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<RUNNING HEAD>EPISTEMIC VICE AND MOTIVATION

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<ABS>**Abstract:** This article argues that intellectual character vices involve non-instrumental motives to oppose, antagonise, or avoid things that are epistemically good in themselves. This view has been the recent target of criticism based on alleged counterexamples presenting epistemically vicious individuals who are virtuously motivated or at least lack suitable epistemically bad motivations. The paper first presents these examples and shows that they do not undermine the motivational approach. Finally, having distinguished motivating from explanatory reasons for belief and action, it argues that our epistemic practice of vice attribution supplies evidence in favour of motivational accounts of vice.

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Intellectual character vices involve non-instrumental motives to oppose, antagonise, or avoid things that are epistemically good in themselves.<sup>1</sup> In short, intellectual vice comprises a motivation actively to turn away from the epistemic good. This view, or something like it, has recently come under attack (Cassam 2016; Crerar 2017). In this paper I argue that arguments denying that such epistemically bad motivations are necessary to character vices neglect an important distinction between two kinds of explanation of action and belief. The first rationalises them by offering motivating reasons in their support; the second makes these beliefs and actions intelligible in terms of reasons that explain them. Both kinds of explanation invoke motives. Opponents of motivational accounts of vices focus their

discussions on motivating reasons but fail to consider the motives presented in mere explanations of actions and belief.

There are, as is well known, two approaches to virtue in epistemology. Virtue reliabilists think of virtues as cognitive faculties or capacities, such as memory or perception, that are in ordinary circumstances reliable (Sosa 2007). Virtue responsibilists claim that virtues are character traits with their distinctive motivations (Zagzebski 1996). In its clearest example, which is found in Zagzebski (1996, 2003), the view states that each intellectual virtue is individuated by its distinctive proximate motivation. These virtues, however, also share one ultimate motive, which is love of truth or of cognitive contact with reality. This is a motivation to seek non-instrumentally, something that is epistemically good in itself.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore natural to ask whether bad motivations may be essential to intellectual vices in the same way in which good motives are said by responsibilists to be defining of virtue. There is a small but growing literature addressing this issue either directly or indirectly. Heather Battaly has suggested, for example, that vices may have distinctively bad motivations (2016, 2015), while Linda Zagzebski (1996) at times indicates that vice is defined by the absence of good motivations. Finally, Quassim Cassam (2016) and Charlie Crerar (2017) have defended the view that individuals may possess epistemic vices despite having some good motivations. In this essay I argue that once the notion of motivation is properly understood, the objections against the view that intellectual vices have characteristic bad epistemic motivations can be shown to be ill founded. Further, I show that the view that epistemic vices have these distinctive motives can be independently motivated. There is, however, an important disanalogy between virtues and vices because there is no ultimate motive that is common to all vices.

The essay consists of three sections. The first details some counterexamples to the view that epistemic character vices require epistemically bad motives, or at least the absence of good motivations. The second section shows that once the motivations involved in these hypothetical cases are properly understood, all of these examples involve non-instrumental aversion to epistemic goods. Hence, the challenge to motivational accounts of vices based on them is shown to fail. In the third and final part of the essay, I distinguish motivating from explanatory reasons for belief and action. I argue that once it is accepted that

explanatory reasons can be motives, our epistemic practice of vice attribution supplies some evidence in favour of motivational accounts of vice.

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May intellectual character vices require non-instrumental motives to oppose, avoid, or antagonise things that are epistemically good in themselves?<sup>3</sup> There are intellectual vices that seem to involve such motives: epistemic malevolence, for example. Jason Baehr characterises this vice as the opposition to the epistemic good as such (or for its own sake) in all its incarnations or to others' share in it (2010, 192, 204). He defines such opposition in volitional terms. The person who is epistemically malevolent acts out of an ill will. He is driven by the motive universally to antagonise, block, or prevent what he regards as epistemically good, or to put obstacles in the way of the acquisition by some person of her share of this good. That is to say, malevolent motives may target specific people, or they may be directed impersonally to the epistemic good itself.<sup>4</sup> A person may be malevolent for malevolence's sake. He may be ill willed toward others for no further purpose than seeing their share in epistemic goods languish and decline. It is also possible to harbour malevolent motives for instrumental purposes. For instance, an individual may, out of arrogance, want to acquire some epistemic goods for herself that she is not prepared to share with others. Hence, she may also malevolently keep other people ignorant as a means to her goal of becoming intellectually superior to them.

Baehr seems to think that a motive is either final or instrumental, but not both (2010, 192). If this is his view, it is mistaken. It is possible for one person to be at the same time motivated by malevolence for its own sake and as a means to a further end. The person who initially behaves malevolently for the sake of feeling intellectually superior to others may eventually love being malevolent for malevolence's sake. When this happens, his actions may be simultaneously motivated both non-instrumentally and instrumentally by antagonism to the epistemic good.

Baehr discusses some fictional and actual examples of epistemic malevolence such as O'Brien in George Orwell's *1984* and Sophie Auld as described in Frederick Douglass's autobiography. The latter, after having taught Douglass the rudimentary elements of

reading, is transformed into an epistemically malevolent individual by the corrupting influence of her husband. Hence, she starts to oppose angrily and actively impede the attempts by Douglass to read and acquire knowledge, whilst openly displaying her contempt for him and his pursuit of self-education.

Ill will toward others' intellectual flourishing is necessary for the vice of epistemic malevolence.<sup>5</sup> The person who blocks, antagonises, or actively prevents other people from acquiring epistemic goods is not best thought malevolent if he does not act out of ill will. To see why this is the case consider the example mentioned above of an intellectually arrogant person who behaves malevolently out of a desire to be intellectually superior to other people. In so far as this person attempts to block others' access to epistemic goods, he behaves in the same way as a malevolent person would. He may, however, not be malevolent himself.

He may instead think of people that they are a threat to his quest for intellectual superiority. But, if they were not a threat, he would have no interest in denying them access to the epistemic good. Hence, he considers them to be obstacles rather than his enemies. Therefore, this person does not seem to harbour malevolence toward others; rather, he tries to crush them only when they are in his way. If he has nothing to gain from putting them down, he will leave them alone. It is plausible to conclude that we would not characterise this person as malevolent, because he harbours no ill will toward these people, although we would think of him as viciously arrogant. Thus, here we have an intellectual vice that requires the presence of a non-instrumental motive to oppose the epistemic good as such. Ill will may also be sufficient for epistemic malevolence, since it is plausible to think of an ill willed person who ineptly ends up promoting the acquisition of epistemic goods as being epistemically malevolent, even though ineffectual.

I have argued that the possession of a non-instrumental motive to make the epistemic good one's enemy is both necessary and sufficient for malevolence. For the purpose of a defence of the motivational view, it is also important to note that this is a motive that is bad in itself, rather than merely because of its effects or contributions to something else that is bad. The motive of malevolence is bad in itself because it is the enemy of what is in itself epistemically good.<sup>6</sup>

The view that intellectual vice requires non-instrumental epistemically bad motivations has its supporters. The clearest pronouncements in this regard have been offered by Battaly, who has often stated that there is a plausible (responsibilist) conception of epistemic vices according to which they are “partly composed of bad epistemic motives” (2016, 106; 2017b, 226). She explicitly models this account of intellectual vice on a responsibilist theory of epistemic virtues according to which motivations to pursue non-instrumentally epistemic goods are essential to virtue.<sup>7</sup>

I have suggested that the purely motivational theory of epistemic vice is plausible with regard to the vice of epistemic malevolence. If, however, the theory is to be of interest, it must offer a plausible account of all intellectual vices or at least of all those vices that are character traits. Once we think of the theory as having a general application, we can readily think of seeming counterexamples.

For instance, Crerar has argued that the eponymous main character in Goncharov’s novel *Oblomov* is intellectually vicious despite lacking epistemically bad motivations of the sort required by motivational accounts (2017, 5).<sup>8</sup> Oblomov shows no interest in anything. He loafs on his sofa because nothing, in his view, is worth his efforts.<sup>9</sup> In this characterisation he is shown as lacking that deep concern for cognitive contact with reality that is sometimes said to be essential to every intellectual virtue (cf. Zagzebski 1996). His apparent lack of good motives alone, as should be obvious, does not make him a counterexample to the motivational account.<sup>10</sup> Instead, what must be shown is that, first, Oblomov is intellectually vicious and, second, he has no relevant epistemically bad motivations. The latter point is arguably disputable.<sup>11</sup>

We may support the first claim that Oblomov suffers from intellectual vices by our describing his behaviour as flowing from epistemic laziness.<sup>12</sup> Oblomov, so characterised, has no interest in the acquisition of epistemic goods; therefore, he lacks curiosity and shows no inclination to initiate inquiry or to persevere with it when a question pops into his mind. Once his situation is described in these terms, it is open to the supporter of the motivational account to agree that Oblomov is vicious but to deny that he has no epistemically bad motivations. Instead, one may claim that his vice stems from those epistemically bad motivations—whatever they may be—that are characteristic of the vice of epistemic laziness.

Opponents of the motivational view have an immediate response to this argument. They may retort that although there may be some bad epistemic motives that are associated with intellectual laziness, these are not the kind of motive required by motivational accounts. That is, they are not non-instrumental motives that actively oppose or avoid things that are epistemically good in themselves. Instead, to be lazy is primarily to lack the good motives that would be required for virtues like inquisitiveness and perseverance.<sup>13</sup> This response is plausible since there is a ring of truth to the thought that to be lazy is to lack the motivation to make an effort. Despite its plausibility, I argue in section 2 that this conclusion is ultimately mistaken.

One may concur that this example shows that epistemically bad motives are not necessary for intellectual vice. Nevertheless, one may also think that motivations are important. For instance, one may claim that these vices are characterised by an absence of the good motivations required by virtue. This position has widespread support since it can be plausibly attributed to Baehr (2010), Montmarquet (2000, 138), and Zagzebski (1996).

A deeper challenge to the motivational view of intellectual vice is presented by fictional examples of individuals whose motivations appear to be epistemically good but who display a range of seemingly vicious behaviours. Crerar discusses two cases. Since these are similar, I limit my discussion to the first. It concerns a scientist—Galileo—who is motivated to seek the truth for its own sake but who is also arrogant (2017, 7).<sup>14</sup> Out of his sense of intellectual superiority Galileo underestimates the intellectual abilities of his interlocutors and so takes no notice of their comments. Thus, Galileo is intellectually vicious despite possessing the kind of motivation that is common to all intellectual virtues.

Analogous to the Galileo case is the example of Oliver the conspiracy theorist (Cassam 2016, 162–63). Cassam describes him as a person who is genuinely motivated to find out the truth but is gullible and easily led astray by the Internet. Crerar questions whether Oliver is best described as intellectually vicious or as possessing limited cognitive abilities (2017, 8). Be that as it may, it is possible to conceive of a conspiracy theorist—Olivia—who seems to be motivated by the truth and yet is intellectually vicious. Olivia does not want to believe conspiracies, come what may; she only wants to believe them if they are true. She may be perseverant and curious. She may even be better informed than most on the topic.<sup>15</sup> In some sense, however, she also wants the conspiracies to be true, and it is this motivation

that guides her inquiries. Hence, she has a blind spot; she is closed-minded about the falsity of her pet theories. In short, she displays many of the behaviours that are characteristic of virtue, and she is motivated to believe only what is true. She is, however, not equally motivated to find out whether her favourite theories are false.

There is also another kind of counterexample to the motivational theory of intellectual vice. It concerns individuals who turn vicious trying to compensate for a defect that they attribute to themselves. Montmarquet, for instance, imagines a person who becomes dogmatic out of fear that she is too gullible (1993, 25). This person—call her Gail—out of a concern for what is intellectually good attempts to correct for what she perceives to be a defect in her character. This endeavour leads her, however, to develop a tendency not to listen to contrary views, because she fears that she might too easily believe them. Unfortunately, she ends up overcompensating and thus turns herself into a dogmatic person. She seems to be exclusively motivated in the right ways but nevertheless ends up acquiring an intellectual character vice.

If all of this is right, then epistemic bad motivations are not a defining feature of intellectual vice. While some character vices such as malevolence may require them, and others necessitate an absence of good motives, there are other vices that can be had even though one is exclusively driven by good motivations of the kind required for intellectual virtue. There would, therefore, be nothing of significance to say in general about the relation of intellectual character vices to motivations.

There are reasons, however, not to rest happy with this negative conclusion. The proposal that vices have non-instrumental motives to avoid, oppose, or antagonise things that are in themselves epistemically good is intended to do much explanatory work as part of an account of the nature of vice. First, the proposal provides an account of what makes vices bad and thus grounds criticisms directed toward those who have these features. Vices would derive their disvalue from the disvalue of their motivational component.<sup>16</sup> Second, the proposal offers a criterion for the individuation of individual vices, since each one of them has its distinct motivations. Third, it helps to distinguish vices from other kinds of intellectual shortcoming, such as incapacity, cognitive malfunction, and lack of ability or skill. The only intellectual shortcomings that are vices are those that have bad motivational states of the requisite kind among their components. If we abandon the motivational

account of vice, it becomes at best unclear what else could take its place in these explanations.

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In this section I argue that non-instrumental aversion to epistemic goods is at play in all the examples considered above. These, therefore, do not refute the motivational account of vice. In the next section I offer some independent reasons in support of such a view.

Crerar focuses on Oblomov's lack of motivation (2017, 5). Further, although Crerar leaves it open that Oblomov may possess some bad motives, he claims that his viciousness precisely consists in his indifference for what is intellectually good and therefore in the absence of the kind of motivation required by epistemic virtue. There are, however, reasons to doubt this characterisation. Oblomov, if he is lazy rather than akratic, must in some sense choose not to bother with inquiry. He has opportunities to acquire epistemic goods that he does not take because he abhors making the required effort. So understood Oblomov is an agent who regulates his mental activity. His behaviour is guided by his motivations rather than by external forces. Oblomov's ultimate motive is to avoid making any effort. This motivation itself is not epistemic; it is also not always bad, since effort is not unqualifiedly a good. Oblomov, however, also possesses other motivations, some of which are plausibly described as epistemic since they guide his intellectual conduct.

Oblomov is an irresponsible epistemic agent. He is not guided by the evidence; he is negligent in his belief formation; he shows a lack of due care when thinking about any topic.<sup>17</sup> He acts in this manner because his behaviour is driven by an aversion to making any intellectual effort. It is this aversion that also explains his indifference to the truth. Thus, although it is accurate to describe Oblomov as lacking virtuous motivations, what is most telling about his character is the presence of the motive actively to avoid whatever may require intellectual effort or application. This is the characteristic bad motivation that is necessary for intellectual laziness. It is a non-instrumental motivation to avoid intellectual labour.



It may be objected, however, that this motivation is not of the kind demanded by motivational accounts, because aversion to intellectual labour is not bad in itself since what is being avoided is not something that is good in itself. It is true that effort is not always valuable. There are many domains in which effortless success is preferable to having to labour for the same outcome. As Zagzebski also notes, there are many goods whose goodness does not depend on having to work to get them (2003, 20). These are goods that are desirable and include epistemic goods, such as true belief. But there are other goods whose goodness requires that we work for it. These are goods that are admirable and that, arguably, include knowledge. It is also plausible to think that intellectual work or effort is epistemically good in itself. We do admire people who apply themselves in the pursuit of intellectual inquiry, and our appreciation of them is not wholly dependent on the success of their endeavour. In conclusion, although much more would need to be said to establish the point, in the epistemic domain doing the work required by inquiry is epistemically good in itself because it warrants admiration. What is characteristic of epistemic laziness is aversion rather than indifference to effort. This aversion to application is the bad epistemic motivation that explains Oblomov's behaviour.

Having rebutted the example purporting to show that some vices are characterised by an absence of good motives of the right kind, I turn my attention to three cases intended to show that one may be vicious despite possessing intellectually virtuous motives. Below I cast doubt on attributing to these fictional characters the motivation to love the truth for its own sake. But for now I shall not challenge the coherence of the examples and grant, for the sake of argument, that these individuals have virtuous motivations.

Galileo, in the example under consideration, cares for the truth, but he is also arrogant. Further, his arrogance leads him to become closed-minded. It is important to distinguish clearly this case from another in which a Galileo-like figure—Copernicus—makes an honest mistake. He believes that he is intellectually superior to other people around him. Consequently, he may not give to their views the credit they deserve. He, however, would not be arrogant or closed-minded; he would be misguided.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this is not the case that we are being asked to consider, because Galileo in our example is supposed to be both arrogant and closed-minded.

What is the difference between Galileo and Copernicus? I submit that a crucial difference lies in their motives. Suppose that they both dismiss out of hand a criticism raised by an opponent. If we ask why they behave in this way, however, our answers differ. Copernicus may think that the opponent's claim is not a genuine challenge, Galileo may find any criticism to be an affront to his intellectual standing. But even if these are not precisely their motives, their similar actions will have different psychological explanations. Whatever these may be, it is plausible to think that those who are arrogantly closed-minded are motivated to preserve their sense of superiority by trying to do others down.

The contrast with Copernicus supports this point. Copernicus has the right motivation without also having bad motives such as envy. He is, however, not plausibly classified as vicious. Galileo is *ex hypothesi* vicious and has good motivations. An explanation is needed, however, for his behaviour. His actions are intelligible if we think of Galileo as being driven by a desire to preserve his sense of superiority by doing others down. This motive is an aversion to, or strong dislike of, other people's epistemic achievements that is also manifested as a delight in, and an enjoyment of, their failures.

It is plausible to think that Galileo is non-instrumentally averse to others' achievements. He sees other people's successes instrumentally as obstacles, but he is also simply opposed to them for no other reason than that he dislikes the idea that others have achievements to their name. Further, since epistemic achievements are good in themselves, it is plausible to think that a motive of aversion to them is an epistemically bad motivation.

One can run a parallel argument to address Olivia's case. Olivia has desire for the truth, but she also wants some beliefs of hers to be true. She is therefore closed-minded, dogmatic, and prone to wishful thinking. But Olivia is not Oliver. She is not easily swayed because of limited cognitive abilities. She has mixed motivations. She cares for the truth but, because she is dogmatic, she is unwilling to engage with views alternative to her own (Battaly forthcoming). This unwillingness is the manifestation of a disposition actively to ignore evidence. This motive exemplifies an opposition to an epistemic good that is a component of epistemic responsibility: namely, the careful consideration of evidence. Further, if Olivia has become genuinely dogmatic rather than someone who has a blind spot for conspiracy theories in particular, it seems plausible to think of her as being averse to the careful consideration of evidence non-instrumentally, because she would find such evidence

challenging. She does not ignore evidence exclusively as a means to achieve her goal of holding on to her favourite theories.

If the above is correct, these cases are not even challenges to the view that the presence of motivations actively to turn away from things that are epistemically good in themselves is both necessary and sufficient for intellectual vice. They would, however, undermine the view that good motivations of the requisite sort are sufficient for intellectual virtue. It is thus worth pointing out that the claim that Galileo and Olivia are motivated in the right way by the truth is at least open to question.<sup>19</sup>

Since we are dealing with thumbnail examples, the psychologies of these fictional characters are largely under-described. Of course, one may make it a matter of stipulation that Galileo is motivated by the truth for its own sake. For these stories to be effective counter-examples, however, they must possess a degree of psychological plausibility. Given that Galileo is described as arrogant and also as closed-minded as a result of his arrogance, 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. Believing this, truly or falsely, does not make one arrogant or closed-minded. Thus, at the very least Galileo is only motivated to acquire truths for himself. He is not prepared to sacrifice the amount of truth he has access to for the greater epistemic good of the community.

This characterisation, however, does not really fit Galileo. He is not motivated to discover as many significant truths as possible for the truth's sake. The fact that he does not value the truth for its own sake is illustrated by the fact that he would be bitterly disappointed if he were not the one to discover it. One may object that his psychology may not fit this description. In response, I would argue that we need to be told more about his character than the sketchy characterisation offered by those who use the example to attribute to Galileo only epistemically good motivations. I would also add that a psychologically realistic way of filling in the picture is to portray him as not caring for the truth for its own sake but only caring that he is the one that discovers the truth. If I am right, Galileo is only instrumentally motivated by a desire for epistemic goods; he desires the truth because being the one who discovers it enhances his epistemic standing in his own and others' eyes. He is ultimately motivated by a desire to further inflate his own inflated self-conception.

This fact would explain his arrogance and closed-mindedness and his apparent drive to discover truths.

The final alleged counterexample to the motivational account is structurally different from the cases discussed above. Gail does seem to have genuinely and exclusively good motivations. Having discovered a temperamental weakness, she resolves to counteract it to become a better inquirer. Unfortunately, she ends up overdoing it and thus starts ignoring objections that she should address. In my view it is not altogether clear that she suffers from an epistemic character vice. If we ask her why she behaves as she does, she would make reference to her gullible temperament, which requires her to be particularly active in counterbalancing this tendency. Thus, she would not be dogmatic, although she behaves in seemingly dogmatic ways. Her behaviour would, instead, be indicative of a series of misjudgements about what it takes to be receptive to others' views without being too easily swayed.

This characterisation of Gail, however, may not ring true to some. It is psychologically plausible also to think of her as acquiring the vice of dogmatism through repeated acts of overcompensation. But if we think of her in these terms, she appears as someone who first develops an instrumental motive for not listening to other people's views to fulfil her end of avoiding false beliefs. Over time, however, she turns herself into a dogmatic person, because the motive for closing her mind to opposing views becomes an end in itself. In short, it makes sense to think of her as possessing a vice rather than a weakness, if we think of her actions as constituting a process of habituation into the vice of dogmatism. Such a process leads Gail to act out of the motives for dogmatism automatically. Thus, her dogmatic responses are the result of motives that are automatically engaged.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Gail no longer considers whether the dogmatic response would serve the further purpose of acquiring epistemic goods. She has become dogmatic because she is averse to careful consideration of the relevant evidence. Hence she ends up acquiring the same bad motivation as Olivia, even though the processes by means of which she acquires it are different.

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There is something unsatisfactory in my dispute against those who claim that motivation of the right kind is neither necessary nor sufficient for vice since we simply appear to trade in intuitions. I am sure that those who oppose motivational theories of vice may provide alternative accounts of the examples described above. Therefore, we appear to have reached a stalemate. In what follows I provide some independent support for the idea that vices require non-instrumental motivations to avoid, oppose, or antagonise things that are in themselves epistemically good. My argument begins by considering the purpose of charging or, more neutrally, attributing vices to other people (Kidd 2016). It proceeds by deploying some distinctions that are standard in the philosophy of action to suggest 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.

We can approach questions about the nature of intellectual vice by considering the use of vice attributions to explain people's actions. Cassam (2015) describes these attributions as intellectual vice explanations. He characterises them as explanations of another person's beliefs or activities that are intended to undermine that belief or action as lacking any rational grounds and being merely a reflection of personal idiosyncrasies.<sup>21</sup> That is to say, the attribution of a vice explains, in the sense of making it intelligible, a person's belief or action by showing it to flow from a psychological state of that person. The attribution also entails that there are no reasons that would support holding the belief or carrying out the action.

While I agree with Cassam that its ability to play this explanatory role is an important feature of the concept of vice, I have a quibble with the idea that explanations in terms of vice are explanations of belief and action as a result of individual idiosyncrasies. Or at least I find myself in disagreement if these are understood as akin to quirks or eccentricities. Sometimes we do explain people's activities in terms of their idiosyncrasies. Thus, we may say of the person who uses only a specific brand of sugar in her coffee that this behaviour is one of her quirks. Nonetheless, by saying so we would not be taking ourselves to criticise this person or attribute any particular vices to her.

To clarify the thought that vice plays an essential role in some explanations of people's beliefs and actions, it is helpful to borrow from the philosophy of action a distinction between three kinds of explanation: justifications, rationalisations, and mere explanation. An explanation justifies an action or a belief when it adduces considerations in its favour. These considerations are normative reasons, which is to say facts that provide rational grounds for the belief or the action. A rationalisation adduces the reasons that the agent takes to support her beliefs or actions. These reasons are known as motivating reasons; they are the considerations that the agent takes to offer rational support for her actions and beliefs and that as a result motivate her to believe and behave as she does.<sup>22</sup> A mere explanation supplies reasons that make the agent's actions or beliefs intelligible without either justifying or rationalising them. Both rationalisations and mere explanations are psychological explanations, while justifications are not.

An example I borrow from Maria Alvarez will help to clarify this distinction. Consider the killing of Desdemona by Othello. There are no normative reasons in support of his action. For which, therefore, there is no justifying explanation. Othello has a reason for his action, though. His reason is the putative fact that Desdemona was unfaithful to him.<sup>23</sup> This is the consideration that motivates Othello to act. Hence, there is a rationalising explanation for his killing. Othello murders Desdemona because he thinks that she is unfaithful. Finally, one may also supply another explanation that makes his action intelligible. Othello is jealous. His jealousy explains why he forms the belief that Desdemona is unfaithful, and thus why he kills her. The motive of jealousy is not what he takes to be his reason for his behaviour. It is not something that rationalises his behaviour. Nevertheless, it is the psychological state that explains both his deliberation and his actions. It is a motive without being a reason (Alvarez 2010, 2016).<sup>24</sup>

Vice explanations are psychological explanations. One may wonder whether they could be rationalisations or whether they always function as mere explanations. Cassam's discussion is not clear on this matter. In my view there may be some rationalisations that undermine the belief or action as lacking rational support because the adduced motivations are plainly bad from a normative point of view. Actions that manifest epistemic malevolence exemplify this structure. We can explain why a person blocks others' access to epistemic goods by adducing her motivating reasons. These may include the fact that she opposes their

epistemic well-being. This is the consideration that rationalises her actions because it specifies her reasons for acting as she does. It also explains her actions, since it presents the motivations that make these activities intelligible.

More typically, however, vice explanations make someone's actions or beliefs intelligible by supplying psychological motives that explain, but do not rationalise, them. An agent is typically unaware of possessing these motives, since bringing them to consciousness would make her realise that she has no reason that rationalises her actions. For instance, an intellectually arrogant person may silence other people out of defensiveness.<sup>25</sup> His defensiveness explains his deliberations and actions, but it is not the reason he acts as he does. Nevertheless, defensiveness may be an underlying motivation of his activities.

The discussion so far indicates that if we are prepared to take seriously our use of the vocabulary of vice when criticising people for their beliefs and actions, then vices constitute psychological states that make actions intelligible and also on occasion rationalise them. These psychological states are the motives underlying individuals' beliefs and activities that may be said to reflect or manifest them. It is also part of our practice of vice charging that an explanation of a belief or an action as reflecting a vice implies that this belief or action lacks any justification. It also presupposes that the person who believes or behaves in this way is a legitimate target of criticism.

There is a sense in which anyone who believes or does something that she has no (normative) reason to believe or do is falling short of what is normatively required. We do not, however, criticise or blame people who make honest mistakes or whose reasoning falls short of what is normatively required due to temporary or permanent impairments of their cognitive capacities. In these cases we may be critical of their beliefs or actions but are not critical of these individuals themselves.<sup>26</sup> In this regard vice attributions are different. Explaining a person's belief or action as reflecting a vice entails taking this person to be a legitimate target of criticism.<sup>27</sup>

These considerations raise the question of what may warrant such criticism. I contend that the most plausible answer is that criticism is legitimate because of the badness of the psychological states from which the individual's beliefs and actions flow. Thus, 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. The states are the motivational components of vice. These are bad because they are non-instrumental motives actively to turn away from things that are epistemically good in themselves.

If it is granted that our practices of vice attributions presuppose that vices involve psychological states, which supply bad motivations without always being reasons for action, we can settle my disagreement with those who claim that epistemically bad motivations are not necessary or sufficient for vice.

The distinction between motivating and explanatory reasons sheds light on Oblomov's motivational architecture. It is plausible to attribute to Oblomov a paucity of motivating reasons. He does not think that anything is worth doing. Therefore, he has no reasons that motivate him to act. Nevertheless, it is possible to explain his behaviour in terms of his underlying motivations. We intuitively think that Oblomov is intellectually lazy or indolent because he is motivated to avoid effort. This motivational architecture explains why he does not see the value of seeking the truth, and why he always gives up too soon. His opposition to epistemic work is the ultimate epistemic motive that explains his epistemic conduct.

The same distinction between two kinds of reason also explains the viciousness of Galileo. His ultimate motivation is one of self-enhancement, but his deepest epistemic motive is an aversion to others' epistemic achievements. This motive explains why Galileo is arrogant; it also explains his rationalisations of his actions. He takes his reasons to be a love for the truth. But he is mistaken. The motives of self-enhancement and envy of others' achievements bias his thinking and guide his behaviour. In short, Galileo does not really have epistemically good motives. Rather he is self-deceived, since his rationalisations hide the true motivational structure behind his activities.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, if it is granted that our practice of charging people with vice is genuinely explanatory, it follows that we take vice to be at least in part constituted by a psychological state that explains people's beliefs and actions without justifying them but normally also without rationalising them. Further, there is a respectable notion of motivation that identifies the motives for believing or doing something with the psychological states that explain why one believes or acts in that manner. Hence, the idea that vices have motivations as one of their constituents is part and parcel of our practice of vice attribution. I have not



argued here that our practice is in order; I have assumed that it is. Hence, it is open to my opponents to argue that there is something mistaken with our folk practice.

However, and I take this to offer substantial support for my view, if we do go along with our practice and deploy the distinction between justifications, rationalisations, and mere explanations, we are able to offer richer and psychologically plausible accounts of the psychology of vice. The richness of these descriptions, when contrasted with the sketchiness of the accounts of those who claim that motivations are neither necessary nor sufficient for vice, is evidence for the motivational account. The arguments offered here do not show that bad motivations are sufficient for vice, but—I hope—they do provide evidence that they are necessary.

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<FOOTNOTES>

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper I treat "intellectual vice" and "epistemic vice" as synonymous expressions.

Intellectually vicious individuals also possess other non-instrumental motives that are not epistemic in character. For instance, they may be motivated by power or self-interest.

Human actions are often done for more than one motive, including more than one that is not instrumental. I set these issues aside here.

<sup>2</sup> Zagzebski's formulates two distinct accounts of the value of motivations. The first is eudaimonic. Motivations are good because they are aimed at something that is good since it is a constituent of the good life. The second is motivation based. It identifies some motivations which are good in themselves and whose goodness confers value on their ends. Other virtue responsibilists are not so clear on these points. They are also often unclear about the source of the goodness of good motivations. When they use the term "intrinsic" to refer to good motives, it is often unclear whether they are referring to things that are good in themselves or to things that are valued non-instrumentally. See Kosgaard (1983) for a clear statement of this distinction.

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<sup>3</sup> My sole concern here is with character vices such as laziness and arrogance. Intellectual vices may not be restricted to character traits, since they may include habits of thought such as wishful thinking (Cassam 2016, 160). In this paper I set this issue aside.

<sup>4</sup> Baehr explains being opposed to the epistemic good in itself for its own sake in terms of making the epistemic good one's enemy (2010, 193–94). He also thinks that malevolence may not always be a vice, because its characteristic motive may co-exist with a sufficiently good ultimate epistemic motivation (2010, 190, n. 2). I find this deeply implausible but shall not pursue it here.

<sup>5</sup> Here and throughout this section I rely on what I hope are shared intuitions about whether an individual is vicious. There are some worrying limitations to this methodology. I adopt it here because it has been used in the arguments against the motivational account of vice that I wish to oppose.

<sup>6</sup> This characterisation of malevolence presupposes that malevolence is a bad motive because its aim is to oppose something that is independently good. Alternatively, one could argue that being ill willed is bad in itself. It is the badness of ill will that would make antagonising the epistemic good a bad thing.

<sup>7</sup> Battaly's notion of an epistemically bad motive is not wholly clear. It at least requires that it is a non-instrumental motivation to pursue something that is bad (either in itself or because of its effects).

<sup>8</sup> Crerar is not committed to the view that Oblomov has no motivations that are in some sense epistemically bad. He is instead committed to the claim that these motivations are not bad in the sense required by motivational accounts.

<sup>9</sup> Oblomov is also discussed by Gabriele Taylor (2006, 19–21), who describes him as the archetype of sloth and indolence.

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<sup>10</sup> An individual, for instance, may have an instrumental concern for the truth without being intellectually vicious.

<sup>11</sup> One may also take issue with the description of Oblomov as intellectually vicious. In the book he is often described as being riven by anxieties. He is confined to his bed because of his inability to prioritise. So described, he appears to be not slothful but akratic. He may care for the truth but against his better judgement finds himself unable to regulate his mental activity in line with his motivations.

<sup>12</sup> Kidd (manuscript) provides an account of intellectual laziness. Battaly's (2017a) vice of capitulation is also closely related to laziness and indolence. See also Baehr (2011, 19, 70) and Zagzebski (1996, 152) for some brief remarks.

<sup>13</sup> See Watson (2015) for an account of inquisitiveness and Battaly (2017a) for perseverance.

<sup>14</sup> Crerar borrows this example from Roberts and Wood (2007, 254).

<sup>15</sup> That is to say, she may have more true beliefs on the topic than most people. Of course, she also has more false beliefs than most. This fact alone does not make her ill informed. Presumably, anybody who cares about a given subject has more false beliefs than those who have not given it any thought.

<sup>16</sup> Further motivations may be the ultimate source of disvalue or they may be bad because they oppose or avoid that which is epistemically good in itself. It should be noted that explanations that ground the badness of vice on something other than motivations are also possible, since attributions of blame may not require bad motivations.

<sup>17</sup> See Cassam (2016, 166) for a characterisation of the obligations of responsible inquiry.

<sup>18</sup> For defences of this position see Tanesini 2016, 516, and Roberts and Wood 2007, 243. Crerar has commented in a private communication that he does not envisage Galileo to be epistemically selfish. I think what he has in mind is a person who cares for the truth and

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wrongly but honestly thinks he is intellectually better than other people. Such a person in my view would not count as being arrogant. Hence, he would not be a counterexample to the motivational approach.

<sup>19</sup> For reason of space I develop the point only with regard to the Galileo example.

<sup>20</sup> For an account of automaticity see Rees and Webber (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Cassam focuses exclusively on explanations of belief, but attributions of vice are used as often in explanations of behaviour.

<sup>22</sup> I leave it an open question whether normative and motivating reasons are essentially the same kind of thing—putative facts—or whether they are different because motivating reasons are psychological states.

<sup>23</sup> Alternatively, one may say that the belief that Desdemona was unfaithful is Othello's motivation reason. If one adopts this stance, one takes motivating reasons to differ in kind from normative reasons. Nothing in my paper hangs on this issue.

<sup>24</sup> Not all psychological explanations of action invoke motives. Some, for example, may explain actions in terms of impairments.

<sup>25</sup> See Tanesini 2016 for a discussion of the plausibility of defensiveness as a deep motive for arrogance.

<sup>26</sup> It might be claimed instead that we do criticise these people, even though we do not blame them. For this view see Montmarquet (2000, 132). Be that as it may, we are more critical of people for their vices than for their cognitive defects.

<sup>27</sup> I wish to set aside here the further question whether we also think vice attributions warrant blaming the person for her viciousness and the behaviours that flow from it. Battaly (2016), for instance, has argued that we may not always want to blame people for their intellectual vices. Cassam (manuscript, chap. 1) also considers this.

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<sup>28</sup> This fact explains the stealthiness of arrogance (Cassam 2015). It is because arrogance always involves a kind of self-deception that it is hard to cure oneself of.