonstrated by those who assume a license to speak on behalf of groups to which they legitimately belong while lacking legitimacy in speaking for them. This is exemplified in the politician who assumes knowledge of what "the British people" want and claims to speak on behalf of them when making assertions for which there does not appear to be obvious widespread support. This may often appear to be simply a rhetorical strategy designed to add weight to one's claims, but it also seems possible for it to take the form of a genuine assumption of license; a license to speak on behalf of an entire population and to "know" what that population wants or needs without evidence. Undue assumptions of license of this kind may sometimes come from *warranted* feelings of similarity with the group that the arrogant speaks for, but nevertheless demonstrate a variety of arrogance.[12] It is somewhat unclear if cases like these, which relate to assertion on behalf of others without epistemic warrant, constitute moral or epistemic arrogance. I leave the question open, here, and return to this in section 4.

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[12] Whether the feelings or beliefs about similarity are warranted will depend to some extent on how we characterise them. If the politician's belief is that they are similar to the British people in the sense that their own views or experiences are representative of those peoples' views or experiences, then their belief may be unwarranted. If the belief or feeling of similarity more generally relates to being a citizen of the UK then it seems warranted.

Finally, the cases of arrogance raised by Audre Lorde (2017) and Mariana Ortega (2006) also fit the undue assumption of license account. These cases bear a similarity with cases of *synecdoche epistemic arrogance* insofar as they involve individuals with greater social power making undue assumptions of license regarding their treatment of individuals with less social power, though they differ in that the licenses assumed do not solely relate to the arrogant claiming of knowledge. Lorde implies that arrogance can consist in the making of assumptions, writing of 'a particular academic arrogance' in those who '*assume* any discussion of feminist theory without examining our many differences, and without a significant input from poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians' (2017: 89; my emphasis). We might say that those theorists implicated by Lorde unduly assume a license to speak on behalf of all women without recognising their differences, or to discuss women's issues without reference to those women who face intersecting forms of marginalisation, or even to theorise as if all women were white and middle class. These assumptions are undue because they disregard the ways in which the experiences of other, often more marginalised, women can contribute and enhance the enquiry. In the case which Ortega refers to, the white feminist claims to have knowledge about, but in fact produces ignorance with regards to, women of colour by failing to check and question knowledge claims about these women (2006: 61). This also seems to involve an undue assumption of license; a license to enquire without due sensitivity to the subjects one speaks of and/or a license to "know" without adequate evidence. These are unwarranted assumptions because the subjects of which the theorists speak are owed sensitivity and knowledge-claims can only be made with adequate supporting evidence. One harm related to these kinds of assumptions is that conclusions drawn from these discussions will systematically ignore and so further marginalise women from the most marginalised social identities via the production of ignorance. This constitutes not just epistemic injustice in terms of the damage this form of arrogance does to people from these groups *as knowers*, but also plausibly has the result of bolstering non-epistemic injustice by influencing wider policy and social structures that facilitate their marginalisation.

What I hope to have shown here is that the range of arrogant behaviour discussed in relation to these test cases can all plausibly be explained with reference to an undue assumption of license, that these assumptions necessarily manifest forms of interpersonal

disrespect, and that they are linked to various epistemic and non-epistemic harms. In each of these cases the self-esteem motive can be seen to play a role in which it leads the arrogant to make the error of assuming license unduly; a mechanism that leads to the arrogant undervaluing the perspectives of others and overvaluing their own perspective. This demonstrates how viewing the central mechanism of arrogance as consisting in an undue assumption of license can offer a general account of this vice. Having articulated and elaborated upon this positive account of arrogance as a vice, I now defend it against an objection that suggests that arrogance can sometimes be virtuous. In the next section, I will disaggregate distinctively moral and epistemic forms of arrogance before considering the ways in which arrogance can manifest as a general or simply a domain-specific vice.

3.5 Virtuous arrogance: a challenge

Perhaps we should not be so quick to think of arrogance as *necessarily* vicious, however. Robin Dillon has recently argued that arrogance may in fact be a virtue for people living in contexts of social subordination; that, in such situations, arrogance may be a 'virtue of self-respecting resistance to injustice' (2021: 208). Put differently, Dillon argues that the resistant, liberation-seeking actions of members of socially oppressed groups can be characterised as genuine cases of arrogance whilst at the same time being genuinely self-respecting. And to the extent that these people demonstrate self-respect, these actions are virtuous. This raises the prospect of virtuous arrogance and, as such, presents a challenge to my account, which only gives a picture of vicious arrogance. If Dillon's argument obtains, my account is, at best, incomplete.

Dillon's argument that arrogance can sometimes be a virtue in contexts of oppression rests on taking seriously the charges of arrogance made by dominant members of society, or oppressors. Dillon offers a variety of examples to support the view that arrogance can be a virtue, based on the charges of arrogance levelled at oppressed individuals. The first describes Frederick Douglass recounting how he was sent by his master to a "Negro Breaker", Edward Covey, whose job it was to turn defiant slaves into submissive ones through hard manual labour and flogging (Douglass 1855: 205-249). After months of this treatment Douglass felt broken but resolved to resist his subordination. The

next time Covey attempted to beat him he fought back, whereby a two-hour fistfight ensued that ended when Covey gave up. Douglass recalls,

> I was a changed being after that fight. I was *nothing* before; I WAS A MAN NOW. It recalled to life my crushed self-respect and my self-confidence . . . I was no longer a servile coward. (Douglass 1855: 246–247; emphasis in original)

Dillon describes how this episode allows Douglass to manifest self-respect through his resistant actions. The problem, though, is that the slavery-supporting whites at the time would have seen it very differently: as 'the height of arrogance, not self-respect' (Dillon, 2021: 207).

Next, Dillon considers the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, whose work is said to express respect for black lives and has the possibility of catalysing social change that promotes respect amongst all people (2021: 208). The problem, for Dillon, is that (again) some people see this very differently. Citing a US-based right-wing nationalist blogger – "The Angry Patriot" – Dillon shows how opponents of BLM condemn it as arrogant for causing disruption to people's daily lives, for example by blocking roads during protests. While BLM activists may well see their work as liberatory and manifesting self-respect for themselves and their community, then, some of their opponents see it as, like Douglass fighting back, arrogant.

In a further example, Antigone, the eponymous character of Sophocles' tragedy, being charged with hubris by her uncle, and ruler of Thebes, Creon, for violating his edict and burying her dead brother in an act of defiance. In Creon's eyes, he is owed Antigone's 'unquestioning obedience', and her transgression of social normative expectations of "girls" like her is an assault on his 'very identity as a man' (2021: 221). In the same way as Douglass' claim for freedom was a transgressive overreach in the eyes of his masters, Antigone's 'violation of her duties of obedience' (222) oversteps the limits of what it is correct for a woman to claim in Thebes and, as such, constitutes unwarranted claims arrogance. Yet Dillon argues that in this context Antigone's arrogance is not a vice because she was motivated, not by a desire for self-esteem, but by a moral form of self-respect (222).

Using these examples, and others, as cases in which oppressed individuals arrogantly resist their oppression in self-respecting ways, Dillon argues that people can be genuinely arrogant and genuinely self-respecting. For Dillon, the arrogant can in such cases affirm their self-respect by resisting power; their arrogance can be a way of 'protesting against unjust norms and constraints, refusing their subordination, and claiming space for self-respect' (2021: 221). Moreover, arrogance can affirm agency and make self-respect possible and oppressed people could use arrogance strategically in order to 'humble arrogant dominants' or 'shock' them into recognising their own arrogance and privilege (224). Dillon concludes that arrogance can sometimes be a virtue of the oppressed.

While I accept that in each of the examples described, the putatively arrogant individuals engage in self-respecting and liberatory actions, I deny that such cases can be described as genuine manifestations of arrogance. This is because we have no reason to take the oppressors' arrogant charges seriously in any of the cases described. Whilst Douglass, BLM, and Antigone no doubt assume various kinds of license – to resist one's oppression and defend oneself, to engage in civil disobedience in the service of racial justice, and to defy the oppressive patriarchal norms of one's society – these assumptions of license appear not to be *undue* but to be *warranted*, given the context. Of course, given the dominant sociomorality of their contexts, we can understand how the oppressors concluded that these resistant actions were arrogant, but this is not a reason to concede the charges of arrogance as valid. Moreover, conceding the charges of arrogance appears likely to further ossify the oppressive sociomorality of each of these contexts, rather than to challenge it.

Tanesini also discusses the issue of virtuous arrogance raised by Dillon and argues that it is mistaken (2021: 110). Tanesini suggests that we cannot determine what is arrogant simply with reference to what most people would consider arrogant, i.e., with reference to the prevailing sociomorality. But Tanesini also argues, in agreement with Dillon, that the motives that move the oppressed in resisting their subordination 'are not related to self-esteem or self-enhancement' (2021: 110). For Tanesini, this is a further reason to not consider these cases as genuine manifestations of arrogance.

It is not clear, however, what reasons there are for thinking that the self-esteem motive is not driving behaviour in these cases. Dillon suggests that Antigone is motivated by self-respect rather than self-esteem, but are these motivations so distinct? It is plausible that motivations for self-respect will often be closely aligned with the self-esteem motive. Further, in the contexts described, the subordinated agents have very good reason to be motivated to boost their self-esteem because the society in which they live offers them insufficient esteem. Douglass describes his actions as restoring his 'crushed self-respect and [his] self-confidence' (1855: 246). Although self-confidence and self-esteem are distinct, they seem highly related and to overlap considerably. Interpreting Douglass' behaviour as motivated towards boosting his self-esteem should not therefore be considered controversial. The problem with this, for Tanesini, is that this conclusion complicates the view that a necessary and distinctive feature of arrogance – the feature that grounds its disvalue and status as a vice – is the self-esteem motive.

While the idea that the resistant actions of the oppressed are driven by the self-esteem motive causes issues for Tanesini's account, the *undue assumption of license* account can accommodate it. In fact, what Dillon's examples helpfully expose is how the self-esteem motive can sometimes drive virtuous behaviour and so is plausibly neutral with regards to its normative status. On my account, only cases where the self-esteem motive functions as to make an agents moral or epistemic reasoning ineffective or dysfunctional – via the undue assumption of license – can arrogance be said to manifest. Moreover, the fact that this kind of reasoning is dysfunctional and unwarranted is what grounds the viciousness of arrogance. The fact that the liberation-seeking behaviours of those who resist their oppression demonstrates assumptions of license driven by the self-esteem motive is no reason to think that it is arrogant, because the assumptions must be unwarranted. When they are unwarranted, the behaviour is arrogant and necessarily vicious. When warranted, assumptions of license can drive virtuous and liberatory behaviour – but this cannot also be described as arrogant.

4.   Arrogance: epistemic and moral, global and domain-specific

So far, I have discussed the idea of whether arrogance involves distinctive motivational outlooks and concluded that the self-esteem motive plausibly operates in all

cases of arrogance but that it cannot help to locate instances of arrogance because of the ubiquity and neutrality of this motivational outlook. I then introduced and argued for my own account of arrogance, as the disposition to make undue assumptions of license, and for the view that arrogance is necessarily vicious, before animating this position with reference to the exemplars of arrogance discussed in chapter 2. I also defended the view that arrogance is always vicious in response to Dillon's argument that arrogance, in certain contexts, can be a virtue. What remains, in this section, is to answer the question of how to distinguish between moral and epistemic forms of arrogance. Here, I will also respond to the idea put forward by Quassim Cassam (2019) that epistemic vices can manifest as character traits, attitudes, or ways of thinking. I consider how epistemic arrogance could fit this taxonomy but ultimately argue that, though thinking about arrogant attitudes or ways of thinking may often be a useful shorthand, there is no reason to think that granular or domain-specific instances of arrogance are not *also* characterological.

4.1 Disaggregating moral and epistemic arrogance

As we have seen, whereas *motivationalists* like Tanesini will seek to differentiate epistemic forms of arrogance by locating defective non-instrumental epistemic motives, this avenue is not open to us, given my discussion of arrogance and motivation. My suggestion is that, typically though not always, we can differentiate between moral and epistemic forms of arrogance by considering the domain of activities that the arrogant individual's undue assumption of license relates to. Those who unduly assume a license to inflict cruelty on others, for example, will demonstrate *moral* arrogance – because this license relates directly to their treatment of other people. Those who unduly assume a license to "know", assert truth, or believe without evidence, on the other hand, are assuming a kind of epistemic licence – insofar as the assumed license relates to how they engage in their epistemic activities – making the arrogance they demonstrate *epistemic* arrogance.

Although this distinction appears to clearly demarcate epistemic and moral forms of arrogance in theory, in practice the kinds of activities that the arrogant unduly assume will often relate to *both* the moral and epistemic domains. In these cases, my suggestion is that arrogance can be plausibly described as operating as a moral-epistemic vice. The idea

that arrogance can straddle both moral and epistemic domains is not novel: Linda Zagzebski (1996: 137-58) suggests that epistemic virtues are a sub-set of moral virtues, making all epistemic virtues also moral virtues and, presumably, all epistemic vices moral vices; and Elinor Mason and Alan T. Wilson argue for the view that arrogance is best understood as a moral-epistemic vice insofar as it involves a 'double failing in motivation' towards moral and epistemic ends (2017: 89).[13] Although I will not suggest an answer to the wider question of how epistemic virtues and vices are related to moral virtues and vices here, I submit that arrogance can be described as moral, epistemic, or, and perhaps more often, moral-epistemic; that is, arrogance often takes a hybrid form as a moral *and* epistemic vice. In its hybrid form, arrogance can manifest in ways that involve undue assumptions of license towards either *both* epistemic and moral activities or undue assumptions of license of activities which are plausibly described as involving both moral and epistemic ends.

The arrogance demonstrated by the Bush administration, Galileo, Aristotle, Banks, and Spacey appear to be more "pure" manifestations of epistemic arrogance, whereas the cases of Kissinger and Chris the footballer appear to demonstrate moral arrogance. In the epistemic cases, the exemplars unduly assume licenses to ignore the experts, to "know" despite competing claims, and to ignore relevant others in contexts in which their activities involve the practice of enquiry, of seeking answers to questions or problems. Epistemic arrogance in these cases is epistemic in the sense that the license assumes relates to epistemic activities, but this does not mean that these undue assumptions of license will not have morally harmful effects, as the decision reached by the Bush administration perhaps best exemplifies. In the moral cases, Kissinger and Chris unduly assume licenses that involve the mistreatment of those around them, usually with harmful effects, in ways that necessarily and wrongly disrespect people and therefore in some sense damages their well-being. Their arrogance is moral in the sense that the activities that they unduly assume license to relate to their other-regarding behaviour. Relatedly, however, moral arrogance may have epistemically harmful effects. Kissinger's students may be denied access to a deeper understanding of the subjects Kissinger taught by the barriers Kissinger placed upon meeting with them. For Chris's fans, his behaviour might create the false impression

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[13] As the discussion in section two suggests, I would not endorse this motivational framing of arrogance, even if I do think that arrogance often manifests as a moral-epistemic vice.

that behaviour like his is expected and justified given his footballing prowess, and thus generate a confused moral sensibility that arguably constitutes an obstruction of moral knowledge.

For a hybrid case of moral-epistemic arrogance, let us return to the figure of the arrogant politician who unduly assumes a license to know what the British public feel and want and to therefore speak on their behalf. This case is notably dissimilar from the Banks and Spacey cases, because the politician is a legitimate member of the group on whose behalf he speaks, though is nevertheless unwarranted in assuming a license to do so. The politician's *epistemic* arrogance is demonstrated by his undue assumption to know what the British public feel and want. Although he is a member of the British public, he lacks warrant for assuming license to this kind of knowledge because he, let us assume, lacks the appropriate evidence to be able to make reliable statements about the population's outlook. The activity he unduly assumes license towards is primarily epistemic because it involves the presumption of knowledge. However, the politician also unduly assumes license to speak on behalf of this group of people, in light of his prior undue assumption of license to know. This, in my view, demonstrates the politician's *moral* arrogance, because it involves a denial of respect that is owed to the individuals that make up the large and diverse group of people that constitutes the British public. In this instance, the moral arrogance flows from the epistemic arrogance insofar as the prior undue assumption of epistemic license leads to an undue assumption of moral license. The result is that the politician's behaviour can plausibly be described as demonstrating moral-epistemic arrogance.

Alex Jones' case also exemplifies the ways in which epistemic and moral arrogance can be interconnected, though it is less clear that his moral arrogance flows from his epistemic arrogance. Jones' undue assumptions of license relate both to his treatment of other people and to his epistemic activities or his enquiries. He unduly assumes license to mistreat others and to ignore the assertions of others and to "know" without epistemic justification. He unduly assumes licenses that relate both to moral and epistemic activities and so his arrogance is plausibly moral-epistemic. However, we might also think that anyone who unduly assumes license to ignore others displays moral-epistemic arrogance. This is because ignoring others is an activity that relates both to moral and epistemic ends:

it is part of a process of enquiry (or lack of it) and a process of interpersonal relations in the moral domain. Though there is not sufficient space to develop this further, here, it suggests that one can manifest moral-epistemic arrogance in a singular undue assumption of license, when that license is plausibly directly related to both moral and epistemic activities.

4.2 General and domain-specific arrogance

In his book, *Vices of the Mind*, Quassim Cassam (2019) argues for an account of epistemic vice that offers a three-pronged taxonomy of vice. According to Cassam, character traits, attitudes, and ways of thinking (or thinking styles) can each be epistemic vices when they systematically obstruct 'the gaining, keeping, or sharing of knowledge' and are blameworthy or 'otherwise reprehensible' (2019: 23). This taxonomy raises the question of how epistemic arrogance fits into such an account; that is, whether epistemic arrogance is or can be a character trait, an attitude, and/or a way of thinking. Cassam suggests that epistemic arrogance can involve a person's attitude but can also be used to describe a person. He writes that 'a person's attitude towards others can be arrogant, and a person can also be arrogant' and that it 'is possible to be arrogant in certain respects without being an arrogant person' (2019: 13-14). Epistemic arrogance, for Cassam, can be an attitude or a character trait. On the question of whether it can also be a 'thinking vice' Cassam does not comment, but Liebow and Ades (2022) suggest that it can be, when arguing that *synecdoche epistemic arrogance* is a thinking vice.

Although I agree that arrogance does often appear to manifest in the attitudes and ways of thinking of individuals – insofar as people's attitudes and thinking styles can reflect undue assumptions of epistemic license – I disagree that these should be thought of as distinct from character traits. Although the idea of attitude- and thinking-vices might sometimes function as a useful shorthand for talking about domain-specific manifestations of arrogance, I think it is mistaken to ignore the ways in which these dispositions form parts of peoples' characters. In my view, Cassam's discussion is best interpreted as saying that people can have arrogant attitudes – i.e. they can manifest (epistemic) arrogance – without demonstrating arrogance *in general*, or arrogance as a 'global', as opposed to 'local', vice. This is consistent with the thought, which Cassam shares, that someone could

have arrogant attitudes regarding some things or people whilst at the same time having humble attitudes regarding some other things or people. Of course, individuals can manifest arrogance and humility in different domains to the extent that makes attributing a single virtue or vice to them very difficult. But this does not mean that when they demonstrate arrogance, they are not demonstrating a vicious character trait – because character traits need not apply in *all* contexts or domains that a person engages in but can be more localised and context specific, only manifesting in certain scenarios.

A number of the cases described in this chapter (and in chapter two) exemplify how arrogance can manifest in localised contexts, although it is difficult to say for sure without much more evidence or awareness of the individuals' behaviour in other contexts. Tyra Banks and Kevin Spacey are said to demonstrate an arrogant way of thinking in their claiming of parallel knowledge to that of people from oppressed groups, but this disposition need not mean that they demonstrate arrogance in other areas of their lives. As I have described them, the cases of John Howard Griffin and Grace Halsell also demonstrate epistemic arrogance as a thinking vice in the claiming of what's-it-like knowledge regarding black folk in the US in their historical era. They may not demonstrate arrogance in other domains, but in this domain, I suggest, they do. Further, Aristotle appears to demonstrate arrogant attitudes towards slaves, women, and workers whilst plausibly demonstrating epistemic humility in other parts of his epistemic life. The arrogant attitudes, I suggest, still plausibly form a trait that is part of his character, but this does not exclude the possibility of having humble traits in other domains. The attitudes of white feminists described by Audre Lorde and Mariana Ortega are said to demonstrate a kind of arrogance toward women with intersecting marginalised identities. In this case, we might want to describe the arrogant attitudes as part of the group's character, but this need not exclude the possibility that the same group has virtues in other areas. In other words, whilst in certain instances the language of arrogant attitudes and arrogant ways of thinking provides a useful way to talk about domain-specific manifestations of arrogance, in my view these manifestations of arrogance are nevertheless traits of character in the sense that those who demonstrate these are disposed to manifest undue assumption of license of these kinds in the same or similar scenarios reliably or predictably.

Perhaps more importantly, however, is the idea that localised manifestations of epistemic arrogance often appear to reflect social and cultural forces and thus help demonstrate some of the ways in which social dynamics can catalyse arrogance in individuals. The social power of white women operating within something of an 'epistemic bubble' (Nguyen, 2020) seem to be likely contributing factors towards their epistemic arrogance. Aristotle's social and cultural epoch appears to shape his character to the extent that his arrogant attitudes were ubiquitous within men of his social class in his context. Banks and Spacey both hold substantial social power insofar as their celebrity status allows them the privilege of communicating with huge audiences and, perhaps, shielding them from being held accountable for their assertions. And Griffin and Halsell were able to report on and talk about their experiences as racially privileged white people. The suggestion that arrogance can be catalysed by social forces also raises the question of the groups in which we inhabit can influence the likelihood of us manifesting arrogance. Further, it raises the question of whether groups themselves can demonstrate arrogance, which (as we will see) many have suggested. The question of group arrogance will therefore be the focus of the remainder of this thesis.

5.   Conclusion

I started this chapter by focussing on three central questions, which I have sought to answer here. First, I asked what motivations, if any, are necessary for a general account of arrogance? Next, why should we think of arrogance as a vice? And third, how should we distinguish epistemic and non-epistemic, or moral, forms of arrogance? In my discussion of the first question, I concluded with some scepticism regarding the ability of *motivationalist* approaches to properly account for arrogance, given the ubiquity and potential universality of the self-esteem motive and, contra Tanesini, the possibility that *non-motivationalists* can also engage in vice explanations as 'mere explanations' (Tanesini, 2018a). I also argued that self-esteem motives are plausibly normatively neutral and therefore pursued an account of arrogance that focusses on *how* the arrogant seek to achieve their epistemic ends, rather than *what* the epistemic ends themselves are. This conclusion led me to offer my own account of arrogance, which explains that the defective reasoning involved in displays of arrogance involves making an undue assumption of license. With this account in hand, I was able to answer the second question by suggesting

that arrogance can be considered a vice because it always involves disrespecting other people and their capacities as (epistemic) agents, it will typically have harmful effects, and it necessarily leads the arrogant to circumscribe a view of their own agency that is misaligned with reality. My account of arrogance also allowed for the disaggregation of epistemic and non-epistemic forms of arrogance and, here, I suggested that epistemic arrogance will always involve unduly assuming an *epistemic* license, of one kind or another.

To conclude this chapter, it is useful to recap some of the key strengths of the account of arrogance that I have argued for here. First, the account allows us to see more definitively how arrogance can sometimes involve feelings of similarity with those towards whom one is arrogant, a key finding from the previous chapter. This is because the arrogant can unduly assume a license based on feelings of similarity with others, just as they can based on feelings of superiority, difference, or uniqueness. Unlike other accounts discussed in chapter 2, the *undue assumption of license* account does not necessitate a particular affective attitude of any kind towards different people or groups.

Second, this account of arrogance shows how people can demonstrate arrogance even when their behaviour is justified or when they reach the right conclusions in their enquiries. Even in a world in which Galileo was right and his peers' critiques had no merit, Galileo could still demonstrate arrogance in assuming a license to ignore them without warrant. He may still arrive at the right conclusions, but he nevertheless displays arrogance in the process. And the British Remainer who writes off his Brexiteer opponent as stupid and assumes a license to ignore them might have justified beliefs about the impact of Brexit on the UK economy, but his refusal to engage with those he opposes can still betray arrogance. In other words, epistemic arrogance will not always result in defective knowledge or belief, though, I propose, even in these cases it remains an epistemic vice.

Third, this account is compatible with both *motivationalist* and *non-motivationalist* approaches to epistemic vice. Undue assumptions of license may often be caused by defective epistemic motivations, but they need not be. Insofar as my account focusses on the process by which arrogance functions it is able to remain agnostic with regards to the distinctive motivations involved in arrogance. It also grounds the disvalue of arrogance, and therefore its status as a vice, in features other than defective motivations. This allows

those who support *non-motivationalist* approaches to explain how epistemic vices are vicious without recourse to motivational outlooks. At the same time, however, the account is open and accepts a motivationalism of at least one kind, in acknowledging the self-esteem motive as a powerful and common driver of behaviour. The account is therefore compatible with *motivationalist* accounts of epistemic vice, too.

Finally, as my discussion of general and domain-specific manifestations of arrogance shows, the *undue assumption of license* account allows us to locate arrogance even in highly domain-specific cases. This means the account can capture subtler, more everyday displays of arrogance that will be common in many of our encounters, rather than simply accounting for arrogance in cases where the vice has become pathological. In my view, arrogance will often be displayed not by hyper-autonomous epistemic agents who see themselves as the measure of all things or by individuals who think they are superior to others, but by a multitude of agents whose behaviour is not otherwise defective. This offers an alternative way of thinking about the vice of arrogance and leads naturally, as some of my examples here illustrate, to questions surrounding the social dynamics of arrogance and the possibility that social groups themselves can be arrogant. I will therefore turn my attention to these questions for the remainder of the thesis.

4

Arrogance in groups

1.   Introduction

So far in this thesis I have introduced and assessed prominent contemporary accounts of arrogance with reference to several plausible cases that exemplify the trait (chapter 2). I argued for an interpersonal characterisation of arrogance and against the idea that feelings of superiority or uniqueness are (always) central to it. I argued that arrogance can also involve feelings of similarity with those towards whom one demonstrates their arrogance. In chapter 3, I argued against a strict *motivationalist* conception of arrogance and in favour of a process-oriented approach that sees the disposition to unduly assume license as the central defect of the vice. I defended the view that arrogance is always a vice and showed how the *undue assumption of license* approach helps explain the behaviour of the arrogant exemplars introduced in chapter 2. I also used this account to show how we can disaggregate epistemic from non-epistemic forms of arrogance.

In the preceding discussion, the focus has been on arrogant individuals. Yet it is clear from much of the preceding discussion that social group dynamics, especially regarding unequal distributions of power, play a crucial role in shaping the expression of arrogance. Exemplars of arrogance typically have positions of power or (relative) privilege in comparison to those to whom their arrogance is directed. They are also mostly white men. This observation raises a number of questions regarding the relationship between social dynamics and arrogance, not all of which I will be able to discuss here. The question I will focus on, however, regards the possibility and nature of attributing vices not solely to individual members of groups but to groups themselves: what, if anything, is collective (epistemic) arrogance and how does it work? This is the central question that I will consider for the remainder of this thesis.

The idea that not just individuals but groups can display arrogance is part of our everyday language. Groups of people are frequently charged with arrogance. The

'Brexiteer' leavers (of the European Union) in Britain have been charged with 'imperialist arrogance' (Norman, 2018). Large corporations are described as arrogant, as demonstrated by headlines like, 'Exxon Mobil's response to climate change is consummate arrogance' (McKibben, 2014). Entire countries, or at least their governments, have also faced the charge: 'India "arrogant" to deny global warming link to melting glaciers' (Ramesh, 2009).[1] These examples are just the tip of the iceberg: charges of arrogance aimed at a diverse range of other groups abound.[2]

It is not just in newspaper headlines where we find such charges, however. Marilyn Frye (1983) critiques the 'arrogant eye' of men in an early essay on the subject. Anita Superson (2004) claims that members of privileged groups are much more likely to display arrogance than others; indeed, she argues that their privilege facilitates arrogance. And José Medina (2013) has more recently followed a similar line of thought by arguing that epistemic arrogance is one of the central 'vices of the powerful', which supports the 'active ignorance' common amongst, though not a necessary feature of, powerful, privileged subjects. Michael Lynch (2018) and Alessandra Tanesini (2020a) have made similar claims. Audre Lorde's (2017) criticism of the arrogant presumption of theorising about women amongst white feminists (introduced in chapter 2) offers a further, albeit brief, charge of group arrogance. Mariana Ortega (2006) develops this, with reference to Lorde's claims and alongside related discussion from María Lugones (2003).[3] In this chapter I will critically discuss some of this philosophical work and suggest that these claims can be interpreted as attributing arrogance to social groups. I do not aim to adjudicate the details of such charges but use these discussions as a starting point for theorising group arrogance.

Before outlining the plan for the chapter, it is useful to note the variety of group structures that charges of collective arrogance are often aimed at. Some groups charged with arrogance, such as governments (or their departments) and corporations, can be

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[1] These headlines are usefully highlighted by Ian Kidd (2016).

[2] Here are two further illustrative examples: the British, it is claimed, are arrogant regarding their cultural output (O'Connor, 2021) whilst 'arrogant middle-class' Extinction Rebellion climate protestors are the target of a Conservative MP (Fogarty, 2019).

[3] I do not discuss the charges of arrogance levelled at white feminists in Lorde (2017), Lugones (2003), and Ortega's (2006) work, here, because this group appears to be more alike 'established' social groups, which are not my focus.

considered *institutional* groups insofar as they have constitutions under legal frameworks, defined decision-making processes as well as other information-processing functions. Other groups that are said to be arrogant – men and other privileged social groups, for instance – are not archetypal group agents (like corporations or government departments, as institutional groups) but are far broader, informally organised groups defined by common characteristics or features rather than explicit legal structures. They are groups in the sense that they are social categories, distinct from 'established' social groups that are founded to perform specific functions. These groups lack the coherence or unity of purpose that makes established groups capable of action analogous to that of individuals (Lahroodi 2019: 407). In other words, social groups (such as men) that are often afforded privilege are what we might call, following Nguyen and Strohl (2019: 996), 'sub-agential' groups. Whilst 'established' or institutional social groups have been almost the sole focus of philosophical work on collective epistemic virtue and vice, with notable exceptions that I will discuss (Byerly & Byerly, 2016; Holroyd, 2020), here I seek to explore the question of how we should make sense of claims that *sub-agential* groups like these can be epistemically arrogant. I restrict my analysis to these groups both because they have been under-discussed in the literature on collective vice and virtue and because they are the groups most typically charged with arrogance in the philosophical literature. This is all the more significant given that work on collective epistemic vice *in general* has been under-studied, with relatively sparse contributions so far.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the next section I will introduce some putatively arrogant groups as described in the extant philosophical literature. First, I consider Marilyn Frye's (1983) work on the 'arrogant eye' of men before turning to discussions regarding the arrogance of the privileged and powerful more generally. I argue that these examples are best interpreted as attributions of collective epistemic arrogance and show how each fits the *undue assumption of license* account introduced in chapter 3. In the third section, I look to prominent accounts of collective epistemic vice to consider how these might accommodate the claims of these scholars. I first outline *summativist* and *non-summativist* approaches to collective vice and argue *summativist* approaches do not appear to accommodate the claims made regarding the arrogant groups under discussion. I then introduce two different but influential non-summative accounts of collective vice, first from Miranda Fricker (2010; 2020) and then Jules Holroyd (2020), who develops an

account of collective vice from Byerly and Byerly's (2016) *dispositional* account of collective virtue. I consider how each might help us to understand the structure of sub-agential group arrogance and ultimately argue that Fricker's account fails to do so. The *dispositional* framework, though it can provide a structural basis for ascribing these group vices, fails to provide explanatory power in these cases – a feature that is highly desirable and, perhaps, essential, given the wider ameliorative goals of the enquiry. I conclude by considering the gap in our understanding that this result leaves: we need an account of collective epistemic vice that can provide an explanatory framework for the arrogance of sub-agential groups. This sets up the basis for the next chapter, in which I aim to offer a positive account of sub-agential collective arrogance.

2.   Some (putatively) arrogant groups

We will start by considering some of the philosophical work that, as I will argue, attributes the vice of epistemic arrogance to two overlapping but theoretically distinct groups: men and dominant or powerful social groups that are afforded privilege, more generally. Here, I accept that some men will be afforded far fewer privileges than others (depending, to a large extent, on intersecting membership of marginalised social groups) and that many men will be included in the wider concept of privileged social groups. I maintain the distinction between these groups, however, following the lead of the authors discussed. The claims made here will serve as the basis for adjudicating between accounts of collective epistemic vice and assessing their compatibility and suitability for providing a theoretical basis for understanding these groups' putative epistemic arrogance.

2.1 Frye on the arrogant eye of men

Marilyn Frye's (1983) seminal essay on arrogance (and love) defends the view that there is a distinct form of arrogance related to men; that male perception is defined by what Frye calls 'the arrogant eye'. In other words, she charges men with arrogance. For Frye, male arrogance is a matter of perception; a self-centred way of seeing the world that sees the actions of those around them as aimed at or somehow to do with them. Those with the 'arrogant eye' see the actions of those around them as aimed at or somehow to do with them. Men perceive their place in nature along teleological lines: they perceive

everything as existing for the purposes of 'man's exploitation'. This (illusory) arrogant perception makes men organise the world so that everything is 'seen with reference to themselves and their own interests'; the arrogant perceiver believes 'that everything exists and happens for some purpose, and he tends to animate things, imagining attitudes toward himself as the animating motives. Everything is either "for me" or "against me"' (1983: 67). The end purpose of this perception is ultimately the 'acquisition of the service of others' (66) – namely, women – and, moreover, it is men who are in the cultural and material position to realise this aim.[4] Men are able to shape the roles of women according to their interests because they have the 'cultural and institutional power to make the misdefinition stick' (70). Significantly for our purposes, Frye claims that the arrogant perceiver 'has the support of a community of arrogant perceivers' (72: footnote) who are amongst the most powerful individuals in society.

Although, as we will see, there are different ways to cash out the claim, the charge Frye is making is a charge of arrogance against men as a social group. If this sounds like too strong a reading of Frye's essay, then alternatively we could say that it is a charge of a particular form of arrogant perception that is characteristic of, though perhaps not universal to, men. Importantly, for Frye male arrogance develops and flourishes within communities of powerful people in insidious ways; it is bolstered by social forces and achieves the same oppressive results as 'overt force' (70) through its ability to define. Those who control the 'material media of culture and most other economic resources' can shape and normalise ways of perceiving the world in ways that hide the arrogance inherent to those ways of seeing (72: footnote). This is a helpful characterisation of a distinct way in which arrogance can be a 'stealthy vice' (Cassam, 2015): arrogance may hide in commonly accepted practices involving social roles, norms, expectations or other structural features which themselves help to bolster and perpetuate arrogant attitudes. Frye is therefore explicit, where others are not, in stating the role of communities of people in perpetuating or catalysing arrogance and, therefore, the oppression of women that it is said to support.

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[4] This claim is obviously in need of an intersectional analysis, as it is surely not all men who occupy this cultural and material position.

Frye's account of the 'arrogant eye' also highlights the epistemic dimensions of the vice. This is most clearly depicted where Frye sets out the nature of the 'loving eye', which is set up as an opposing form of perception.

> [The loving eye] knows the independence of the other... knows that nature is indifferent... knows that to know the seen, one must consult something other than one's own will and interests and fears and imagination. One must look at the thing. One must look and listen and check and question. (75)

If we invert this analysis, then, we can see that arrogant perception is constituted by significant forms of ignorance – ignorance of the independence of others, of the nature of reality, and of the fact that one's will, interests, fears and imagination are generally unreliable routes to knowledge. The reason why this constitutes arrogant perception and not just ignorant perception, however, is the fact that the arrogant claim to know when in fact they do not. Men could and should 'know better' – they are culpably ignorant – and this is at least part of what makes them arrogant. The 'arrogant eye' of men therefore unduly assumes a license to know, think, believe and ignore. In other words, the activities that Frye claims men unduly assume license to are, to a significant extent, *epistemic* activities. The charge of arrogance can thus be seen as a charge of collective epistemic vice compatible with the *undue assumption of license* account that I introduced in the previous chapter.

Of course, Frye is not alone in thinking about these issues, which have been central to feminist discourse for decades. But Frye's particular focus and labelling of the phenomena as arrogant offers an influential and developed position that is therefore useful for our purposes here. Relatedly, Amia Srinivasan's (2021) recent discussion of male sexual entitlement – manifested as the presumption of a 'right to sex' and most explicitly articulated in online "incel" forums – appears to add support to the view that these kinds of arrogant assumptions of (in this case, sexual) license are attributable to men as a group.

Kate Manne's (2018; 2020) recent monographs on misogyny and male entitlement suggest a similar conclusion. Like Srinivasan, Manne (2020) also discusses male entitlement to sex, along with a range of other entitlements that, it is argued, men see

themselves as having. Perhaps most significantly, given our primary focus is on *epistemic* arrogance, Manne explores male entitlement to knowledge, whereby men take themselves to be entitled 'to occupy the conversational position of the knower by default: to be the one who dispenses information, offers corrections, and authoritatively issues explanations' (2020: 52). This entitlement is most clearly demonstrable with reference to the phenomenon of mansplaining and is problematic in virtue of the fact that often men are wrong to assume this conversational position, because there are frequently more knowledgeable and authoritative women present in these contexts.

While Srinivasan and Manne's work can offer further support to those seeking to defend the claim of arrogance levelled at men, Frye's account of arrogant perception makes the charge most directly. It is not my task, here, to defend these claims, though I am sympathetic to them. Rather, I use these cases of putative group arrogance to elaborate on what kind of account of group vice is required in order to understand the social metaphysics of such claims. However, I accept that the claims must at least have some plausibility in order to motivate the discussion around group arrogance. For those sceptical of their plausibility, I would refer to the wealth of testimonial evidence that these authors draw upon in their discussions of these topics, for example Manne's analysis of misogynistic comments that abound in the media and Srinivasan's commentary on the (sometimes violently) distorted reasoning found within the 'manosphere'. Additionally, and as Manne (2018) also notes, there is an extant literature in social psychology on the way certain traits of dominance are gendered, so that controlling and arrogant behaviour is expected in men but prohibited in women.[5]

2.2 The arrogance of the powerful and privileged

While Frye's work can be seen to level the charge of arrogance at men, then, other philosophers have taken aim at a broader social group: the privileged. Privileged social groups are those who have the most power in society in light of their socio-economic position. Part of their social privilege is a distinct *epistemic* privilege, which José Medina describes as 'the privilege of knowing (or always being presumed to know), of always being

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[5] For a good example of this work, see Rudman et al. (2012).

heard as a credible speaker, of always commanding cognitive authority' (2013: 30). Although the specifics of their arguments vary, philosophers who have claimed that privilege is closely connected with arrogance include Anita Superson (2004), José Medina (2013), Michael Patrick Lynch (2018), and Alessandra Tanesini (2020a). No one claims that *all* privileged people are (epistemically) arrogant – i.e., that the privileged are *necessarily* arrogant – but that privilege *facilitates* arrogance. In other words, members of this group are dramatically more likely to demonstrate arrogance in virtue of their group membership. Here, I focus specifically on Superson and Medina's work, to demonstrate how these claims can be interpreted as attributions of collective epistemic arrogance.

2.2.1   Superson on privilege

With reference to Frye's work, Anita Superson (2004) claims that arrogance is common amongst those who are privileged, and that this has serious consequences for women and other marginalised groups in society. Specifically, Superson argues that 'privilege tends to foster in those in the dominant group the traits of arrogance, self-centeredness, and a refusal to accept responsibility' (35). The claim is not that arrogance is held by *all* privileged people, but that privilege facilitates its development such that, presumably, the privileged as a group are more likely to be arrogant. What's more, the claim is that arrogance (along with self-centeredness and a refusal to accept responsibility) unconsciously generates immoral behaviour (35). Superson therefore can be interpreted as developing a charge of group arrogance against the privileged.

To better understand Superson's work, let me highlight a few key features of her account of privilege. First, Superson is clear that privilege ought to be understood as a 'group concept': individuals are privileged only in virtue of being members of privileged groups, which 'define a person's identity, give her a sense of history, affinity, and separateness, and even constitute her mode of reasoning and way of evaluating and expressing feeling' (36). Second, she argues that privilege is systematic, in the sense that there is a system of related forces that sustain it. Third, and in order to explain the systematicity of privilege, Superson argues that a key feature of privilege can be found in the kind of benefits that the phenomenon confers on members of privileged groups. These benefits include, in the case of the racial privilege attached to being a white person, having

one's race represented in mainstream culture and media and being able to eat, talk and dress in ways that are not attributed to one's race. What's more, these benefits can add up to be cumulatively advantageous: privilege "snowballs" in the sense that small but frequent advantages combined put members of privileged groups in high-powered or at least relatively comfortable and advantageous positions within society (36).

Another significant benefit of privilege, for Superson, is the kind of "cultural domination" or "cultural imperialism" that is systematised in virtue of it. Such relations consolidate, strengthen, or otherwise facilitate privilege in a systematic manner. For Superson, drawing from Iris Marion Young (1990), cultural domination involves three key mechanisms: (1) privileged or dominant groups' views define the culture of the society in which it is dominant or privileged, meaning 'that a society's culture will express the experiences, values, goals, and achievements of the privileged group that produces it and will represent their perspective on, and interpretation of, events as that of all of humanity, or, "the truth"'; (2) through being able to produce and control society's dominant perspective, the privileged have the power to ignore those they oppress, which 'underscores the alleged exclusive importance of the privileged and thereby facilitates the cultivation of arrogance about their perspective as the only one, or the only one that matters'; and (3) by virtue of their ability to dominate the culture of their society, privileged groups can (and do) stereotype subordinated groups (which further strengthens their position of privilege) (Superson, 2004: 37-38).

The features involved in Superson's discussion of cultural domination helpfully elucidate the ways in which Superson understands the arrogance of the privileged. To rearticulate this using the account of arrogance defended in this thesis, we can see that Superson understands privileged people to unduly assume various epistemic licenses, here: a license to ignore the oppressed, for example, and a license to claim their perspective as "truth", to claim "knowledge", in the form of stereotypes, about marginalised social groups. All of these forms of license are unduly assumed by the privileged, in Superson's view, and so we can, again, interpret these claims as a charge of collective epistemic vice.

The fourth and final feature of privilege that Superson describes regards how privilege is generally unrecognised or denied by the privileged. This feature, in particular,

adds support to the view that the arrogance of the privileged relates to the making of (undue) assumptions. Superson explains how

> privilege is hidden in structures, accepted rather than condemned in hierarchical societies, taken for granted by the privileged because it is the status quo, and accepted by the victims of a system that indoctrinates them into complicity about their subservient position. (2004: 38)

The uncritical acceptance or taking for granted of privilege constitutes a way in which the privileged limit their thinking to a world in which their privilege is a natural or unchangeable feature. In other words, members of privileged social groups unduly assume the kinds of license associated with their arrogance – licenses to act without accountability and to avoid responsibility for the injustice that results from such assumptions. This complacency is taken to be a mark of the arrogance attached to privilege, for Superson, insofar as it involves a failure to acknowledge and take responsibility for the harms that privileged groups may be perpetuating. In denying one's status as belonging to a privileged group, one fails to recognise the benefits that their privilege confers upon them and the impact that this has on marginalised or oppressed social groups. For Superson, then, privilege and arrogance are intimately related and although she does not claim that all members of privileged groups are arrogant, the implication is that arrogance is common amongst this group. Importantly, we can interpret Superson's claims not merely as attributing *epistemic* arrogance to the privileged, as a collective, but also arrogance simpliciter – because the licenses they are said to assume (to unaccountable actions, to avoid responsibility, etc.) involve moral activities rather than merely epistemic ones.

Finally, although the target of Superson's arrogance-charge is different, the account bears some striking similarities to Frye's (perhaps unsurprisingly, given Superson's references to Frye's work). For Superson, the privileged dominate the society's culture in the same systematic sense that men do for Frye – perhaps unsurprisingly considering the considerable overlap between groups. In the same way that Frye talks about men having the cultural and institutional power to (mis)define people and their roles, Superson describes how the perspectives of the privileged become seen as the only one (or the only one that matters). And, similar to Frye's claims that male arrogance consists of a

community of arrogant perceivers, Superson describes how privilege, as a group concept, can define a person's identity and mould their modes of reasoning and evaluative methods. Although Frye targets men as a group, then, whereas Superson targets the privileged, both seem to see group arrogance as structured in similar ways.

2.2.2 Medina on epistemic arrogance as a 'vice of the privileged'

The claim that privilege and power are intimately related with arrogance is mirrored in the work of José Medina (2013), who argues that epistemic arrogance is one of the key 'vices of the privileged' that contributes to what he calls 'active ignorance'.[6] For Medina, epistemic arrogance, along with epistemic laziness and closed-mindedness, is one of the central vices characteristic of the privileged and powerful. Like Superson, Medina does not claim that this vice is always present but that members of this group are at greater risk of becoming epistemically arrogant: a vice embodied by those who have become 'epistemically spoiled' to the extent that they have become cognitively self-indulgent 'know-it-alls' who think of themselves as 'cognitively superior' (2013: 30-31). Medina writes that

> Epistemic arrogance is one of the obvious ways in which the powerful and privileged can be spoiled and come to exhibit a cognitive immaturity that – in some radical cases – can even become pathological, namely, when the subject becomes absolutely incapable of acknowledging any mistake or limitation, indulging in a delusional cognitive omnipotence that prevents him from learning from others and improving. (31)

The idea that the arrogance of the privileged is an indulgence via which the privileged limit their thinking in ways that asserts their own epistemic authority and dominance is certainly compatible with the account of arrogance that I defend in this thesis. This is because this description implies that the privileged engage in a range of undue assumptions of epistemic licenses: to "know", to ignore, or to assert without accountability. The

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[6] The relationship between the 'vices of the privileged' and 'active ignorance' is given in chapter 1 of Medina (2013): "Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction" (27-55).

account is therefore well-placed to cater for the kind of behaviours that Medina is highlighting here.

Although Medina suggests that pathological forms of epistemic arrogance will be rare, he uses Alexis de Tocqueville's (1990) description of US slaveholders of the 1830s to exemplify how group arrogance can function in this particular privileged group. Slaveholders are said to learn from infancy the habit of 'ruling without resistance' (Tocqueville: 394) in order that their opinions are not called into question. This, in turn, allows slaveholders to develop a putative 'undisputed cognitive authority' (Medina, 2013: 32). For Medina, in extreme cases like this, 'reality in its entirety can be perceived by the subject as being at his will, as of his own making' (32). While this degree of epistemic vice can be said to be epistemically disastrous for slaveholders – because they risk losing all sense of reality and therefore acquiring numerous false beliefs and robust forms of ignorance – Medina also notes the social impact of the group vice and how it can 'damage the social knowledge available and harm the chances for epistemic improvement of the subject's community' (31).

In both Superson's and Medina's work, then, we find a relationship between power and privilege and epistemic arrogance. But neither are explicit about making the vice-charge of arrogance against the group *as a whole*. Indeed, both agree that arrogance is *not* a necessary feature of being powerful or privileged, nor is it claimed that arrogance is contingent upon being a member of powerful or privileged groups (i.e., non-privileged, powerless people can be epistemically arrogant, too). The claim that both Superson and Medina uphold is that people, in the context of their membership of powerful and/or privileged groups, are more likely to develop and express the vice of epistemic arrogance. They suggest that social forces and cultural power structures (for example, the possibility of slave-ownership in 1830s USA, in Medina's case, and control of cultural institutions in Superson's) propagate a heightened risk of individual group members of particular groups in certain societies becoming epistemically arrogant. In other words, arrogance can manifest in stubborn and harmful ways within privileged and powerful social groups. While there may be reasons for reading Medina and Superson's work differently, I think that these offer good reasons to consider their work as attributing the vice of epistemic arrogance, at a collective level, to powerful/privileged groups.

One might be tempted to deny this and hold that both Superson and Medina are merely making claims about the likelihood of epistemic arrogance being fostered in these groups in virtue of their group features. However, it is somewhat unclear what difference there is between this and the idea that the group features themselves are constitutive of the group's arrogance. Could it therefore make sense to interpret their claims as about group arrogance? Doing so will enable us to better account for what such a charge might mean and how this, and potentially other, varieties of group arrogance might be constituted. Of course, this needs to be carefully qualified – not least in the sense that neither Medina nor Superson wish to claim that *all* members of privileged/powerful groups are epistemically arrogant. Nonetheless, the group-related features that both philosophers describe in accounting for epistemic arrogance in these groups gives us good reason for considering these accounts as claims of group arrogance.

Apart from Superson and Medina, other philosophers – including Alessandra Tanesini (2020a), Michael Lynch (2018), and Nabina Liebow and Rachel Levit Ades (2022) – have also noted and discussed the close relation between social privilege and arrogance. Insofar as many of these authors profess that group membership *facilitates* the epistemic arrogance of individuals, it seems inappropriate to seek out an individualistic analysis over a collectivist one, when it seems that it is the collective features that are having the epistemically corrupting effects. Medina has recently emphasised the necessity of work that centres the epistemic agency of collectives as 'the proper locus' of analysis, while suggesting that our individual and collective epistemic agency are 'deeply intertwined' and so distinguishing between the two is always 'somewhat artificial' (2021: 336). This position neither militates against individual or collective analyses but demands both. Here, I interpret this work as claiming that epistemic arrogance is a distinctive feature of these groups *as groups* with vicious epistemological frameworks operative within them; frameworks which embed undue assumptions of epistemic license into group membership. Questions remain regarding how such collective vice may be structured within groups like these.

2.3   What kinds of groups are these?

As already suggested, there is a good deal of overlap between the groups under discussion here. Many men will have the sort of privilege or social power that Medina and Superson discuss, though some will not. I hold the two groups to be distinct to the extent that one's gender identity is not the *only* feature that tends to afford people privilege; so, too, does one's race, ethnicity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, and class status. This means that when authors refer to the arrogance of the privileged, they do not only or even necessarily refer to men, though those who discuss male arrogance will typically be referring to men with privilege. We may think of these kinds of groups as social categories. A problem with this, as raised in the introduction, is that social categories are not paradigmatic group agents, and we might question what kind of agency they could have – especially given some characterisations of their status as groups. Reza Lahroodi, for instance, distinguishes between 'established' social groups and what he calls 'mere populations' (2019: 407). Population groups include social categories and loose associations, which have common characteristics like gender, social class, or support of a particular football team. Established groups include intimacy groups (families or housemates), task groups (juries or teams) and corporations. Established social groups are 'relatively coherent units in which the members are bonded and united together in some fashion' and interact frequently, making them 'capable of action in a manner not dissimilar to that of a single subject or agent'; they are 'paradigmatic' collectives (407-408). Populations, it is suggested, lack the coherence, unity, and interaction that makes some groups capable of joint action; they do not meet the criteria of group agency which, on Christian List and Phillip Pettit's (2011) prominent account, requires that the group can have representations and motivations (beliefs, knowledge, desires, etc.) and the ability to process and act on these (for instance, via voting mechanisms or decision-making hierarchies).

If social category groups do not (and, perhaps, could not) possess the features that we expect of full group agents, can they still have epistemic vices? I think there is good reason to think that they can. For one, discussion of the vices of large, informal groups is nothing new and appears plausible to many. Jules Holroyd points out that 'it is not uncommon to attribute vices to loosely constituted groups' and that both Slote's (2001) and Beggs' (2003) accounts apply the concepts of group agency and institutional virtue to societies and the *polis*, respectively (Holroyd, 2020: 135). Large, informally structured

groups are therefore not *obviously* bad candidates for vice-attribution. Moreover, we know that groups much larger than formally constituted institutions can behave in coordinated ways, with shared behavioural dispositions, attitudes, and sets of beliefs. Many collective endeavours involve this, for example a global shift within scientific communities towards the research and development of novel vaccines to combat lethal new viruses, or the mobilisations of diverse communities of activists, politicians, scientists, workers, students, and school children to campaign for climate justice. This suggests that there is no *prima facie* reason to think that loosely organised groups cannot act in coordinated ways that make the ascription of collective epistemic vices plausible, even if they do not demonstrate *all* the features to be considered full group agents. The fact that social categories are not paradigmatic group agents does not mean that they cannot demonstrate any agency at all.

We can better understand the distinctiveness of the kinds of groups at issue here, and the kinds of agency they may demonstrate, by considering Iris Marion Young's (1990: 42-48) account of social groups. In stark contrast to Lahroodi, Young argues that social groups that we might think of as social categories (like men or the privileged) are not simply sets or collections of people but are 'more fundamentally intertwined with the identities of the people described as belonging to them' (43). Social groups are collectives 'differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life', whose group members share similar experiences that prompt them to associate with each other in particular ways distinct from those in other groups (43). Young claims that philosophers (like Lahroodi) have for the most part ignored or dismissed this idea of social groups, conceiving of groups as either aggregated sets of people (artificially conceived groups who share at least one attribute) or associations (formally organised institutions). Young argues that it is a mistake to think of people in social categories as aggregations because they are held together by not merely by shared attributes but also by a common sense of identity: 'it is identification with a certain social status, the common history that social status produces, and self-identification that define the group as a group' (44).

Relatedly, Matthew Strohl and C. Thi Nguyen (2019) give an account of 'intimate groups' which is far broader than Lahroodi's limited sense of 'intimacy groups'. For Strohl and Nguyen, group intimacy 'entails that the group is bound together by common practices that ground a sense of unity among members of the group' (989). For them,

intimate groups may include families, but also much larger groups, including social categories and loose associations (Star Wars fans, skateboarders, etc.). For Strohl and Nguyen, intimate groups appear to be 'sub-agential' groups insofar as they lack the organisational structure and decision-making abilities that are required of group agents. My suggestion is that this is how we ought to think of the groups in question here: men and the privileged are also *sub-agential* groups. Although some might be tempted to pursue a defence of these groups as full group agents, this is not a project I wish to pursue here. This is because I find the claim that social categories lack certain features of paradigmatic group agents convincing and I see no reason to think that only paradigmatic group agents can possess collective epistemic vices.

Importantly, the classification of 'sub-agential' does not imply that these groups are non-agential. In fact, Strohl and Nguyen's account of intimate groups, in combination with Young's work, offer good reasons to think that social categories can have more agency and demonstrate a greater level of unity than Lahroodi's description of groups like these as 'mere populations' suggests. If groups must have some kind(s) of collective agency in order to demonstrate collective vices, these accounts offer a useful starting point for theorising the epistemic vices of sub-agential groups. I will return to related discussion of sub-agential group agency in chapter 5. For now, let's consider some extant accounts of the structure of collective vice.

3.   Collective epistemic vice

Proceeding on the understanding that the arrogance of men and the privileged ought to be treated as cases of collective epistemic arrogance, then, how should we understand this group vice to be structured? We have a few options. First, group vice may be structured *summatively*. For summativism to obtain, all or most members of the group must have the vice in question individually and regardless of their group membership for the group to have the vice. For example, a governmental panel may be said to be closedminded if all or most of its members are individually closedminded. The summation of this feature amongst individuals across the group explains why the group is closedminded. As Lahroodi (2019: 411) has noted, *summatively* structured group vice is not genuinely collective vice, as the vice-ascriptions are ultimately aimed at group

members as private individuals rather than the group itself. For our purposes, to describe a group of people as arrogant in a summative sense would just mean that all or most of the individual members of that group are themselves arrogant *as individuals*. Group arrogance consists in nothing more than enough group members being arrogant and, importantly, it is unrelated to group membership.

But summativism does not seem to be the account of group arrogance that the authors discussed in section two have in mind. None of them suggest that the arrogance of men or the privileged is a result simply of a majority of the members of these social groups demonstrating epistemic arrogance as private individuals and nor do they argue that a majority of group members do in fact display the vice of arrogance. Further, discussion of the (epistemic) arrogance of men and the privileged does not appear to be used as a shorthand for discussing the individual vices of members of these groups. Instead, what seems to be the focus is on how *the group itself* can be said to demonstrate arrogance in virtue of collective (that is, irreducible) features. Specifically, it is suggested that the arrogance of group members is facilitated via features inherent to group membership. But there is no reason to think that the arrogance-facilitating function of group membership means that arrogance must be common to a majority of group members. Some might think that it is true that most members of the groups in question do in fact demonstrate forms of epistemic arrogance as individuals, but the authors' discussions of these cases do not appear to *require* this. While this pushes us towards *nonsummative* (or, as I prefer, *anti-summative*) accounts of collective vice, it does not provide conclusive reasons for abandoning summativism. *That* the cases are not described in summativist terms is not a reason to think that they *could* not be. I return to this issue in chapter 5, where I defend an explicitly collectivist (anti-summative) account of group arrogance. For now, I take it that descriptions of the cases of group arrogance offer reason enough to look elsewhere.

How about anti-summativism then? Anti-summativism is the view that all or most individual members of a group need not have the vice in question *as individuals* for the group itself to have a vice. In other words, groups can have vices or virtues which its individual members do not. Typically, anti-summativism is taken to be the 'relevant philosophical challenge' (Fricker, 2010: 235) because it seeks to defend an account of

group behaviour that is genuinely collective, i.e., irreducible to individual member-level features. To say that a group is arrogant in an anti-summative sense would be to say that irreducible group features make the group itself arrogant and individual group members need not display arrogance as private individuals for the group of which they are a member to be arrogant. Although some may take issue with the more metaphysically demanding nature of anti-summativism, these two options should not be seen as mutually exclusive; generally, defenders of anti-summativist accounts readily accept the possibility and prevalence of summativism (Fricker, 2020; etc.). In other words, although summativism and anti-summativism are distinct *as views* of the ways vices and virtues may occur within groups, there would be nothing stopping us from holding that group epistemic arrogance could sometimes be instantiated via summative group structures and other times via anti-summative features. For our purposes, here, anti-summativism looks to offer a way forward whereas summativism appears inconsistent with the cases of group arrogance under discussion. However, for it to do so we need an anti-summativist account of collective epistemic vice that tells a plausible story of precisely which irreducible group-related features constitute the group's arrogance. Let's consider two prominent options.

3.1 Fricker's anti-summativism

Miranda Fricker (2010; 2020) defends an anti-summativist account of collective epistemic virtue and vice that seeks to account for what she calls 'institutional' virtues and vices. This is motivated by the thought that the language of virtue and vice can help to account for, and be a useful conceptual apparatus to diagnose, certain institutional failures. For Fricker, examples of these include the institutional racism diagnosed within London's Metropolitan Police service in the Macpherson (1999) report following the public enquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, along with the 'inferential inertia' found within the higher management of one of Britain's most high-profile public institutions, the BBC, following the enquiry into former television presenter Jimmy Saville's history of sexual abuse against children (Fricker, 2020).

For Fricker, the genuinely collective group features that substantiate the anti-summativist account are, inspired by Margaret Gilbert's (1987, 1989, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2013) extensive and influential work on collective agency, *joint commitments made under*

conditions of common knowledge. Groups are appropriately bound together in virtuous or vicious ways insofar as their members (qua group members) jointly commit to practices – including epistemic practices – and understand that they are committing to this. Fricker (2010: 238-239) borrows Christine Korsgaard's (1996, chpt. 3) concept of 'practical identities' to carve out an account of precisely how individuals' joint commitments are shaped and how they sometimes conflict with their personal commitments. Our practical identities are the social roles we inhabit that involve various associated commitments. A member of a drama society, to use Fricker's example, adopts the practical identity of a society member in committing to the society's survival and flourishing. However, in their practical identity as a private individual and local resident who is 'regularly inconvenienced by the society's occupying the town hall and taking up all the parking places on a Thursday evening', the individual group member might be unmoved by the society ceasing to exist (Fricker, 2010: 238). Here, then, an individual's commitments *qua* private individual are in conflict with their commitments *qua* drama society member; commitments that are shaped by their different practical identities.

More recently, Fricker has developed this view by building in an account of institutional ethos, where ethos is the collective analogue of individual character, defined as 'a set of interrelated dispositions and attitudes, where (in the case of a virtuous person) these are conceived as temporally and counter-factually stable motives towards good ultimate and mediate ends' (Fricker, 2020: 93). In the case of a vicious person, the picture is a little more complicated, however. In response to Charlie Crerar's (2017) argument that epistemic vices will typically not mirror virtues by positively aiming at epistemically bad ends, Fricker suggests that epistemic vices will typically 'take the negative form of an inadequate commitment to good epistemic ends' – including ultimate epistemic ends like 'cognitive contact with reality' and mediate epistemic ends like fact-checking (Fricker, 2020: 99). With ethos as the analogue of individual character, then, a group can display a vicious ethos via inadequate commitments to good epistemic ultimate and mediate ends.

In addition to motivational failures, Fricker also considers performative failures as one way in which epistemic vices can manifest. This leads to the following conceptualization:

institutional epistemic vices are displayed—either in thinking or, where persistent, also at the level of institutional character—whenever there are culpable lapses in the institution's epistemic ethos and/or in the implementation of its ends. (2020: 100-101; emphasis in original)

This iteration of Fricker's view therefore incorporates two distinct kinds of epistemic defect that collectives can demonstrate: motivational defects within the 'epistemic ethos' and performative defects relating to the implementation of group ends.

One problem with applying this account to the cases of group arrogance in question should be immediately clear following the previous discussion around varieties of groups and group agency: Fricker's account is concerned with formally structured, 'established' or institutionalised groups. As I have suggested, men and the privileged appear to be *sub-agential* groups, making a straightforward application more complicated. The possibility of sub-agential groups possessing group 'ends' is questionable because such groups typically do not have formalised methods for establishing their purposes or for expressing these collectively. Accounting for the arrogance of sub-agential groups in terms of a culpably defective performance regarding the implementation of ends is therefore unlikely.[7] However, some might think that there remains the possibility of expanding Fricker's account if a good case can be made that the group's epistemic arrogance has followed from a culpable lapse in the collective's epistemic ethos.

It is unclear if the account can be extended in this way, however. For one, the joint commitment model looks implausible in the case of group arrogance. Fricker contends that cases of epistemically bad motivations will be 'unusual at best' and so locates the disvalue of the motivational component of vice instead in an 'inadequate commitment to good epistemic ends' (2020: 99). Jules Holroyd (2020) convincingly argues that a failure to commit to virtuous ends need not signal vice, because some groups may simply have different priorities that do not require them to commit to some virtuous ends. Perhaps the condition that lapses in epistemic ethos need be *culpable* to some extent clarifies how a failure to commit to virtuous ends is sometimes vicious and other times not. But, in the context of male arrogance and the arrogance of the privileged, locating a group's vice in

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[7] This is not to say that the group's behaviour is not defective but just that it is implausible that the group's performance is a result of the kinds of ends that the group has set for itself.

inadequately virtuous motivations appears inapt – because arrogance, working within the framing that I introduce in chapter 3, is not a matter of a particular motivational orientation but of engaging in undue assumptions of license that systematically obstructs one's access to epistemic goods. Culpable lapses of ethos, as analogous to culpable lapses of motivation, do not appear well-suited to describe the phenomena at issue in the cases described.

To explain, consider what Fricker's account demands for ascriptions of collective epistemic arrogance to obtain. We have already discounted the possibility of the fault being found in the implementation of the group's ends – because sub-agential groups are not clearly constituted in a way that would make the establishment of group ends possible. This means that the group's defect must be found in their motivational orientation or, in Fricker's terminology, their epistemic ethos. Because this is an anti-summative account, Fricker seeks to define an irreducibly collective feature of the group that functions to produce the epistemic ethos, as analogous to an individual's character. Fricker understands such collective features to be formed by a joint commitment (themselves shaped by our various and sometime conflicting practical identities). Thus, the epistemic ethos will be constituted via joint commitments.

The problem is that group members must jointly commit *under conditions of common knowledge* – a condition which is implausible in many if not most contemporary contexts. Imagine men, for instance, unanimously and with self-awareness, committing to the acquisition of the service of women. Though Fricker (2010: 244-247) clarifies that the motive need not be conceived of *as vicious* and that group members can become party to joint commitments merely as 'passengers' (by letting the commitment stand or failing to object to it), contexts in which such an overtly oppressive commitment could be made seem sparse at best.[8] More plausibly, manifestations of arrogance in privileged groups (including men) will most often be the result of a closedmindedness or thoughtlessness derived from an ignorance of, or insensitivity towards, the people to whom their arrogance

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[8] Incel (involuntary celibate) culture is perhaps one particularly extreme but concerning context in which such an outwardly misogynistic motivation or commitment might be far more common.

is directed.[9] In these cases, which I take to be typical, privileged individuals will not be knowingly *committing* (as mere passengers or not) to the pursuit of conversational domination (e.g., mansplaining) or the persistent ignoring and diminishing of testimonies of women and other members of marginalised communities. It appears far more plausible, instead, that these privileged individuals are simply unaware that this is what they are doing or take for granted that what they are doing is entirely normal and acceptable behaviour.[10] If this is the case, it suggests that sub-agential group arrogance is unlikely to be structured via the joint commitment framework.

To be clear, Fricker grounds an epistemically vicious ethos (in part) in an *inadequate commitment* to virtuous epistemic ends rather than in a commitment to vicious epistemic ends. Perhaps members of privileged groups are simply inadequately committed to the virtues (like humility) opposed to arrogance, then. However, Fricker's account relies on a metaphysics that understands collective virtues and vices as grounded in joint commitments, so arrogant groups must be jointly committed in a way that warrants the ascription of epistemic arrogance. But arrogant sub-agential groups are not aptly described in terms of the presence of inadequate joint commitments or in terms of joint commitments at all.

If Fricker's account is unable to tell a plausible story about how sub-agential group arrogance is anti-summatively structured, we might be inclined to think that this is so much the worse for the suggested cases of collective arrogance; that these are not genuine cases of collective arrogance at all. I will suggest, however, that a more plausible story can be told. Moreover, the problem with accounting for group arrogance in terms of joint commitments shaped by our practical identities is explained by the way in which arrogance is, in Robin Dillon's words, commonly

> a matter of inexplicit assumption, unarticulated taking for granted, implicit expectation, a matter of presumption… a matter of what goes without saying and

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[9] See Tanesini (2020a) and Battaly (2020) for illuminating discussions of the connections between arrogance, ignorance, and closedmindedness.

[10] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer of *Synthese* for raising this possibility and pushing for further clarification on the suitability of the joint commitment model, here.

without thinking, more a matter of understanding, interpretation, construal, and perception than of inference, explicit belief, and declaration. It tends to operate stealthily, without thought, and unconcerned about, inattentive to, or contemptuous of truth and reality. (Dillon, 2007: 108)

This ought to be motivation enough to look elsewhere for an anti-summativist account that can help us understand the arrogance of sub-agential groups.

3.2   Dispositional anti-summativism

Jules Holroyd (2020) has offered an alternative anti-summativist account of collective epistemic vice that develops upon T. Ryan Byerly and Meghan Byerly's (2016) account of collective virtue. Holroyd states that 'a collective C has vice V to the extent that C is disposed to behave in ways characteristic of V under appropriate circumstances' (2020: 138). On this account, it is the *dispositions* of groups that account for the possibility of them having vices, rather than joint commitments. In Byerly and Byerly's original formulation, they respond to a concern raised about how to understand group dispositions by offering an alternative framing of the dispositional account: 'A collective C has a virtue V to the extent that the members of C are disposed, *qua* members of C, to behave in ways characteristic of V under appropriate circumstances' (2016: 43; emphasis in original). Again, we can substitute 'virtue' for 'vice' here and have an alternative articulation of the dispositional account relating to collective epistemic vice. This iteration of the account seeks to explicate the mechanics of group dispositions by locating them in group member dispositions, *qua group members*. In other words, the dispositions of the group are reducible to the dispositions of the group members, but the members' dispositions are oriented around and constituted by their participation in the group, meaning they are irreducible to group members *qua private individuals*.

This account states that the epistemic vices of groups are based on the dispositions of the members of these groups *qua group members*. All that is required for collective vice, then, is that group members have particular dispositions that are identifiably group-related. A significant implication of this account is that it does not require that groups must demonstrate collective intentionality in order for them to possess or demonstrate vices.

This is because group-dependent properties like dispositions related to group membership need not require collective agency. To illustrate how this is so, consider how a disposition to behave in a hostile manner to fans of a rival football team does not require that the group of football fans have collectively processed, considered, and then committed to or decided upon this course of action, as a group agent might. Problems around group agency therefore do not arise on the dispositional account, making it a useful account for applying to cases of epistemic vice in groups that are not paradigmatic group agents; in our case, sub-agential groups.

This feature of dispositional anti-summativism looks like a key area of compatibility for those who hope to defend claims of sub-agential group arrogance. What's more, the account looks *prima facie* consistent with the claims of male and privileged arrogance. Frye, I think, would agree that men are disposed, *qua men*, towards epistemic arrogance. And it appears a fair estimation of views of the arrogance of the privileged that this group can be described as epistemically arrogant because members of privileged groups are disposed, *qua members of this group*, to behave in ways characteristic of epistemic arrogance under appropriate circumstances. Neither claim entails that *every* group member behaves in epistemically arrogant ways but merely that members' group membership disposes them in this way. I understand this to mean that, on average, members of these groups will be more likely to demonstrate epistemic arrogance or that the vice will flow more easily, be more readily accessible, for individuals in these groups than it otherwise would. This allows for the possibility that many group members will not possess nor demonstrate the arrogance of the group, perhaps because they have been able to acknowledge and mitigate the risk of this tendency. Further, this relation is a close approximation of what it means for group membership to play a facilitative role in establishing a vice in its members – which, we have seen, is said to be the role membership of privileged social groups plays.

The dispositional account of collective vice is therefore compatible with the cases of epistemic arrogance in sub-agential groups discussed here, but what does this tell us about the nature of the collective arrogance operating in these cases? The account can tell us that the arrogance of the collective is structured in terms of a group disposition, or the individual dispositions of group members qua members, but it provides no explanation for

how or why this is the case. This failure to provide explanatory power should come as no surprise, however. Philosophical accounts of the structure of collective vice need not deliver explanatory power *in addition to* the social metaphysics, and it may be the case that group-related dispositions are explained differently in different cases, or that different vices or virtues require different explanatory toolkits in different contexts. The dispositional account may therefore provide a foundation for an account of collective epistemic arrogance, then, but it is not able to provide much more.

This result leaves several important questions regarding sub-agential group arrogance unanswered. These are primarily explanatory or etiological questions, like what are the origins of the group's disposition toward epistemic arrogance? How is the disposition structured amongst and between group members? Why does the group have this epistemically arrogant disposition? What group features in particular dispose group members in this way? In relation to the putatively arrogant groups in question, here: why is it that men or the privileged have epistemically arrogant dispositions? How is this vice fostered or facilitated in virtue of group membership? Answers to these questions will be essential for a fuller understanding of the nature of sub-agential group arrogance, but dispositional anti-summativism alone cannot provide these. This conclusion is of even greater significance if part of our motivation for studying group arrogance is the hope that better understanding of this form of collective vice will be an important step towards its amelioration. We might think that we may only begin to dismantle or mitigate the collective epistemic arrogance of groups if we are able to understand the origins of how or why it is structured as it is. An account that is unable to provide an adequate explanation of a group's vice will be unable to suggest ways to ameliorate it. There remains much work to do, then, to provide such explanatory power in cases of sub-agential arrogance.

4.   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to show how prominent extant accounts of collective epistemic vice are unable to provide an adequate explanatory framework for understanding the epistemic arrogance of sub-agential groups. I began by highlighting the various ways in which groups are often said to display arrogance and introduced and discussed claims of arrogance made by Marilyn Frye, in relation to men, and Anita

Superson and José Medina, in relation to the privileged. I highlighted how each account sought to show how group features foster or facilitate epistemic arrogance amongst its members and argued that there is good reason to treat these claims as attributions of collective epistemic arrogance.

Next, I asked what, if any, extant accounts of collective vice could adequately accommodate these cases. I argued that the groups' arrogance cannot be accounted for via the summativist model, because this would imply that the arrogance of the group pertains only to the aggregated individual vicious traits of group members qua private individuals. The extant philosophical attributions of collective epistemic arrogance offer no support for this view. I therefore suggested that an anti-summative model of collective epistemic vice is required to account for the group arrogance in question.

I first considered a prominent and developed anti-summative account from Miranda Fricker, which builds upon the work of Margaret Gilbert in claiming that collective virtues and vices are formed via joint commitments made under conditions of common knowledge. I argued that this model is incompatible with the cases of collective arrogance discussed here, not just because its primary focus is on institutionalised groups but also because the condition of common knowledge is highly unlikely to apply to these cases. I then considered Jules Holroyd's dispositional account of collective vice, inspired by T. Ryan Byerly and Meghan Byerly's earlier work on collective virtue. The dispositional account, I argued, is promising insofar as it provides a foundation for understanding the structure of sub-agential group arrogance – because it identifies group dispositions or the dispositions of group members qua members as the basis of collective vices. But, I argued, this account of collective vice does not provide an adequate explanatory framework for understanding how or why the arrogance of men or the privileged is structured as it is.

To conclude this chapter, then, we are left without an adequate explanatory basis for how sub-agential group arrogance is structured. This is unsatisfactory not only because an adequate explanation would be enlightening but also, as I suggested at the end of the previous section, because this result will hinder efforts to ameliorate the epistemic arrogance of groups that, as various philosophers discussed here have argued, cause a great

deal of harm. In the next chapter, I turn my attention to this project – to argue for a distinctive account of collective arrogance that can explain how arrogance is structured within sub-agential groups.

5

A norms-based account of collective arrogance

1.   Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted various ways in which philosophers have understood how epistemic vices may be structured within groups, but the discussion left a gap in our understanding of how the epistemic arrogance of sub-agential groups is structured. I argued that putative cases of group arrogance in privileged social groups do not appear consistent with summative conceptions of group vice and are not well explained in terms of joint commitments. The dispositional account of collective vice is compatible with the claims of group arrogance – privileged groups are disposed to behave in arrogant ways under appropriate circumstances – but this does not explain why or how this should be so. The task of this chapter is to fill this gap. How can we explain the epistemic arrogance of sub-agential groups? Why should certain groups be disposed towards the vice of epistemic arrogance? My answer, in short, is that social norms can provide the explanatory basis for how sub-agential groups can possess vices like arrogance. My argument in this chapter therefore adds to recent philosophical work that highlights the role of norms in shaping group epistemic behaviour. José Medina (2021) and Elizabeth Anderson (2021) both suggest that group norms play a crucial role in prompting or inhibiting epistemically virtuous or vicious group behaviour. Given that their focus is not on arrogance, and that they do not aim to give an account of collective epistemic vice, I do not discuss this work further – though I hope that highlighting it demonstrates a certain coalescence around norms in the recent literature.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the next section, I consider the ambiguity around the role of 'qua' when discussing group member dispositions *qua* group members. I discuss the most plausible interpretations in relation to agential, organised, or institutionalised groups and argue that these are not transferrable to sub-agential groups. Further, I argue that philosophical work on social norms can help account for the 'qua'-talk with regards to sub-agential group members' dispositions. Specifically, I introduce

Lacey J Davidson and Daniel Kelly's (2020) account of social norms, which I argue is especially well-placed to help explain how individuals can replicate the epistemic vices of the groups of which they are members. In section 3, I respond to various concerns regarding the similarity of this account with Fricker's joint commitment model and clarify the ways in which a norms-based account of collective arrogance is distinctly *collectivist*, as opposed to individualist or summativist.

In section 4, I elaborate further on how social norms can explain the way in which group membership can dispose group members towards epistemic arrogance by way of a case study. I describe the phenomenon of mansplaining, whereby a man presumes an epistemically authoritative position and seeks to explain things to women who, in fact, possess greater epistemic authority. Mansplaining, I argue, is an archetypal epistemically arrogant behaviour displayed by men in virtue of their membership of this group. In particular, I contend that particular social norms attached to this group identity can (and often do) embed the disposition to mansplain in group members. As a result, I illustrate through this case study how epistemically arrogant dispositions of group members can be explained via the social norms that operate within and are mobilised via membership of the (sub-agential) group. In section 5, I take a brief detour from the central argumentative strand of the chapter to return to a question raised in the previous chapter regarding the form or forms of agency that sub-agential groups are capable of and the necessity of groups possessing full collective agency in order to ascribe them substantive epistemic vices. Although the dispositional account allows that this need not be the case – that *sub-agential* groups can have dispositions and therefore vices – I argue that the social norms account can reinforce this conclusion by showing how a group's dispositions can be understood in terms of their social norms. I also argue that this conclusion provides reasons to think that sub-agential groups are not *non-agential* groups and that social norms offer at least one distinctive way in which sub-agential groups possess agency. I do not, however, make the stronger claim that this feature warrants considering these groups *full* group agents. I conclude by summarising the chapters arguments and highlighting the implications of this view for the cases introduced in chapter 4.

2.   Collective vice and social norms

In chapter 4, I sought to understand the ascription of epistemic vice to two putatively arrogant groups – people in privileged social positions generally and people privileged in light of their gender specifically – with reference to two extant anti-summative accounts, having found the summativist approach inconsistent with the claims of those authors introducing these cases.[1] I argued for the incompatibility of Fricker's joint commitment model of collective epistemic vice, largely but not solely due to the condition of common knowledge attached to Gilbert's theory of joint commitment, which Fricker employs. I further argued that, while the dispositional account of collective vice can diagnose group arrogance, it does not explain it; it does not tell us how a group's arrogance is structured and so leaves important questions unanswered regarding the nature of collective arrogance. How can we better understand group arrogance in cases involving sub-agential groups, then? My suggestion is that we can explain the arrogance of groups like men or the privileged by modelling the arrogance-oriented dispositions of such groups around the concept of social norms. I begin by discussing the 'qua-talk' at the heart of the dispositional account and its relevance to social roles and their attendant norms before introducing an account of social norms that, I argue, helps explain group dispositions.

2.1   On being disposed *qua* sub-agential group member

What does it mean for a man or a member of privileged social groups to be disposed to behave in certain ways *qua* member of that group? One thing we might mean when speaking of actions 'qua' members is that these actions are taken by group members *in their capacity as* members. But acting in one's capacity as a group member seems to be more relevant to institutional, rather than sub-agential, groups. For example, talk of a BBC presenter or a Met police officer acting *qua* institutional member could mean that they are acting as a representative of this group or acting to fulfil their functional role within this group, among other things. They may only be disposed *qua* group member whilst in uniform or when they are on duty, or perhaps their group-related dispositions extend beyond work contexts. But to talk of a man or privileged individual acting as a

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[1] Note that here (and throughout) I do not take a position on whether *all* men are in fact privileged in virtue of their gender identity, though there is widespread agreement that many men, qua men, are so. Tommy J. Curry (2017) argues that Black men, at least in the context of the United States, are not privileged by but are rather victims of their gender identity. While such discussions surely warrant further debate, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to contribute towards this project.

representative of, or fulfilling his functional role as, a man or privileged person is ill-formulated, because these social groups are expansive, loosely constituted groups which appear not to have objectively identifiable spokespeople or explicitly determined functions, roles, or motives.

Here I will articulate and argue for the novel view that we can make sense of actions *qua* sub-agential group members in terms of members' responsiveness to the social norms that govern group behaviour. To be disposed to behave *qua* man or privileged person can therefore be understood as to be disposed to behave in ways responsive to the attendant social norms of masculinity or privilege. I take this to be an anti-summativist position in that social norms are intrinsically group-related features whose presence relies on group dynamics. This norms-based view of group arrogance is therefore irreducible to the private dispositions of a group's individual members. While such norms will be characteristic of men or the privileged in general, they need not be followed or demonstrated by most or all members of these groups (as summativism demands). As such, social norms offer a unique way of understanding collective epistemic arrogance (and, potentially, other vices) in that the norms act as irreducible group features that make the account genuinely collectivist.

It is also worth noting, here, that institutionalised groups like the Metropolitan Police service (henceforth, the Met police) or the BBC will also have distinctive social norms operating within them. Though we can interpret the qua-talk in these cases as referring to members' specific roles and their compliance with clearly articulated policies of their institution, we can also think about their behaviour *qua* group member as flowing from the social norms operative within their institutional contexts. This might be particularly applicable to cases where the group behaviour cannot be well understood in terms of official policy, for example in cases where faults are found within an institution's culture. This is true in the case of the Met police, whose racist "canteen culture" led to it being labelled institutionally racist in the Macpherson report, which followed the public inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 (Macpherson, 1999: §6.28). More recently, an official report has again described the Met police as institutionally racist, but also institutionally misogynistic and homophobic , after identifying prevalent 'cultures' of 'blindness, arrogance, and prejudice' (Dodd, 2023). Another sizeable institution with

related charges made against it is the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), which has recently sought to 'overhaul' its workplace culture after a series of allegations of sexual assault were reported by staff (Isaac, 2023).

My suggestion is that institutional failings that are rooted in a vicious working culture may be helpfully explained via the social norms present in these groups, even though they are not sub-agential groups. Appealing to the social norms of groups and their role in vice may be more fruitful than focusing on the joint commitments of an institution or its members. In this way, understanding group-related behaviour in terms of social norms appears to apply to a more expansive and varied range of group types than in simply understanding the 'qua' as referring to individuals behaving as a representative of or fulfilling their functional role as a group member. This suggests that an account of collective arrogance based on social norms can also apply to cases of institutional vice relating to paradigmatically agential collectives. I will return to these considerations and elaborate on them further in section 5.

2.2 Davidson and Kelly's account of social norms

In a recent paper on the subject, Lacey J. Davidson and Daniel Kelly describe social norms as 'the rules, often unwritten, that organise social life, marking out what behaviours are required, appropriate, permitted, or forbidden for different kinds of people in different circumstances' (2020: 194). They argue that work on social norms offers a way to overcome debates about individualist versus structuralist approaches to bias, oppression, and injustice because norms can bridge the gap between individualist and collectivist understandings of these phenomena. Social norms aid our understanding of how individuals are connected to their social realities because, they suggest, they 'form a soft but durable connective tissue that binds individuals to groups via cycling loops of mutual influence' that results in a 'normative pull' toward particular group behaviours (198). Davidson and Kelly explain how individuals have 'norm systems' that often function without 'conscious guidance' and beyond our awareness (196). These systems include an acquisition mechanism, which identifies and internalises the prevalent norms in a person's local community and culture, and an execution mechanism, which identifies situations and types of people to which an internalised norm might apply and motivates behaviour

in accordance with the norm. The 'normative pull' that is experienced by individuals whose social roles are associated with certain norms is explained in terms of individuals being 'responsive to and evaluable under' such norms (194). Finally, norms are considered affective; they 'feel like the right thing to do', and not necessarily for personal gain (197).[2]

Davidson and Kelly note that while the norm system is likely an innate and universal feature of human psychology, the specific contents of norms are not. This helps to explain how some social norms will dispose groups towards epistemic arrogance and others will not. Imagine a society in which it is the norm for members of (privileged) aristocratic social classes to avoid all unnecessary contact with people of less privileged social classes, compared with a society in which it is the norm for members of all social classes to mix and socialise together without restraint. It will be incredibly difficult for those in the former context to resist epistemically arrogant behaviours – for example ignoring or giving little weight to the testimonies of less privileged people – whilst this will be much less likely in the latter context, in which arguably the concept of class is itself manifesting very differently. This is not to say that social norms cannot be resisted, but that they can play a significant role in disposing individuals and groups to certain epistemically vicious behaviours.

To illustrate Davidson and Kelly's account, consider the social norms related to how people greet one another in different places and cultures. In some places or contexts, especially in more formal settings, handshakes are deemed essential gestures to show someone an appropriate level of respect when greeting them. Other recognisable greetings include to bow, to embrace and kiss on the cheek, to fist bump, or to hug. There are not usually formalised or codified rules to engage in these ways of greeting, but they are often socially expected, and individuals will face social costs for failing to comply with what is expected. Under the norm system described by Davidson and Kelly, it is plausible to think that the social norms that call for any one of these ways of greeting are acquired through the process of socialisation within a culture or community (and, internally, via the norm system's acquisition mechanism) and, once acquired or internalised, practiced by

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[2] I focus on Davidson and Kelly's account of social norms here due to its focus on bridging the gap between individual and collective social phenomena, but Cristina Bicchieri's (2006) work offers an alternative framework (that is largely compatible with this one), as Kelly and Davis (2018) discuss.

individuals who are able to identify situations in which the norm applies and are motivated (usually) to comply with the norm (via the execution mechanism).

When a social norm associated with a certain way of greeting is in place, individuals will be responsive to and understand, at some level, that they are evaluable under the norm – so that if they fail to comply with the norm they may face (sometimes severe) social costs, including criticism or condemnation. 'The norm is kept in place by each individual members' reliable propensity to comply and punish those who step out of line' (Davidson & Kelly, 2020: 197). Even in situations where individuals wish to pursue alternative forms of greeting or offer no greeting at all – perhaps because they want to subvert what they perceive to be the formal or austere tone of the handshake or because they wish to show disrespect to an individual in order to make a point – they will still likely feel a normative pull toward this form of greeting and will have an awareness that their resistance to the norm will be evaluated and potentially condemned (if their reasons for doing so are deemed invalid, if their reasons are not adequately received, or if they fail to provide any reason and no good reason can be adduced).

Social norms therefore offer a distinct way for us to understand the 'qua-talk' relating to sub-agential groups like (privileged) men and the privileged more generally. We can make sense of the arrogant groups introduced in chapter 4 insofar as it is possible to identify dominant social norms within privileged groups that elicit, promote, or encourage behaviour that is epistemically arrogant. As a starting point, there are a number of candidate social norms that we might think dispose groups to behave in characteristically arrogant ways, like norms that require members to dominate discursive situations, to assume a right to control conversations, to deny perspectives that do not reflect members' own experience, to show no empathy for or to wilfully ignore members of less-privileged groups, or to uphold and promote group distinctiveness, superiority, or uniqueness. Identifying and robustly defending the existence of such norms is an empirical task beyond the scope of this thesis, but it seems at least *prima facie* quite plausible that many such norms do indeed operate amongst privileged social groups and there certainly seems to be plenty of testimonial evidence in support of this conclusion.

To elaborate on the social norms associated with collective arrogance, consider the (allegedly fictional) example of Dave that Charlie Crerar (2017) describes. Dave is born into wealth and sent to the best schools and universities in the world. He knows that he is privileged and knows just how privileged he is. But this knowledge, rather than keeping him grounded, arms him with 'a flawed understanding of what constitutes an intelligent and reliable person' (2017: 7). This results in Dave thinking that he should only listen to highly educated people (like him) who have studied the relevant issues and can articulate their position through 'dispassionate argumentation' (8). In politics, Dave surrounds himself with these people. Crerar continues,

> When [Dave] came to decide whether to implement a policy that would disproportionately harm members of a marginalized social group, he discounted their concerns about the extent of damage, listening instead to a team of advisors who downplayed the potential costs. (2017: 8)

Crerar asserts that Dave is closedminded, prejudiced, partial, and a snob. I would add that he is arrogant insofar as he appears to unduly assume license to ignore the testimonies of anyone who lacks his level of education and articulateness.

Whilst Crerar uses the example to argue against motivational approaches to epistemic vice (as discussed in chapter 3), I suggest that it can also help elucidate the norms-based account of collective arrogance. Though there is no mention of norms in the description, it is in my view highly plausible that Dave acquires and internalises particular social norms, including those relevant to his arrogance, via his social environment and membership of a privileged social and economic elite. In particular, Dave appears to have internalised two of the norms listed above: to deny perspectives that do not reflect members' own experience and to show no empathy for or to wilfully ignore members of less-privileged groups. The idea, here, is that these are norms that Dave has acquired and complies with as a result of his privileged group membership. The norms may well have been acquired at an early age, whilst Dave was studying at one of the country's most elite private schools or, later, at university, perhaps within the circles of the private members clubs or societies that ambitious (or, perhaps, power-hungry) people like Dave often join. In such environments, the social costs involved in resisting compliance with these norms

may be substantial, potentially being perceived as signalling a lack of class solidarity or a "softness" that could be the object of scorn or humiliation.

In his book, *Sad Little Men*, Richard Beard documents his experience of attending one of Britain's most elite private boarding schools and his testimony offers ample support for the view that the social norms relating to Dave's arrogant behaviour often are, in fact, operative within such a setting. He details how children like him came to disavow their homesickness and 'learned to despise the children who blubbed for their mummies', relating these feelings with what Joy Schaverien (2015) calls 'Boarding School Syndrome', which is the subject of a growing body of literature within psychotherapy that lists exceptionalism, defensive arrogance, and offensive arrogance alongside several other symptoms (Beard, 2021: 86; Schaverien, 2015). Beard describes the boarding school experience as one of segregation and isolation from the rest of society, writing

> In our isolation we learned that we were special. Everyone else was less special and often stupid, though with important distinctions: as privileged English-speaking white men we were sufficiently educated to appreciate that women and black people and the lower classes and foreigners could each be stupidly inferior in different ways… the segregation required to harden these attitudes called for a residential facility: this wasn't education so much as *re*-education, in the Maoist sense, easier to achieve if the process was at work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Boarding school was where we went, aged eight, to learn to despise other people. (Beard, 2021: 127; emphasis in original)

Although it is unclear on the description above whether Dave *despises* people who lack his social position and education, it is highly plausible in light of Beard's testimony to suggest the presence of social norms that demand the privileged to ignore and dismiss the assertions and demands of less-privileged individuals within this particular social environment and thus, potentially, other social contexts or roles that the same people occupy later on in life.

The point of this analysis is not (or not only) to supplement the story we can tell of how Dave came to possess the vices that he does, but to show how particular social norms

that we might identify as operating within certain group contexts can generate arrogant behaviours in individual group members and thus make the collective subject to the ascription of arrogance. Of course, not all those who share Dave's (or Beard's) experiences will have been responsive to these social norms in the same way. Whereas Dave may have internalised the norms and so comply with them, others' responsiveness might involve attempts to subvert or resist such norms and could perhaps even motivate epistemically virtuous behaviour when such individuals find themselves motivated and able to resist them. The point, however, is that compliance with such norms is the social expectation of members of these groups and so those who resist them should expect to face certain consequences for doing so, including negative evaluations and social condemnation, in the various forms that this may take – at least within the immediate groups in which the social norms operate.

3. Norms-based arrogance and collectivism

In chapter 4, I described the distinction between summative and anti-summative approaches to collective vice and virtue and argued that the cases of group arrogance under discussion appear to demand an anti-summative account. As Reza Lahroodi notes, summative ascriptions of virtue (and it would follow, vice) 'are not genuinely collective as they are not ultimately ascribed to groups, but to particular individuals' (2019: 411). My aim in this section, then, is to defend the view that a norms-based approach to collective arrogance does not merely ascribe arrogance to individuals (in virtue of prevailing social norms) but offers a genuinely anti-summative (i.e., collectivist) account.

Before explaining in more detail how a norms-based account is genuinely collective, let me respond to a possible objection. It is open to suggestion that the social norms account of collective vice is similar to or even the same as Fricker's anti-summative account. Fricker understands the collective ethos of a group to consist of joint commitments (as per Margaret Gilbert's plural subject account introduced in chapter 4) shaped by our practical identities. If our practical identities are related to our social roles, and if we can understand social norms to be a matter of joint commitments related to our social roles, we might think that there is very little differentiating these views.

There are good reasons to discount this worry, however. First, many social norms, including those related to sub-agential collective arrogance, do not appear to be things that individuals or groups commit to, certainly not knowingly. The identification and internalisation of norms usually occurs without our awareness or guidance. We don't collectively decide upon them as the rules to shape our conduct or assent to them as knowing (if conflicted) 'passengers'. The operation of social norms is usually unconscious and therefore uncommitted in any sense Gilbert, whose theory Fricker relies upon, appears to intend.

Second, although the Korsgaardian understanding of practical identities that Fricker employs appears apt for the joint commitment model, it is incompatible with Davidson and Kelly's account of social norms. This is because for 'voluntarists' like Korsgaard 'the authority that a norm holds over an individual rests in the individual's voluntary acceptance of the norm and her conscious, deliberate commitment to or endorsement of it' (Davidson and Kelly, 2020: 195). If this were right, then a voluntarist rendering of social norms looks to be compatible with the joint commitment model of collective agency. The problem is that while there are many roles and norms that we seem to take on voluntarily (like those related to work or hobbies, for example), it is implausible that this is true of the norms and social roles at issue in sub-agential groups. These roles and norms seem to exert their normative pressure and stipulate that we will be subject to evaluation under them without individuals voluntarily accepting them. Our racial, gender, and class-related identities involve social roles and norms that we do not enter into voluntarily – they are roles and norms that we become responsive to and evaluable under because they are what have been ascribed to us by other members of our communities. On this view – which Davidson and Kelly, following Charlotte Witt (2011), call *ascriptivism* – many social roles and their related norms cannot be conceived of as things we voluntarily accept or commit to. While I will not offer a full defence of *ascriptivism*, I find it compelling in relation to the norms of sub-agential groups.[3] It also marks an important difference

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[3] Davidson and Kelly (2020: 195) – whose pluralism with regards to *voluntarism* and *ascriptivism* I share – offer a fuller discussion of this distinction. The pluralistic approach accepts that some norms may sometimes be entered into voluntarily, but that in many instances they are instead ascribed. Most important for my project is that the norms relating to privileged social groups are ascribed, rather than voluntary.

between Fricker's joint commitment model and a norms-based account of collective arrogance.

Perhaps a stronger objection to the idea that we can understand the collective epistemic arrogance of sub-agential groups as grounded in the social norms of such groups stems from the earlier discussion of the distinction between summativism and anti-summativism. As discussed, Lahroodi (2019) notes how summative approaches to collective virtue and vice are not *genuinely* collective because the group virtues and vices are reducible to individual members of the collectives in question rather than the collectives themselves. One could suggest that the norms-based account of collective epistemic arrogance described here is open to a similar kind of summativist reduction – in that the arrogant dispositions of the group are to be found in the behaviour of individual members influenced by the social norms operative within that group.[4]

While I accept that toxic social norms can (and do) elicit or facilitate the development of individual epistemic arrogance in many privileged people, we ought to remember what taking on a summativist approach would commit us to. On that view, ascriptions of vices, including arrogance, to social groups depends on most or all members of that group possessing the vice in question. This is a view that some might find plausible in relation to men or the privileged more generally, but it is not one that we *must* accept in order to ascribe vices like arrogance to social groups. This is because social norms can operate without having the effect that most or all members of a group act in accordance with the norms. All that is required (according to the account introduced here) for norms to have normative force is for group members to be '*responsive to* and *evaluable under* those norms' (Davidson & Kelly, 2020: 194). Being responsive to a norm involves 'calibrating' one's behaviour in relation to the norm – though this need not imply that one complies with it: calibrating one's behaviour to a norm can also involve engaging in resistance to that norm. Being evaluable under a norm means that others can and will evaluate an individual in relation to a norm.

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[4] Sean Cordell (2017) makes a related charge of reducibility against Fricker's (2010) account of collective virtue, concluding that the account therefore fails to offer examples of irreducibly collective virtues. Cordell argues that a group's (joint) commitment to a motive or end is plausibly reducible to individual members' commitment to the motive or end qua group member.

Importantly, there are a variety of ways in which one can be responsive to a norm or calibrate one's behaviour in response to it – meaning there is no singular causal path between the presence of a social norm and the resulting behaviour in individuals subject to the norm: 'Rebellion is one way of being responsive to a norm; so is compliance' (Witt, 2011: 43). This means that there is no necessary connection between membership of an epistemically arrogant sub-agential group and compliance with the social norms distinctive of that group (which warrant its status as epistemically arrogant). Social norms transcend the dispositions of individual group members. As a result, the social norms account of collective arrogance does not require that all or most individual members of an arrogant group are individually arrogant, as the summativist would insist. It would not be surprising, however, if many of the arrogant group's members did turn out to be individually arrogant – given that compliance is at least one way in which group members respond to their group's norms. In fact, this feature of the account helpfully clarifies how one's membership of a privileged social group can facilitate epistemic arrogance.[5]

A final consideration follows an objection raised by Sean Cordell (2017) against other attempts to collectivise virtues and vices. Cordell argues that some attributions of collective virtue and vice tend to elide features of collectives with collective character traits without these features counting as substantive virtues or vices. For example, Cordell argues that Donald Beggs' (2003) account of group moral virtue mistakenly suggests that a group's *habitus* – roughly speaking, its social practices – are 'quasi-psychological features of the group agent' that 'can itself sustain a substantive virtue [such as 'radical tolerance'] independently of individual members' motives or attitudes' (Cordell, 2017: 56). For a feature to count as a substantive virtue or vice, the (collective) agent must be able to evaluatively reflect on it so that it can decide whether to cultivate or eliminate it. In the case of group *habitus*, Cordell argues that on Beggs' account the collective virtue of radical

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[5] It is worth clarifying that it is implausible that we will be able to identify the relevant social norms without a significant proportion of members feeling the normative pull of the norms in question. If few men felt the normative pull to (arrogantly) claim epistemic privileges, then it would be unclear that there was a social norm to do so. However, feeling a normative pull need not necessitate compliance, because conforming to the required behaviour can sometimes be quite difficult. To see why, consider how norms of appearance for women may still hold normative force while few women may in fact conform to them (and, for some, this may be impossible). But even in cases where there is a majority of members complying with the relevant social norms, the account I offer here is at odds with summativist views. This is because, while summativism suggests that a collective has a vice because most individual members do, the norms-based account suggests that individual members have the vice because the collective does (i.e., arrogant dispositions are determined by distinctive social norms of the group). I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer of *Synthese* for raising, and helping me to clarify, this.

tolerance is not the subject of reflection by the group agent at all but, rather, a collective tendency that develops through practices, which cannot themselves 'evaluate on anything, let alone possess motives or values' (2017: 53).

While I think Cordell's criticism will have greater plausibility in cases of substantive virtues, I agree with Holroyd's response that this is an 'excessively restrictive view of collective vice' (2020: 140). Many *individual* vices – including arrogance – are not plausibly fostered by processes of evaluative reflection. For instance, it would seem unlikely and perhaps irrational for an agent to reflectively embark on a process of habituating the trait of arrogance in the same way as they might the trait of open-mindedness or epistemic humility. In fact, it seems probable that the epistemic vices of individuals are often the result of a lack of such reflection, and there is no reason to think that this should not also apply to collectives, including sub-agential groups. Moreover, the conception of epistemic vice employed here includes a broader range of phenomena than just character traits, conceived as a general or global trait. Recall that on Cassam's (2019) view, vices can manifest not only in character traits, but also in ways of thinking or attitudes. Tanesini's (2021) taxonomy also suggests that epistemic vices can manifest as sensibilities and thinking styles, as well as character traits. While some might be metaphysically spooked by the idea of collective character traits, perhaps the idea that collectives can have distinctive attitudes, sensibilities, or ways of thinking in virtue of their social norms is less controversial, as this view does not require that vices need be conceived of as *global* character traits but that they can manifest in other, more granular, or domain-specific, ways. [6] Though Cordell may be right to be wary of confusing collective or structural group features with the virtuous character traits of a group – understood as a general or global trait – there are good reasons to think that employing a symmetrical argument against *vicious* character traits misunderstands how epistemic vices tend to be conceptualised. Further, even if the argument can be extended to make the ascription of collective character vices problematic, this does not obviously apply to the different ways in which epistemic vices are said to manifest.

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[6] In Chapter 3, section 4.2, I argued that even these granular or domain-specific manifestations of vice (which Cassam and Tanesini variously describe as attitudes, thinking vices, or sensibilities) can be conceived of as character traits, too. However, this expanded notion of character traits I argued for in Chapter 3 is not the same conception as is at issue here. Cordell's critique therefore does not seem to apply to my expanded view of vicious character traits.

4.   Mansplaining: A case study

Now that I have introduced this norms-based account of collective arrogance and defended it as an anti-summativist position, I will now illustrate the account by considering the phenomenon of mansplaining as a case study of male arrogance. I am not alone in associating epistemic arrogance with mansplaining – both Alessandra Tanesini (2018c) and Michael Patrick Lynch (2018) also discuss their relationship – though here my approach seeks to show how the phenomenon demonstrates some characteristically masculine social norms (that is, social norms present within privileged male social group contexts) that can help elucidate how the norms-based account of collective arrogance applies in practice.

'A paradigmatic act of mansplaining', according to Kate Manne, 'consists of a man presuming to "explain" something incorrect(ly) to a more expert female speaker or set of speakers—and in an overly confident, arrogant, or overbearing manner, which often results in his not backing down or admitting to his mistake after it has been authoritatively pointed out to him' (2020: 122). In less paradigmatic cases, it seems that the act of mansplaining might not necessarily involve an inaccurate explanation but is typically taken to be at least unnecessary or unelicited, so that the man appears to assume the position of explainer without justification.

4.1 The Aspen Man(splainer)

In a 2012 blog post titled 'Men Explain Things to Me' (as Manne (2020) also discusses), Rebecca Solnit describes her experience at a ski lodge dinner party in Aspen, Colorado during which the wealthy party host mansplained to Solnit and her friend. The man, who I will call the Aspen Man, asked about the 'couple of books' Solnit had written (the number was six or seven at the time) and, as she began talking about her most recent book about the photographer Eadweard Muybridge, he interjected: 'And have you heard about the very important Muybridge book that came out this year?'. Solnit writes,

> So caught up was I in my assigned role as ingénue that I was perfectly willing to entertain the possibility that another book on the same subject had come out

simultaneously and I'd somehow missed it. He was already telling me about the very important book – with *that smug look I know so well in a man holding forth, eyes fixed on the fuzzy far horizon of his own authority*. (2012: para 13; my emphasis)

Solnit's sarcasm in the latter clause, here, is notable. For it is the Aspen Man's *supposed* authority (according to him) that is remarkable, rather than his actual (epistemic) authority. The book the Aspen Man was describing was the one Solnit had written, and he had only read a review. Upon learning from Solnit's friend who the book's author was, the Aspen Man 'went ashen' (para 15). That Solnit, a relatively young woman, had written this 'very important' book 'so confused the neat categories into which his world was sorted that he was stunned speechless', though only momentarily, before he quickly collected himself and continued 'holding forth' (para 15). This experience was not a one off. Solnit describes reading a 'snarky' letter in the *New York Times* from a man trying to correct her work unduly and receiving criticism from a British academic, writing in the *London Review of Books*, for failing to mention one of Muybridge's predecessors who was, in fact, mentioned and in the book's index. Solnit is explicit that these cases, and the way they are set up to be damaging, and perhaps deleterious, to women's epistemic self-confidence, are part of an 'archipelago of arrogance' (para 29).

4.2 The social norms of (privileged) masculinity

As Manne (2020: 124-126) illuminatingly discusses, the Aspen Man's behaviour is characteristic of a kind of *epistemic entitlement* peculiar, but not exclusive, to privileged men. Manne argues that 'mansplaining typically stems from an unwarranted sense of entitlement on the part of the mansplainer to occupy the conversational position of the *knower* by default: to be the one who dispenses information, offers corrections, and authoritatively issues explanations' (122). Manne suggests that while women may on occasion also demonstrate this kind of epistemic entitlement, in the case of men the problem is 'systemic' (126). My suggestion is that it is systemic in the sense that it is symptomatic of the social norms of masculinity that cast men as epistemic authorities and others as in need of educating – features characteristic of epistemic arrogance. As raised in the third section, norms that require members to dominate discursive situations or to assume a right to control conversations will be associated with epistemic arrogance and

are therefore characteristic of arrogant groups. While there are different ways of framing these norms, this is surely what is being expressed in the Aspen man's behaviour, who we can think of as having internalised such norms through the norm system's acquisition and execution mechanisms.

The Aspen Man, *qua* man, adopts the position as authoritative *knower* due in no small part to the social norm present in the group of privileged men of which he is a member that asserts that men are (and *ought* to be) epistemically entitled in this way. This assertion directly involves an undue assumption of epistemic license in paradigmatic but also in less paradigmatic cases of mansplaining. In paradigmatic cases, the assumption of epistemic license (or, more specifically in this case, the assumption of epistemic *authority*) is clearly undue because the individual *incorrectly* explains what it is under discussion, thus betraying their lack of expertise and so lack of status as an authority on the subject. But in less paradigmatic cases, where the explanation may be more or less accurate but is unnecessary or unelicited, the assumption of epistemic authority is undue insofar as it assumes a lower or lack of epistemic authority in the mansplainers' interlocutors. In such a case, the mansplainer might be right in his supposition of epistemic esteem but he is wrong in his estimation of the epistemic esteem or competence of others around him, often and characteristically women or other people whose identities are marginalised.

4.3 *Responsive to* and *evaluable under*: the social norms underlying group arrogance

Of course, it may be true that the Aspen Man is individually epistemically arrogant. There certainly seems to be evidence to support that conclusion within Solnit's testimony. But, more importantly in the context of this thesis, it seems that his behaviour can be explained (in part, at least) with reference to an epistemic arrogance associated with and characteristic of the group of privileged men of which he is a member.[7] Specifically, the Aspen Man's behaviour offers an instance in which (it seems) he has been responsive to a social norm related to his group by internalising this norm and so it has become embedded in his behaviour. In the conversational scenario Solnit describes, the Aspen Man 'holds

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[7] Here, and throughout, I refer to men not in terms of sex, but in terms of gender kind.

forth' just as a man like him ought to, given his epistemic status asserted in virtue of the internalised norm. Indeed, given that norms involve not only their being *responsive to* but also *evaluable under*, it seems plausible that the Aspen Man might, on some (not necessarily conscious) level, see himself as being positively evaluable when he conforms with this social norm and, had he resisted it, being negatively evaluable and perhaps open to social sanctions for his non-conformity. This case, I suggest, illustrates two things. Firstly, it shows how the social norms of putatively epistemically arrogant social groups can manifest in the behaviour of individual group members. Secondly, it also highlights how the behaviour of individual group members can help to evidence the presence of social norms that are characteristically epistemically arrogant and that, on the account of collective arrogance introduced here, can ground our understanding of the arrogance of groups. The case of mansplaining therefore shows how the social norms related to group membership can explain how groups may be relevantly disposed towards epistemic vices like arrogance.

To return to some candidate norms that, when present, could warrant the ascription of arrogance to a group, consider how the Aspen man *qua* man is responsive to and evaluable under some of these norms. First, it seems that, given his behaviour and the wider observation of the phenomena of mansplaining, the Aspen man is responsive to a set of social norms that underlie group arrogance. These norms include the requirement to dominate and to assume as one's right the power to control conversations or other discursive situations. They also include the norm to wilfully ignore members of less-privileged groups and to assume a general lack of expertise or epistemic credibility in the testimony of one's interlocutors, when they are not members of one's group (privileged men).

Although there are different ways in which we can be responsive to social norms, the Aspen man's responsivity appears to reflect compliance; he seems to have internalised these social norms and to have embedded them in his behaviour, via the execution mechanism of the norm system. In other words, the Aspen man has calibrated his behaviour to conform with these social norms. It should be emphasised that such calibration is said to be possible without any conscious decision-making process taking place, meaning that at no point did the Aspen man need to have considered either that this

was a social norm that, as a privileged man, he is expected to comply with, nor that he is, in fact, complying with this social norm. Nevertheless, the Aspen man's behaviour can be seen as reflecting his response to the normative pull of these social norms.

As discussed above, social norms also involve being evaluable under them, meaning that others can and will evaluate an individual in relation to a norm. Of course, there is a sense in which Solnit's commentary itself is an evaluation of the Aspen man's behaviour, alongside others who mansplain to her. But this is a negative evaluation of such behaviour and, on my account, the norms that accompany mansplaining, and so this is not the kind of evaluative relation necessary for the persistence of social norms. One of the aims of such a critique is surely to ameliorate this form of behaviour and thus erode the social norms that, in my view, underpin it. Instead, it seems that social norms owe their persistence to being positively evaluable under them by other members of one's group when one conforms to what they dictate. I would suggest that it is highly plausible that the Aspen man's compliance with these norms will, more often than not, be evaluated positively by many and will be perceived as the apt manifestation of his agency as a member of his gender kind and social position, especially by other privileged men.

But there is also a sense in which even Solnit (albeit perhaps briefly) hints at a positive evaluation of the Aspen man's compliance with these norms. This is reflected in the way in which Solnit takes on the assigned role of ingénue and entertains the possibility that another book on Muybridge could have been released at the same time as her book. Here, there is a sense in which Solnit is briefly convinced by the Aspen man confidently conforming with the social norm that demands his (undue) assumption of epistemic authority. We might infer that this reflects how Solnit is also to some extent responsive to or under the grip of this norm, to the extent that it has the power to shape her interpretation of him and herself. Of course, Solnit quickly realises the mistake made by the Aspen man, who becomes the central subject of her critique. It is plausible that in many similar situations, however, such lucidity with regards to mens' mistaken assumption of expertise is lacking. In such situations privileged men may be evaluated by members of other social groups, without warrant, as possessing high epistemic esteem or status, in line with the social norm that relates to their membership of their privileged gender kind. Again, this

supports the view that the Aspen man's behaviour is reflective of the social norms of masculinity under which he is evaluable.

5.   Group agency under social norms

Before concluding, I want to return briefly to an issue first raised in chapter 4 (section 2.3) regarding the kinds of groups that are typically understood as being capable of demonstrating agency and so of possessing collective epistemic vices. To recap, I raised the issue that social category groups like men or the privileged are typically not understood to be the kinds of groups capable of demonstrating group agency, as they lack group-level representations and motivations (beliefs, knowledge, desires) and the ability to process and act on these (for example, via voting mechanisms or decision-making hierarchies). On at least one taxonomy of group kinds, men and the privileged may be understood simply as unconnected populations, incapable of any form of collective agency and so unlikely candidates as collectives capable of possessing epistemic vices. I argued that thinking of social category groups as being incapable of paradigmatic group agency is not a reason for thinking that they can possess no agency at all. Further, I offered some reasons for thinking that many loosely organised (and so not paradigmatically agential) groups can coordinate their behaviour in ways that seem to demonstrate at least minimal forms of agency. Drawing upon Iris Marion Young's (1990) work on social groups and Strohl and Nguyen's (2019) description of intimate (and sub-agential) groups, I suggested that there were good reasons to think that social category groups are capable of greater agency and unity than the description as 'mere populations' (Lahroodi, 2019: 407) grants them.

Here, I have introduced Davidson and Kelly's account of social norms and argued that it can provide a framework for understanding group dispositions and the collective arrogance of sub-agential groups. Additionally, this account of norms also seems to offer at least one distinctive way in which to understand how some sub-agential groups possess a certain kind of agency – via the social norms that, in Davidson and Kelly's words, bind folks together into 'cohesive communities' and allow 'individuals to get and remain in sync with the groups of which they are members' (2020: 198). In instances of collective arrogance, the way in which social norms allow groups to synchronise their behaviour functions so as to preserve the group's epistemic and social power. This is not an objective

that members are necessarily or likely able to articulate, though the same function is nevertheless served. Here, I suggest that the ability of groups to possess social norms, which can shape, limit, and make vicious, the group's behaviour, is itself a form of collective agency. As previously discussed, social norms transcend the individual dispositions of group members and have a normative force of their own. Insofar as such norms pull people towards certain kinds of (sometimes arrogant) behaviour, they can be understood as one way in which social groups can collectively act.

This is not to deny that individual agency is not also present within group contexts and nor does it imply a prioritisation of analysis of social over individual phenomena – a concern raised by Cordell in his critique of attempts to collectivise virtue theory (2017: 58). I agree with Kenneth Westphal (who Cordell quotes) that there 'are no individuals – no social practitioners – without social practices' and that 'there are no social practices without social practitioners' (2010: 168-169). Social norms clearly could not exist without individuals being responsive and evaluable under them – but this does not imply that social norms cannot express a form of collective agency. Further, it is central to Davidson and Kelly's approach that social norms are not just collective features of groups but that they rely upon individual group members for their operation. Their approach seeks to bridge the gap between individualist and structuralist analyses and 'move beyond' debates between this binary methodology for theorising bias, oppression, and injustice (2020: 190). Instead, it shows how structures such as social norms manifest in the behaviours and dispositions of groups and thus how individual and social practices are interdependent and mutually constitutive, as Westphal asserts.

My hope is that the norms-based account of group arrogance offered here serves a similar purpose, insofar as it offers an account of collective arrogance that is compatible with individualist analyses of vicious behaviour. As we have seen, this is the case insofar as individuals within arrogant groups (on this account) may well, but need not, internalise and manifest arrogant dispositions. I hope that this finding pushes back further against the suggestion that social categories like men or the privileged are merely groups that share some feature or set of features and so cannot demonstrate collective agency. The account of social norms under discussion describes at least one way in which large, informally constituted groups may demonstrate at least *enough* collective agency to render them

capable of collective epistemic vice. Moreover, this form of collective agency has a clear purpose: to bolster the group's social position as putatively epistemically authoritative and thus to consolidate or preserve the group's social and epistemic power and status and to subordinate the power and status of non-group members. It is not accidental or a matter of coincidence that the social norms of arrogant groups have this function. Although this purpose is not explicitly decided upon or committed to by the collective, the presence of these social norms nevertheless means that the group's behaviour is coordinated in a way which serves these aims and thus perform a function as if it had been agreed upon. And that this coordinated behaviour has such a function helps to demonstrate the kind of collective agency that sub-agential groups can be capable of.

However, as I suggested towards the end of section 2.1, the norms-based account of collective arrogance also applies to a wider set of groups than just those that I have described as sub-agential. Even in cases where groups are more obviously cohesive entities that demonstrate (perhaps full) collective agency, we might need to appeal to the way in which social norms can underly collective vices in order to fully explain the vices of these collectives. This is not to say that the norms account of collective vice is necessarily a rival approach, but that it is compatible with other approaches and so is able to supplement our understanding of what is going on in cases of institutional or collective vice in agential groups. For example, even in institutions that have policies, procedures, values, or beliefs that are collectively agreed upon and committed to, social norms will still play a role in shaping the group's behaviour and constituting the institution's working culture. As in the cases of the Met police and the CBI raised in section 2.1 – cases where a 'toxic' or explicitly racist, homophobic, and misogynistic culture has been robustly diagnosed – many institutions express inclusive and anti-prejudicial values in their policies and mission statements that do not suffice in ensuring that the collective is in fact inclusive and lacking prejudice. We might even think that in such cases the social norms present within working cultures play a greater role in shaping the collective's behaviour than its publicly expressed values or commitments. If so, the rigorous identification and analysis of the kinds of social norms that might underly an institution's epistemic vices will be crucial in attempts to ameliorate their impacts.

6.   Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I argued that a full understanding of the epistemic arrogance of groups requires a different model for understanding collective epistemic vice. My proposal in this chapter has been that putting social norms at the centre of such an account provides a viable and potentially enlightening path forward. In particular, I have argued that philosophical work on social norms offers a novel way to understand sub-agential group dispositions and how individual group members' dispositions can be understood *qua* group member. This in turn helped elucidate how the putative collective arrogance of the sub-agential groups introduced in chapter 4 can be better understood by employing this norms-based approach. In section 3 I raised and responded to a range of concerns or objections that such an approach is open to. In particular, I defended the claim that a norms-based understanding of the arrogant group dispositions in question offers a distinctively collective approach, while I also sought to show how this is compatible with the identification of individual-level arrogance in group members. I illustrated the account with reference to the phenomenon of mansplaining in section 4 and then, in section 5, suggested that the norms model for understanding collective arrogance helps elucidate one distinct way in which at least some sub-agential groups can possess at least one form of collective agency. I also suggested that this account can be usefully applied in cases of collective vice concerning institutions or more paradigmatically *agential* collectives.

This proposal, I hope, naturally prompts the investigation of interesting and related topics. It raises the question of how different group memberships, and their related norms, might intersect to increase, or perhaps decrease, the likelihood or frequency of epistemic arrogance. Additionally, given that norms can operate outside of our awareness and may often establish themselves outside of our conscious control, questions around the kind of responsibility that apply at the individual and collective levels are made pertinent. I hope also that the norms-based model further motivates and informs amelioratory approaches to collective epistemic vice. As Medina has recently stated, the 'significance of groups for epistemic behaviour in general and for epistemic virtues and vices in particular cannot be overstated' (2021: 337). For those who take seriously the arguments regarding the epistemic arrogance of men and the privileged, the impact of – and necessity to ameliorate – such collective epistemic vice also cannot be overstated. Social norms, I argue, offer a distinctive and useful framework through which to understand how collectives can be said

to hold vices like arrogance and how their members can demonstrate them. A better understanding of how such norms become so resilient will be vital in the path towards their amelioration.

6

Conclusion

In this thesis, my central aim has been to ask, what is arrogance and how, if at all, can social groups demonstrate it? I have made the following key contributions: in the context of prominent and developed philosophical accounts of arrogance, and having distinguished between interpersonal and non-interpersonal accounts, I argued that arrogance is essentially interpersonal. Further, and in contrast to what philosophers have previously suggested, I argued that arrogance can consist not only in feelings of superiority or uniqueness but also in feelings of similarity with those who are harmed by one's arrogance. These conclusions contributed towards an answer to the first of the thesis' principal questions: what is arrogance? I further developed my answer to this question by arguing for a novel account of arrogance, understood as involving an *undue assumption of license*. In short, arrogance – even where it manifests in feelings of similarity with others – always involves unduly assuming a license to behave or believe in ways that necessarily involve a form of interpersonal disrespect and a reckless over-claiming of agency. When the license that is assumed regards one's *epistemic* behaviour (knowing, inquiring, etc.) we have epistemic arrogance.

How does arrogance manifest in groups? The further key contributions of the thesis account for the kind of arrogance that persists in privileged social groups. In particular, I asked how it is that *sub-agential* groups can demonstrate arrogance. Extant accounts of collective epistemic vice at best only help to diagnose the arrogance of such groups and offer few conceptual tools for explaining it, thus leaving a gap in our understanding. I argued that an account that appeals to social norms can help fill this philosophical lacuna, in that they can help to tell a story about how sub-agential groups can be disposed in particular ways toward epistemically arrogant behaviours (when such norms promote or impel these behaviours). I therefore argued for a norms-based approach to collective epistemic arrogance. Whilst this account is especially useful for theorising the collective arrogance of sub-agential groups, I also suggested that it need not be limited to such groups;

paradigmatically agential groups have social norms, too, and so may have similarly structured collective vices. The account can therefore also be usefully applied in these cases.

While I hope that the contributions that I have made in this thesis are of intellectual interest and value, I also recognise that they raise and leave many interesting questions unanswered. For those concerned with the epistemic vices of groups, and who hope and aim for their amelioration, there is much work yet to be done. For one, while I have restricted my attention to arrogance, and particularly epistemic arrogance, in this thesis, there are of course other (epistemic) vices that demand further attention. Arrogance, though no doubt significant and arguably central to contemporary debates in vice epistemology, is just one of many ways in which humans and social groups err. Moreover, there are good reasons to think that vices like arrogance might distract our attention from other, more subtle but nonetheless damaging vices. The arrogant steal our attention, make headline news, and cause harm and humiliation in ways that doubtless warrants study. But other vices, for example negligence, wilful ignorance, and 'institutional opacity' (Carel & Kidd, 2021), though not as loud as arrogance, may nevertheless demand an equal amount of philosophical attention. Focus on the most obviously obtrusive vices, like arrogance, ought not to distract us from the quieter background vices that may also be found in the everyday functioning of social groups. The framework I have offered – in terms of social norms – for understanding vice in groups can be fruitfully applied to understandings of these other vices too. Future work can explore the application of that model to other vices.

As the final remarks in Chapter 5 sought to highlight, the collective arrogance of institutions also warrants further study and, in my view, further applied approaches to the study of collective epistemic arrogance ought to be welcomed. Louise Casey's recent report into the Met Police – commissioned after one of its officers abducted, raped, and murdered Sarah Everard in London in 2021 – explicitly identifies cultures of 'blindness, arrogance and prejudice' within the UK's largest police force (Dodd, 2023).[1] These claims about institutional *cultures*, rather than the policies or explicit commitments of institutions,

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[1] Ian Kidd (2021) highlights the apparent epistemic failings of the UK's Home Office, in relation to its treatment of individuals who travelled from the Caribbean to Britain to fill post-war labour shortages – known now as the 'Windrush Generation'. This points towards another governmental institution that has been deemed worthy of applied vice epistemological analysis.

show the importance of focusing on how a group's or institution's norms can produce collective vices. My framework facilitates analyses into the failings of institutions like these by bringing norms to the fore and I hope, therefore, that this can contribute towards future projects that engage directly with cases like these. Of course, we should not over-estimate the power of theory alone to ameliorate such institutional vices. Ultimately, amelioration requires the political will to materially change, reform, or perhaps even abolish institutions like the Met that are found to have deep-rooted and intractable failings. This reflection ought not prevent us from engaging with such cases, however, and there is surely ample scope for the development of applied analyses of the arrogance of institutions and other groups, whose harms can be profound.

Another set of questions that this thesis leaves unanswered regards the notion of responsibility. As noted in the introductory chapter, I have assumed throughout that individuals and groups are, at least to some extent, responsible for their arrogance. This is of course open to question. Although we typically hold the arrogant responsible for their vice, it is not obviously true that they are. As much of this thesis, particularly the latter chapters, have illustrated, arrogance appears to be transmitted and taken-up via social structures such as social norms that do not require our conscious deliberation or volition. If a trait is not acquired voluntarily, to what extent is it under our control and so to what extent can we be responsible for it? If we cannot be held responsible for coming to be arrogant, can we be held responsible in other ways? Whilst we might not be responsible for possessing the trait of arrogance, perhaps we are responsible for the continued operation or for the revision of this vice, as Battaly (2016) and Cassam (2019), respectively, discuss?

These questions are complex and substantial enough at an individual level. Questions relating to responsibility for *collective* arrogance will feasibly constitute an even greater challenge. On the account of collective arrogance introduced here, we might wish to better understand whether arrogance-adjacent social norms can plausibly ground attributions of collective responsibility regarding the groups that are found to be arrogant. If there are reasons to think so, we might further ask whether (and, if so, how) collective responsibility for group arrogance relates to group members' personal responsibility for collective arrogance. Perhaps individual responsibility is unevenly distributed dependent

on individual members' contribution or even contestation of the social norms that underly its arrogance? As should be clear, there are plenty of avenues for further research here (at least enough to fill another thesis) and our understanding of the (epistemic) arrogance of individuals and collectives will only be partial until these are explored.

Analyses of responsibility for collective arrogance will potentially also be complicated by a further consideration that I have omitted from discussion in this thesis. This involves the way in which social norms, including those that underly a collective's arrogance, do not exist in a vacuum. Groups, like individuals, are interdependent entities open to be influenced and shaped by others. To theorise as if we can study a social group in isolation from the environment and context in which it exists is to construct an imaginary social world. Social norms plausibly develop and persist at least in part via the influence and complicity of a range of individual and group agents that are external to or not obviously part of the social group whose norms may warrant the ascription of collective arrogance. A related but distinct consideration is that, as my discussion of the arrogance of men and the privileged exposed, social groups – perhaps especially those that are sub-agential – often overlap, with porous boundaries that are difficult to clearly define. As José Medina articulates, the 'individual and collective levels of epistemic standpoint and agency are… deeply intertwined and their separation is always somewhat artificial' (2021: 336). Whilst in the interests of theoretical clarity I have restricted my study to the epistemic vices of collectives and the social norms that underpin them, future research could consider the ways in which these social norms can be bolstered or perhaps contested via the influence of agents external to the putatively vicious collective.

A further, meta-theoretical question that goes unexplored in this thesis asks why we should employ the language of epistemic vice at all in attempting to explain the behaviour of groups. Quassim Cassam raises the prospect that sometimes explanations that reference an agents' epistemic vices might '*themselves* be epistemically vicious, by obstructing our knowledge or understanding of other perspectives' (2021: 302; emphasis in original). Although this possibility is raised in relation to the epistemic vices of individuals, it also seems to translate to the collective domain. The central problem that this possibility raises is that alternative explanations of group behaviour may offer greater analytical precision in characterising group behaviour. For instance, explanations that

focus on the structural features, the prevailing ideologies, or the politico-rationality of groups may be said to prove more accurate and useful conceptual tools. Alessandra Tanesini articulates an initial response (which Cassam (2021) acknowledges) that I find compelling: 'that vice and structural explanations are complementary rather than competitors' (2019: 8). And Robin Dillon's (2021) recent work begins to illuminate some of the ways in which vices like arrogance are plausibly related to harmful ideologies – which suggests that these explanations are not so distinct. Indeed, and as I hope my account of collective arrogance begins to articulate, social structural features like social norms are intricately related to the epistemic conduct of groups and so there is no need, it seems, to rigidly distinguish between explanations that centre the language of vice from those whose focus lays elsewhere. Whilst these reflections might avert any sense of panic amongst philosophers concerned about how the initial problem might undermine their interest in the vices of groups, there is certainly much more to be said with regards to the ways in which (collective) vice explanations intersect with and can be complementary to other kinds of explanations.

Let me conclude this thesis with a pertinent question that will, by now, have occurred to the more pragmatically inclined: what can be done to ameliorate, subdue, or even extinguish arrogance? While I am sceptical of the possibility of expelling arrogance completely from interpersonal relations, this subject certainly demands further research. Although I have not addressed this question in this thesis, I hope that some of my conclusions will at least point us in a useful direction. Ameliorative measures may be inferred from the role played by those social norms that underly collective arrogance, according to my account. Although social norms can become stubbornly fixed and seemingly intransigent, they are ultimately subject to change, and there is no reason to think that they cannot be dismantled or effectively contested. Although it remains unclear precisely what measures will provide the *most effective* strategies for contesting the social norms that underpin collective arrogance, it seems that even recognition that social norms can play such a role is a helpful start.

Ameliorating collective arrogance will, on this view, involve undermining the social norms that substantiate it. Undermining these norms will feasibly involve, at least, identifying and resisting them. Strategies that seek to highlight, subvert, and even ridicule

these social norms will plausibly make some difference. The methods for doing so will not only be found in academic theorising but also in social practices involving artistic and cultural activities, in political organising and movement building, and in a prolonged and resolute sensitivity and resistance to the undue assumptions of license that serve to bolster the interests of the arrogant. Engaging in these practices may well come at a cost, involve risk, and will plausibly involve the cultivation of a range of individual and collective virtues – of both their moral and epistemic varieties – not least courage, proper pride, resilience, humility, and solidarity. Rigorous interdisciplinary engagement with a variety of potential strategies for the amelioration of arrogance appears necessary to make substantive progress in identifying effective measures towards this objective. My hope is that the conclusions reached in this thesis provide some useful insight in that direction.

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