The scholarly self under threat: language of vice in British scholarship (1870-1910)

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Introduction

'Do not be led away by megalomania: do not think that you can possibly write a book without mistakes.'

Charles Oman, 1904[1]

Be modest. That was Charles Oman's central advice to the audience that attended his inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor of Modern History at Oxford University in 1906. In this lecture, Oman (1860-1946) presented his view of the ideal historian: someone who practiced virtues of 'modesty' and 'conviction' and possessed a 'dogged determination to work at all times'.[2] Interestingly however, Oman did not only describe the ideal character traits of a historian. He also devoted a significant part of his lecture to the vices and shortcomings of *bad* historians. He told his listeners to be wary of a desire for 'absolute accuracy' and the vice of 'megalomania'.[3] It was impossible, Oman pleaded, to write an 'infallible magnum opus', so historians should not strive after it.[4] In Oman's eyes, the difference between good scholarship and bad scholarship was defined in terms of virtue and vice. Good historians displayed traits of modesty, discipline and laboriousness, while bad historians tried to be too accurate and too ambitious. Bad historians, Oman stated, suffered from vices such as megalomania. Being a scholar was fundamentally a matter of practicing virtues and withstanding threats of vice.[5]

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1 Charles Oman, *Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906) 28.
2 Ibid. 24
3 Ibid. 28
4 Ibid.
5 Oman did not literally use the terms 'virtue' and 'vice' in his inaugural lecture: these terms are my own. Oman did, however, point repeatedly to traits of character. In this dissertation, I will treat virtues and vices as traits of character. See the next section for a lengthier discussion of these terms.

This moral language of virtue and vice might sound abstract and rather outdated now, but ambition and megalomania were certainly no abstract threats to Oman. In fact, his juxtaposition of virtuous and vicious scholarship served an acute purpose: it was an attack on a prominent group of historians who sought to 'professionalise' the writing of history by instituting very high standards of accuracy, precision and completeness in the curricula of universities.[6] The champion of this group was the recently deceased historian Lord Acton (1834-1902), who functioned as the epitome of what a good scholar should be: completely accurate, thorough and precise. At least, that was the image that 'professionalising' historians like Charles Harding Firth (1857-1936) sought to communicate. Oman, on the other hand, abhorred the 'professionalisation' and 'specialisation' of history at the universities, and attacked the image of the exemplary Acton in order to neutralise this threat to his ideal of scholarly selfhood.[7]

Despite all the efforts of his biographers and supporters to turn him into a scholarly hero, Acton was actually an easy target: he had never finished the magnum opus he had worked on since forty years before his death. In fact, he had never finished any book. This was grist to Oman's mill. Acton was not a hero, but an immensely unproductive icon of vanity. 'Never was there such a pathetic sight of wasted labour. . . . I never saw any sight which so much impressed on me the vanity of human life', Oman reflected in his inaugural address.[8] Instead of aiming for an 'infallible magnum opus' like Acton did, historians should above all be modest. By drawing attention to Acton's vices of megalomania, unproductiveness and

6 For the debates over the meaning of professionalisation at British universities around 1900, see: Peter Slee, *Learning and a Liberal Education: The Study of Modern History in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester 1800-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); and: Arthur Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

7 For a more detailed analysis of the memory culture surrounding Lord Acton, see: Léjon Saarloos, 'Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory: Lord Acton and Charles Oman', *History of Humanities* 1:2 (2016) 339-354.

8 Oman, *Inaugural Lecture*, 25-26.

vanity, Oman thus sought to legitimise his own agenda as professor, and his own ideal of scholarly selfhood. Accusation of vice and attribution of virtue, in sum, played a major role in determining what it meant to be an historian.

Oman's attack on Acton is but a minor episode in the history of late Victorian and early Edwardian scholarship. Yet it forcefully illustrates the immense importance that British scholars around 1900 attached to their own virtuous character, their ability to withstand the threat of vices and their heartfelt duty to challenge the vices of others. Oman's case, moreover, is far from unique. As this study will show, the language of vice was employed regularly by scholars working in all kinds of late Victorian and early Edwardian disciplines, ranging from history, Shakespearean scholarship and classics, to energy physics, geology and chemistry.[9] The discourse of vice is prominent in all types of sources too: obituaries, monographs, articles, diaries and private correspondence all show the prominence of vice language. Finally, the language of vice was used across regional, institutional and social boundaries. Vices threatened aristocratic Cambridge dons and petty-bourgeois Lancashire schoolteachers alike.

9 Because this dissertation covers all kinds of disciplines, ranging from physics and chemistry, to history and Shakespeare scholarship, I will use the terms 'scholar' and 'scholarship' in the broadest sense of these words: 'scholar' refers to anyone pursuing knowledge, while 'scholarship' refers to the practice of pursuing knowledge and the collective project of knowledge acquisition. I treat the term 'scholarship' much as the German notion of *Wissenschaft* or the Dutch notion of *wetenschap*: categories that speak to the entire breadth of organized intellectual activity. The terms 'science' and 'men of science' are more exclusive and are used in this dissertation when actors use these categories themselves. The Victorian term 'man of science', in particular, needs some introduction, which is given by: Melinda Baldwin, *Making "Nature": the History of a Scientific Journal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), especially chapter 3; and: Ruth Barton, '"Men of Science": Language, Identity and Professionalization in the Mid-Victorian Scientific Community', *History of Science* 41 (2003) 73-119. Paul White has argued that Victorians and Edwardians saw science as a moral *and* epistemological pursuit and therefore preferred the term 'man of science' over 'scientist': Paul White, *Huxley: Making the "Man of Science"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Vices, in other words, were everywhere in learned Britain around 1900. Despite this omnipresence, historians have scarcely studied the threat of vice systematically. To remedy this lack of attention, this study takes a closer look at the vices that shaped Victorian ideals of scholarly selfhood. Before reflecting on the Victorian context and my methodology, this introduction will discuss the state of historical scholarship on virtue and vice. This historiographical survey will lead me to my research question and argument.

Vices in historiography: public morality

First, a few words on my definitions of 'virtue' and 'vice'. Although these terms were also used by Victorians and Edwardians themselves, I use 'virtue' and 'vice' as analytical categories in this dissertation. The notions of virtue and vice have a long and complex history, stretching back to ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, but scholars generally agree that both categories refer to traits of character.[10] In this dissertation, I follow this simple definition: virtues and vices are character traits. Where virtues can be described as traits that are beneficial to the acquisition of certain goods (knowledge, morality, and so on), vices are traits that are detrimental to this acquisition.[11] In other words: virtues are desirable traits of character, while vices are flaws of character. As such, vices can also be distinguished from other failings, like the lack of skills (an inability to read German, or

10 For the basic definition of virtues and vices as traits of character, see: Rosalind Hursthouse and Glen Pettigrove, 'Virtue Ethics', in: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue/. For a short introduction into the history of 'virtue', see: Andreas Hellerstedt, 'Introduction', in: Andreas Hellerstedt (ed.), *Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018) 9-36.

11 A lengthier discussion of 'virtues' as 'human qualities conducive to goods that people . . . find worth pursuing in the context of a certain practice', can be found in: Herman Paul, 'What Is a Scholarly Persona? Ten Theses on Virtues, Skills, and Desires', *History and Theory* 53 (2014) 348-371, quote on page 360. Paul focuses specifically on epistemic virtues: virtues oriented towards the acquisition of knowledge. For epistemic virtues, see note 32 in this introduction.

incompetence in bookkeeping for example).[12] When I speak of the language of vice in British scholarship, then, I refer to the discourse that identified flaws of character as threats to the scholarly self.

In historiography, the language of virtue and vice has been studied mainly from two perspectives. Firstly, virtues and vices have been studied by historians interested in public morality and intellectual culture. Stefan Collini, for example, has drawn attention to the prominence of 'character' in Victorian political thought.[13] 'Character', for the Victorians, was a prerequisite for civilisation, and consisted of virtues such as 'self-restraint, perseverance, strenuous effort, [and] courage in the face of adversity'.[14] Moreover, Collini argues that the idea of character was so important to the Victorians because it tied in with their 'vision of life as a perpetual struggle', in which 'one's ability to resist temptation and overcome obstacles' was paramount: virtues were needed to remedy vices.[15] In the moral imagination of the Victorians, Collini states, the virtue of 'altruism' was in a constant struggle with the vice of 'egoism'.[16] A virtuous character thus was

12 Incompetence in bookkeeping can of course be attributed to several vices, but it could also be that the technical skill is lacking. For the difference between skills and virtues, see also: Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 30.

13 Stefan Collini, 'The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985) 29-50, 31.

14 Ibid. 36.

15 Ibid. 38. A famous example of this fear of temptation and vice is Samuel Smiles' work, who refers to temptations and vices repeatedly in his *Self-Help* (1859) and *Character* (1871). For Samuel Smiles and Victorian morality, see: T. Travers, 'Samuel Smiles and the Origins of "Self-Help": Reform and the New Enlightenment', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 9:2 (1977) 161-187; and: T. Travers, 'Samuel Smiles and the Pursuit of Success in Victorian Britain', *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers* (1971) 154-168. Also excellent is Peter Sinnema's introduction to Smiles' Self-Help: Peter Sinnema, 'Introduction', in: Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help. With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) vii-xxviii.

16 This point is developed further in Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) esp. pages 65-67.

an antidote to the threat that vices and temptations posed to individuals, and, consequently, civilisation.[17]

Other scholars, too, have looked at vices through this lens of public morality. Mike Huggins' monograph on (the fight against) Victorian vices such as drinking, betting and prostitution underlines Collini's point that vices were primarily seen as threats to 'social order, good government and respectable life.'[18] Walter Houghton, to mention an older example, resorted to the language of virtue and vice when describing the fundamental 'attitudes' that characterised the 'Victorian frame of mind'.[19] In many cases the binaries of virtue and vice were, as Huggins argues, a means of 'the more respectable' to define the 'moral centre' of society.[20] In this reading, virtues and vices are signifiers of the construction of distinctive higher- and middle-class moralities.[21]

Historians focusing on other national contexts have described the role of vice as being similar to the role described by Collini, Huggins and Houghton. Historians of American intellectual culture have shown, for example, that public moralists in the late nineteenth-century United States used the language of virtue and vice to integrate liberal theories of the market with personal morality.[22] In nineteenth-century Germany,

17 A similar point is made by Nathan Roberts: Nathan Roberts, 'Character in the mind: citizenship, education and psychology in Britain, 1880-1914', *History of Education* 33:2 (2004) 177-197.

18 Mike Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) 5.

19 Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1957) xiv-xvi, 3-5

20 Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians*, 14. For Collini, 'the more respectable' were a highly educated elite: Collini, *Public Moralists*, 2.

21 Collini notes that there were many competing views of what specifically was seen as virtuous, but that public moralists were in deep agreement over their moral duties.

22 See: David E. Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998). For anti-vice campaigning in the United States, see: Nicola Beisel, 'Class, Culture, and Campaigns against Vice in Three American Cities, 1872-1892', *American Sociological Review* 55:1 (1990) 44-62.

likewise, the definition of moral virtue was central to the constitution of the 'bürgerliche Wertehimmel'[23], while in the Dutch context too, virtues and vices were prominent in the language of public moralists, who pointed to the national virtues of the Dutch.[24] In other words, the categories of virtue and vice have been studied as an integral part of a discourse that structured debates on public morality, class and national identity.

Vices in historiography: epistemology

The second perspective from which virtues and vices have been studied is the history of scholarship.[25] Unlike historians of public morality and broad intellectual culture, historians of scholarship have drawn attention to specific virtues and vices that they deem to have been central to scientific ideals and scientific practice. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, in their seminal *Objectivity*, analyse how the 'new epistemic virtue' of objectivity

23 Manfred Hettling and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, 'Der bürgerliche Wertehimmel. Zur Problem individueller Lebensführung im 19. Jahrhundert', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 23 (1998) 333-359. See also: Madeleine Hurd, 'Education, Morality, and the Politics of Class in Hamburg and Stockholm, 1870-1914', *Journal of Contemporary History* 31:4 (1996) 619-650.

24 Henk te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef: liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870-1918* ('s Gravenhage, 1992). For stereotypes about national character, see: Joep Leerssen, 'The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey', *Poetics Today* 21 (2000) 267–292.

25 Recently, there have been calls for a history of knowledge, which offers a broader view of intellectual activity. I consider the broad history of scholarship to be a subset of this even broader history of knowledge. For a historiographical discussion of the breadth of scholarship into the history of knowledge, see: Simone Lässig, 'The History of Knowledge and the Expansion of the Historical Research Agenda', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 59 (2016) 29-58. For the relationship between the history of scholarship and the history of knowledge, see: Peter Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016). The first issue of the new *Journal for the History of Knowledge* also seeks to define the history of knowledge and its research agenda. See especially: Johan Östling and David Larsson Heidenblad, 'Fulfilling the Promise of the History of Knowledge: Key Approaches for the 2020s', *Journal for the History of Knowledge* 1:1 (2020) 3, 1-6.

'emerged as a new way of studying nature, and of being a scientist.'[26] Daston and Galison, struck by the sudden rise of scientific objectivity in the nineteenth century, describe the history of objectivity as a history of the self: only by suppressing one part of the self, subjectivity, could scientific objectivity be obtained.[27] Therefore, Daston and Galison argue, knowledge should not be seen as independent of the knower: epistemology was thoroughly moralised.[28] Although the authors put the epistemic virtue of objectivity in the front and centre of their argument, they do touch on other virtues that are related to the reign of objectivity: virtues of self-restraint, self-discipline and other technologies of the self that were meant to reach a state of 'self-imposed selflessness'.[29]

Daston and Galison are not alone in arguing for a study of moralised epistemology through a focus on virtues such as objectivity. George Levine, for example, has described Victorian men of science as literally 'dying to know' in their ascetic efforts to restrain and sacrifice their very selves to come to knowledge.[30] Similarly, historians of science like Richard Bellon have stressed the epistemic virtues of 'self-discipline', 'patience', and 'humility' in nineteenth-century images of Newton and Darwin, while historians of scholarship like Kasper Eskildsen have underlined the virtues

26 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 16-17.
27 Ibid. 35-42.
28 Ibid. 39.
29 Ibid. 203.
30 George Levine, *Dying to Know. Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

of 'accuracy' and 'impartiality' in Leopold von Ranke.[31]

Historians of scholarship, the above shows, are mainly interested in so-called epistemic virtues: character traits that were considered necessary for a successful pursuit of knowledge.[32] These virtues were often ascetic in nature (in fact, Daston and Galison argue that the epistemic virtue of objectivity was 'parasitic' on religious impulses 'to discipline and sacrifice') and aimed exclusively towards the acquisition of knowledge about the world outside of the self by disciplining the self.[33] This strong focus on the epistemic

31 Richard Bellon, 'There is Grandeur in This View of Newton: Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton and Victorian Conceptions of Scientific Virtue', *Endeavour* 38:3-4(2014) 222–234, 222; Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, 'Inventing the Archive: Testimony and Virtue in Modern Historiography', *History of the Human Sciences* 26:4 (2013) 8–26, 12. Other examples of studies on scholarly virtues and vices include: Graeme Gooday, *The Morals of Measurement: Accuracy, Irony, and Trust in Late Victorian Electrical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); M. Norton Wise (ed.), *The Values of Precision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Matthew Stanley, *Huxley's Church and Maxwell's Demon: From Theistic Science to Naturalistic Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Rebecca Herzig, *Suffering For Science: Reason and Sacrifice in Modern America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005); and: Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger (eds.), *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

32 There is a large body of philosophical scholarship on epistemic virtue as well, some of which has inspired historians to historicise these virtues. See for example: Jason Baehr, 'Character in Epistemology', *Philosophical Studies* 128 (2006) 479-514; Robert Roberts and Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); for a historical case study of epistemic virtue, see: Ian James Kidd, 'Was Sir William Crookes epistemically virtuous?', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C* 48 (2014) 67-74. Some philosophers have recently turned to the topic of epistemic vices: see: Quasim Cassam, *Vices of the Mind. From the Intellectual to the Political* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

33 Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 40.

dimension of virtues has influenced scholars to date.[34] Additionally, because of their interest in the history of knowledge acquisition, many historians of scholarship have focused primarily on character traits that support, rather than obstruct the pursuit of knowledge: virtues have figured much more prominently than vices.

Historiographical relevance and research question

The category of vice, then, has been studied from two main perspectives. There is, however, a rather large gulf between these two rich historiographical traditions. One historiographical tradition emphasises how vices were employed as markers of morality in public debate and intellectual culture, while the other specifically stresses the role of virtues and vices in scientific epistemology. For one group of historians, categories of virtue and vice are part of a generic language of morality, while for the other, these categories play a very specific epistemic role in the shaping of a scholarly self. When applied to the example of Charles Oman in the introduction, moreover, neither of the two perspectives can fully explain the role that vices played.

34 Jeroen van Dongen, for example, has written on Einstein's conception of epistemic virtue: Jeroen van Dongen, 'The Epistemic Virtues of the Virtuous Theorist: On Albert Einstein and his Autobiography', in: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (Eds.), *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 321 (Cham: Springer, 2017) 63-77. A similar focus on the epistemic orientation of virtues can be found in: Chaokang Tai and van Jeroen van Dongen 'Anton Pannekoek's Epistemic Virtues in Astronomy and Socialism: Personae and the Practice of Science', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review*, 131:4 (2016) 55–70. An argument against this view of 'ascetic' virtues is offered by Paul White, who has written on Charles Darwin, objectivity and the scientific self as a 'feeling subject': Paul White, 'Darwin's Emotions: The Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', *Isis* 100:4 (2009) 811-826. In an earlier article, I have also identified problems with this ascetic view of epistemic virtues: Léjon Saarloos, 'Virtues of Courage and Virtues of Restraint: Tyndall, Tait and the Use of the Imagination in Late Victorian Science', in: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (Eds.), *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 321 (Cham: Springer, 2017) 109-128.

The perspective of Collini, Huggins and others does offer clues about the language of vice and its embedment into broader intellectual culture, but it does not explain why Oman saw Acton's vices as so detrimental for scholarship: the epistemic dimension is lacking. The perspective of Daston, Levine and others, likewise, might explain the conflict between Acton's emphasis on accuracy and Oman's call for modesty, but cannot take into account the broader context of Acton and Oman's debate and the meaning of virtue and vice in their minds. In other words: whereas the first perspective is too generic for my purposes and glosses over the specifically epistemic or scholarly dimension of the categories of virtue and vice, the second perspective is too specific and focuses almost exclusively on singular and narrowly defined epistemic virtues, while vices receive less attention.[35]

None of these perspectives, therefore, can explain the importance of vices in Victorian thinking about scholarship. The question remains: what did vices mean to nineteenth-century scholars? Why did they use the time-honoured language of virtue and vice? How did they perceive the relationship between personal character and the pursuit of knowledge? These and many other questions about virtues and vices in late nineteenth century scholarship cannot satisfyingly be answered by simply adopting one of the two main perspectives that the historiography of virtue and vice has to offer.

For the early modern period, the state of the debate is somewhat

35 The problem with narrowly defining epistemic virtue or vice is that historical actors themselves did not distinguish between epistemological, social, political or religious meanings of the term: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul, 'Introduction: Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities', in: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (eds.), *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 321 (Springer 2017) 1-10. See also: Camille Creyghton, Pieter Huistra, Sarah Keymeulen, and Herman Paul, 'Virtue language in historical scholarship: the cases of Georg Waitz, Gabriel Monod and Henri Pirenne', *History of European Ideas* 42:7 (2016) 924-936.

different.[36] Two monographs in particular have drawn attention to vices in early modern learning: Anne Goldgar's *Impolite Learning* and Sari Kivistö's *The Vices of Learning*. Goldgar shows how the world of learning and the world of politics, economics and religion collided in the period between 1680 and 1750. In this turbulent environment, scholars sought to cultivate virtues of 'politeness' and 'selflessness' to set themselves apart from society, while, at the same time, a scholar was intrinsically part of that society and had to adhere to other codes of conduct as well, which resulted in a 'complicated juggling act'.[37] In her monograph on seventeenth and eighteenth-century learned treatises about scholarly vice, Sari Kivistö shows how the language of vice was employed by early modern academics themselves to reflect on their intellectual pursuits, while, at the same time, the discourse fulfilled an important pejorative function. Kivistö argues that the discourse of vice was used to define a new relationship between morality and knowledge in a period of 'secularization, rationalization and diversification of knowledge, which challenged the age-old dominance of theology.'[38]

Goldgar and Kivistö show how the perceived vices of the learned were neither specifically epistemic, nor exclusively part of debates over public morality. The language of vice in early modern learning connected

36 In general, scholars do not agree about what exactly constitutes modern science, but many do agree that there are significant differences between early modern and modern science and that the seventeenth century saw many 'revolutionary' changes. For a recent monograph that argues just that, see: Floris Cohen, *How Modern Science Came into the World*: *Four Civilizations, One 17th-Century Breakthrough* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012). For more scholarship on periodisation in the history of science, see: John V. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing: a New History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); John V. Pickstone, 'Sketching Together the Modern Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine', *Isis* 102:1 (2011) 123-133; and: Hasok Chang, 'Pluralism versus Periodization', *Isis* 107:4 (2016) 789-792.

37 Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995) 211.

38 Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 6.

learning in particular with broader intellectual culture. Kivistö and Goldgar, moreover, draw attention to a whole array of intellectual vices in explaining the appeal of vice in intellectual debate.[39] Where the monographs of Daston and Galison, Levine and others focus specifically on epistemic vice in modern science, Goldgar and Kivistö are able to explain the appeal and usage of the language of virtue and vice with reference to the broader intellectual culture in which scholars were embedded. There are many years, however, between the early modern Latin dissertations on which Kivistö writes and Oman's inaugural speech with which this introduction opens. Charles Oman would probably not have recognised the social codes of politeness on which Goldgar writes.

What is lacking in the historiography of modern scholarship is an approach to the category of vice that moves beyond accounts of singular and narrowly defined epistemic vices: an approach that, like those of Kivistö and Goldgar, is able to historicise and explain the appeal and the usage of vice-language to scholars with reference to the broad intellectual environment in which they operated. To date, only a few scholars have focused on modern scholarly vices in this way, and with interesting results. One account of modern scholarly vices is offered by Christiaan Engberts, in an article on the German orientalist Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875) and his vices of 'arrogance' and 'dogmatism'.[40] Engberts shows how the language of vice was used by Ewald's opponents to make him into an 'unscholarly persona': a shorthand for bad scholarship.[41] In a co-authored article by Engberts and Herman Paul, the role of vices in modern scholarly debates is developed further. Engberts and Paul present two nineteenth-century

39 Other accounts discussing the language of vice in early modern learning are: Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke, and the Early Modern Cultura Anima Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); and: Marian Füssel, '"The Charlatanry of the Learned: On the Moral Economy of the Republic of Letters in Eighteenth-Century Germany"', *Cultural and Social History* 3 (2006) 287-300.

40 Christiaan Engberts, 'Gossiping about the Buddha of Göttingen: Heinrich Ewald as an Unscholarly Persona', *History of Humanities* 1:2 (2016) 371-385.

41 Ibid. 378-383.

case studies to show that scholars around 1900 did not pursue epistemic aims 'in isolation from social, moral, religious, or political ones', and that it would be anachronistic to focus exclusively on 'epistemic vices'.[42] Rather, the authors claim, the more inclusive term of 'scholarly vices' would be in order.[43] Although there is great potential in these approaches, a broad but systematic study of the language of vice in modern scholarship is still missing.

This dissertation aims to contribute primarily to the historiographical debate on modern scholarly vices by offering the first book-length analysis on this topic. For reasons that will be explained shortly, this study focuses on the language of vice in British scholarship between roughly 1870 and 1910. It will answer the following question:

> *Why was the category of vice so important to British scholars around 1900?*

This dissertation thus starts from the observation that the discourse of vice was central to the ways in which British scholars around 1900 conceptualised their own pursuit of knowledge. Its frequent appearance in a great variety of sources, disciplines, institutions and regions of British scholarship is more than remarkable. Answering this question will not only offer historians a thorough account of vices in modern British scholarship, it will also help to bridge the gap between the historiographies of public morality and epistemic vice. I will now elaborate on the benefits of choosing the British case, and will subsequently turn to my answer and methodology.

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42 Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul, 'Scholarly Vices: Boundary Work in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism', in: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (eds.), *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 321 (Cham: Springer, 2017) 79-90.

43 Ibid., see also: Herman Paul, 'Virtue Language In Nineteenth-Century Orientalism: A Case Study In Historical Epistemology', *Modern Intellectual History* 14:3 (2017) 689–715.

The context of late Victorian and early Edwardian Britain

Two main benefits merit a focus on British scholarship around 1900.[44] The first benefit is the varied institutional landscape that characterised British scholarship, while the second benefit is the prominence of gentlemanly morality in Victorian intellectual culture. I will explain both peculiarities of the British context and the benefits for students of the language of vice, but first, some words on periodisation are in order.

This study focuses on the period between 1870 and 1910. In historiography of western European scholarship, this period has generally been regarded as a period of discipline formation. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the institutionalisation of modern disciplines through the establishment of specialised journals, professorial chairs and scholarly associations. Alongside the institutionalisation of modern disciplines, the period between 1870 and 1910 also saw the

44 For a discussion of virtue in the Dutch humanities, see: Jo Tollebeek, *Men of Character: The Emergence of the Modern Humanities* (Wassenaar: Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2011). For a German example, see: Herman Paul, 'Weber, Wöhler, and Waitz: Virtue Language in Late Nineteenth-Century Physics, Chemistry, and History', in: Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (eds.) *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 321 (Cham: Springer, 2017) 91-107. The language of virtue also crossed national boundaries, see: Herman Paul, 'German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes', *History of Humanities* 3:2 (2018) 327-350.

development of shared standards of scholarship, and shared methodologies.[45] For contemporaries, however, the outcome of these discussions was never clear. In fact, discipline formation was a complex and complicated process and led to fundamental discussions about the nature of scholarship, proper methodology, and the identity, self-image and persona of the scholar.[46] These debates make the period between 1870 and 1910 all the more interesting for students of the language of vice, as the essence of what it meant to be a scholar was discussed and reconfigured.

That being said, let me turn to the two benefits of focusing on the British context in this period. Firstly, the institutional landscape of scholarship in Britain around 1900 was quite different from the situation in, for instance, France or Germany.[47] The early nineteenth-century institutional landscape in Britain was dominated by the old clerical universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but as the century progressed, new civic universities were established, often supported by wealthy individuals or groups, or municipal

45 For accounts of nineteenth-century discipline formation and discussions on specialisation, identity or method in general, see for example: David Cahan, 'Institutions and Communities', in: David Cahan (ed.), *From Natural Philosophy to the Sciences: Writing the History of Nineteenth-Century Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) 291-328; Ilaria Porciani and Lutz Raphael (eds.), *Atlas of European Historiography: The Making of a Profession, 1800-2005* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2010); Rolf Torstendahl, 'Fact, Truth, and Text: The Quest for a Firm Basis for Historical Knowledge around 1900', *History and Theory* 42 (2003) 305-331; Ulrich Johannes Schneider, *Philosophie und Universität: Historisierung der Vernunft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998); Frans van Lunteren, 'Het ontstaan van het systeem van bètadisciplines: de natuurkunde', *Studium* 6:2 (2013) 91–112.

46 For one example of how discussions on professionalisation, specialisation and discipline formation centred on questions of what it meant to be a scholar, see: Saarloos, 'Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory'.

47 For an analysis of the German idea of the research university, see: Rainer Christoph Schwinges (ed.), *Humboldt International*: *Der Export des deutschen Universitätsmodel im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Basel: Schwabe & Co. AG Verlag, 2001); and: Johan Östling, *Humboldt and the Modern German University: An Intellectual History* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2018). For the more centralised intellectual climate in France, see: Emmanuelle Picard, 'Recovering the History of the French University', *Studium* 5:3 (2012) 156-169.

authorities.[48] The establishment of new universities alongside the clerical bastions of Oxford and Cambridge made for a diverse institutional environment.[49] Scholarship flourished outside of academic confines as well: in societies, institutes, clubs, observatories, factories, museums, schools, and academies, knowledge was created and transmitted.[50] The very diversity of British scholarship (clerical dons in age-old universities, practical electrical engineers, and socialist Shakespearean scholars operating alongside each other) resulted in coexistence and competition between very different ideals of what it meant to pursue knowledge.[51]

A second peculiarity of the British intellectual context is the power of gentlemanly ideals in defining Victorian morality. Although gentlemanliness was an important marker of respectability, what it meant to be a gentleman was highly disputed in the Victorian age.[52] Being a gentleman was not only a social description, nor was it exclusively linked to class. Above all, gentlemanliness became a moral designation: a marker

48 See Walter Rüegg (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe. Volume II: Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800-1945)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

49 In such an environment, different forms of knowledge flourished in different places. Cities like Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester became hotbeds for the new 'Science of Energy', while Oxbridge remained a haven for the liberally educated elite. See: Crosbie Smith, *The Science of Energy: A Cultural History of Energy Physics in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Slee, *Learning and a Liberal Education*; and: Stuart Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

50 Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Organisation of Knowledge in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially chapter two, in which John Pickstone tackles the 'plural configurations' of British science.

51 A good example of these clashing conceptions is offered in: Ian Hesketh, 'Diagnosing Froude's Disease: Boundary Work and the Discipline of History in Late-Victorian Britain', *History and Theory* 47:3 (2008) 373-395; and: Gowan Dawson and Bernard Lightman (eds.), *Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

52 See for a classic account of the Victorian gentleman: Robin Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1981).

of a middle and upper-class morality, instilled through liberal education.[53] The ideal stressed, amongst other traits, heavily gendered virtues of self-sacrifice, nobility, selflessness, responsibility and dignity.[54] Moreover, gentlemanly ideals of morality played a major role in Victorian definitions of vice, as Mike Huggins has argued. Middle class morality prescribed gentlemanly virtues as a way to keep vices (often associated with women and the working classes) at bay.[55] The self-identification of some Victorian scholars as 'gentlemen' or 'gentlemen of science', moreover, suggests that these debates on the proper moral makeup of a gentleman were entwined with scholarly culture too.[56] As Heather Ellis has shown, the nineteenth-century construction of male scientific authority was deeply bound up with discussions about ideals of masculinity, of which the scholar-as-gentleman was one example.[57]

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53 See for example: Reba N. Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

54 In Houghton's analysis, at least: Houghton, *Victorian Frame of Mind*, 283-284. More recent and critical renditions of 'gentlemanliness' stress the darker side of Victorian gentlemanliness and its relation to empire: Praseeda Gopinath, *Scarecrows of Chivalry: English Masculinities after Empire* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013) especially chapter 1, in which the Victorian gentleman is analysed; and: Edward Beasley, *Mid-Victorian Imperialists: British Gentlemen and the Empire of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 2005). For an analysis of the gendered nature of character in Victorian discussions about the gentleman, see: Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: the Ideological Work of Gender In Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

55 Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians*, 22-23.

56 For 'gentlemen of science', see: Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science: Early years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). For a more recent account of what it meant to be a gentleman in science, see: Richard Bellon, 'Joseph Dalton Hooker's Ideals for a Professional Man of Science', *Journal of the History of Biology* 34 (2001) 51-82. For the gendered nature of 'character' in science and the instability of elite masculinity in science, see: Heather Ellis, 'Knowledge, character and professionalisation in nineteenth-century British science', *History of Education* 43:6 (2014) 777-792; and: Heather Ellis, *Masculinity and Science in Britain, 1831–1918* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

57 Ellis, *Masculinity and Science in Britain*, 8-12.

Focusing on the British context thus has two benefits. The variety of the learned landscape in nineteenth century Britain allows me to focus on the coexistence of and competition between different ideals of scholarly selfhood, while the entanglement between gentlemanly and scholarly ideals of selfhood enables me to embed my case studies in broader Victorian conceptions of virtue and vice. The British context is not unique, and notions of virtue and vice were important markers of scholarly identity elsewhere as well, but these two benefits justify a focus on the mapping of the British debates on scholarly vice. If we want to know why British scholars around 1900 were so preoccupied with vices, the diverse institutional landscape of British scholarship and the power of gentlemanly morality should be taken into account: they shape in many ways the discussions about the specialisation, professionalisation and discipline formation that characterise the period in question.

Two reasons for the importance of vices

Why were vices so important to British scholars around 1900? I will argue in this dissertation that there are two answers to that central question. Firstly, the category of vice was so important because around 1900, all scholars agreed that the scholarly self was under threat of vice. Consequently, Victorians and Edwardians agreed that the project of scholarship could only succeed if individuals withstood this common threat. The fight against vices, then, was an integral part of what it meant to be a scholar. Victorians and Edwardians, I will argue, believed that the pursuit of knowledge was

like walking a precipitous ridge: a narrow path with vices on each side.[58] Walking this path required balance and an inner compass: an array of virtues and a love of science. This first reason for the Victorian and Edwardian preoccupation with matters of vice is thus a story of consensus: scholars from all disciplines and regions of British scholarship agreed that to be a scholar was to withstand the threat that vices posed to the scholarly self. As a common enemy, vices played an important role in the construction of ideals of scholarly selfhood. The first two chapters of this dissertation will show how these shared ideals of scientific selfhood relied on the language of vice. They will show how these ideals were constructed in various contexts, what its sources were and how Victorians and Edwardians learned to inhabit these ideals.

There is, however, a second reason for the British preoccupation with vices around 1900. This is not a story of consensus, but one of dissent. Although there was agreement about the threat that vices posed to the scholarly self, there was deep dissent about what good scholarship actually was. The second reason for the omnipresence of vices in Victorian and Edwardian scholarship was disagreement about what was virtuous and what was vicious in the pursuit of knowledge. Notions of virtue and vice were used not only to construct ideals of scientific selfhood, they were also weapons with which the borders of these ideals were demarcated and policed. Vices were often used pejoratively. Accusing an opponent of vices and drawing attention to the faults in someone's character were very

58 This is a classic Aristotelian conception of virtue as a mean between two vices, see: Karen Margrethe Nielsen, 'Vice in the Nichomachean Ethics', *Phronesis* 62:1 (2017) 1-25. The metaphor of mountaineering fits Victorian scholarship particularly well: many scholars took to the Alps to test their masculinity, their 'balanced' bodies and to practice science. See: Michael S. Reidy, 'Evolutionary Naturalism on High: The Victorians Sequester the Alps', in: Dawson and Lightman (eds.), *Victorian Scientific Naturalism,* 55-78; and: Michael S. Reidy, 'Mountaineering, Masculinity, and the Male Body in Mid-Victorian Britain', *Osiris* 30:1 (2015) 158-181. Writers of obituaries of Victorian mountaineers often stress the 'energy' of their subjects, while at the same time underlining their carefulness. See for example: E.A.S., 'William Marcet. 1828-1900', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 75 (1905) 165-169, 169.

effective strategies to discredit any opponent, just because the threat of vice was so central to ideals of scholarly selfhood in Britain around 1900. Chapters 3 and 4 in particular will make this argument by zooming in on this dissent and the boundary-setting role of vices in scholarly debates.

In the example of Acton and Oman, we can see both aspects of vices at work. Oman used the shared language of vice, first of all, to establish his own ideal of scientific selfhood. With reference to the vices of excessive accuracy, unproductiveness and megalomania (personified by Acton), Oman could formulate his ideal of the historian as modest, disciplined and laborious. In other words: examples of vicious scholarship helped Oman to define the nature of virtuous scholarship. Secondly, Oman's account of Acton's vices shows how this common ground was at the same time contested. By drawing attention to Acton's vices, Oman was also charging an influential group of historians with vices. Oman pointed to the threat that their scholarly ideals posed for the writing of history, and, in effect, vindicated his own view of what the historian should be. It was agreed upon that being a scholar entailed a battle against vices, but since there was no agreement on the actual meaning of good scholarship, vices were thrust into the centre of the debate. In this dissertation, I will analyse these two aspects of the discourse of vice in late Victorian and early Edwardian scholarship: 1) vices as a common enemy, and 2) vice as a contested category.

Methodology: a cultural history of scholarship

How will I proceed? To develop the argument sketched above, this dissertation studies how the language of vice functioned in three different contexts: academic memory culture, scholarly socialisation, and scholarly controversy. In each context, vices played an important but different role in the establishment, demarcation and policing of ideals of scholarly selfhood. It is especially on the interplay between the language of vice and these ideals

of scholarly selfhood that this dissertation focuses.[59] Let me turn, briefly, to the three contexts that I will study.

Firstly, I will sketch the *outlines* of shared Victorian and Edwardian attitudes towards the category of vice through an analysis of learned memory culture. Memory culture, as I will argue, offers a mine of information for scholars interested in ideals of scholarly selfhood.[60] The notion of vice figured prominently in British memory culture around 1900 and was central to the description of idealised lives of scholars. Secondly, I will show how the ideals of scholarly selfhood were instilled in aspiring scholars, by studying the context of scholarly socialisation and the role played by vices in that process. I will argue that socialisation into the moral economy of scholarship was built on a more generic process of moral instruction, in which youngsters learned how to identify and deal with vices. Thirdly and finally, I will study how vices functioned in debates and controversies surrounding the ideals of scholarly selfhood: how did scholars delineate and transmit their conceptions of what a good scholar was, and how did they charge those who did not conform to such ideals? This final context shows how differing ideals of scholarly selfhood might clash and lead to vice charges.

This approach to the history of vices in learned Britain around

59 Other scholars have focused on the interplay between everyday practices and notions of virtue and vice. See for example: Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, 'Private Übungen und verkörpertes Wissen: Zur Unterrichtspraxis der Geschichtswissenschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert', in: Martin Kitzinger and Sita Steckel (eds.*), Akademische Wissenskulturen: Praktiken des Lehrens und Forschens vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne* (Bern: Schwabe, 2015) 143–61; Gooday, *The Morals of Measurement*; Kathryn M. Olesko, 'The Meaning of Precision: The Exact Sensibility in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany', in: Wise, *The Values of Precision,* 103–134; Andrew Warwick, *Masters of Theory: Cambridge and the Rise of Mathematical Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) esp. chapter 3.

60 The importance of memory culture in the construction of academic identities has been identified by: Anna Echterhölter, *Schattengefechte: Genealogische Praktiken in Nachrufen auf Naturwissenschaftler (1710–1860)* (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2012).

1900 is built on the insight that ideals about what it meant to be a scholar seem to operate on at least three levels of generalisation.[61] First of all –at the highest level of generalisation– there are very broad cultural ideas about what being a 'scholar' (or 'artist', or 'politician', or 'knight' for that matter) actually meant.[62] Such generic cultural models of being in the world –often called personae in scholarly discourse–, although shaped by heterogeneous forces, hold great power: they dictate the realm of possibilities within which a 'scholar' could fashion his or her identity.[63]

If we zoom in slightly, however, such cultural consensuses about what it meant to be a scholar become laden with conflict and internal tension. Although we might all recognise the cultural model of the 'historian', for example, actual historians vigorously disagreed about what it was that made them historians. If we remember the opening of this introduction –Charles Oman ripping apart the legacy of Lord Acton–, it becomes clear that broad cultural models of selfhood were negotiated and transformed into 'regulative ideals' of scholarly selfhood within specific scholarly communities.[64] On this second level of generalisation, the meso-level, we can see how debates on the aims and methods of scholarship were entwined with debates over scholarly selfhood.

Finally, if we zoom to the level of the individual, ideals of scholarly selfhood become personally held convictions or ways to perform one's one identity to fit or appropriate these cultural models. On this micro-level,

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61 Gadi Algazi offers that analysis with great clarity here: Gadi Algazi, '*Exemplum* and *Wundertier*: Three Concepts of the Scholarly Persona', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 131:4 (2016) 8-32.

62 Ibid. 12-15.

63 Such broad cultural models of selfhood are also the categories to which Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum refer in their conceptualisation of the scientific persona: Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, 'Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories', *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003) 1-8, 4.

64 Algazi, '*Exempletum and Wundertier*', 10-11. For more examples, see: Saarloos, 'Academic Memory'; and: Herman Paul, 'The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany: Georg Waitz's Contested Example', *Modern Intellectual History* 15:3 (2017) 681-709.

big cultural models of what it means to be a 'scholar' in the broad sense of the word, as well as intermediate ideals of what kind of scholar one aspired to be, become personalised, embodied and performed.[65] Seen from this perspective, models of scientific selfhood become repertoires of acting in and on the world.[66]

The notion of vice, so central to Victorian and Edwardian conceptions of scholarly selfhood, can likewise be traced easily through the same levels of generalisation. On a macro-level, broad and time-honoured cultural ideas about what vice was and how it should be fought can be distinguished.[67] On the meso-level, accusations of vice played a major role in scholarly discussions about what it meant to be a scholar. Finally, on the micro-level, vice was the central category to personal reflections on a scholarly life. In other words, vice is a category bound up with ideal conceptions of scholarly selfhood, which can be traced through various levels of generalisation. An analysis of the language of vice, then, should take into account the interplay between all these levels: from broad cultural ideas and regulative ideals of groups, to individual appropriations and embodiments.[68] In the three contexts in which this dissertation studies vices and ideals of scholarly selfhood, this interplay between broad ideas,

65 See for example: Richard Kirwan (ed.), *Scholarly Self-Fashioning and Community in Early Modern Germany* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

66 See: Mineke Bosch, 'Scholarly Personae and Twentieth-Century Historians. Explorations of a Concept', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 131:4 (2016) 33-54; Rozemarijn van de Wal, 'Constructing the persona of a Professional Historian. On Eileen Power's early career persona formation and her year in Paris, 1910-1911', *Persona Studies* 4:1 (2018) 32-44.

67 See: Ursula Konyndyk DeYoung, *Glittering vices. A new look at the seven deadly sins and their remedies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009); and Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians*, for such broad ideas of what vice was considered to be.

68 In debate with Mineke Bosch, who stressed the importance of this personal dimension for the history of science, Herman Paul has retorted that any account of scientific identity should take into account the interplay between embodiment and more generalised typologies of scholarly selfhood: Herman Paul, 'Sources of the Self Scholarly Personae as Repertoires of Scholarly Selfhood', *BMGN- Low Countries Historical Review* 131:4 (2016) 135-154.

regulative ideals and individual articulations will be central.

The above methodological reflections betray my general indebtedness to a distinctively *cultural* history of scholarship. I agree with scholars like Steven Shapin that the history of scholarship should not purely be studied as the progression of ideas, or the disinterested discovery of facts, but rather, culturally: 'as if it was produced by people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority.'[69] This implies that human knowledge is not the main character in this dissertation, and that its growth and transformation as a corpus of knowledge is not at the centre of my analysis. Rather, I seek to understand the culture in which theories were formed, experiments performed and knowledge communicated.

My alignment with this cultural history has four major methodological consequences. For one, I focus especially on *meanings*: what did the language of vice *mean* to the Victorians, and how and why did they *use* this language? In other words, I aim to historicise the meaning and usage of vice language in the British context around 1900. As such, my approach ties in with other culturally-oriented histories of British scholarship, which, for example, trace the meaning and usage of shifting *images* of Newton,

69 Steven Shapin, *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if It Was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

Bacon or Faraday in later centuries.[70] What such studies bring to light is how the past (the historical construct of 'Newton' or 'Bacon') was utilised in the nineteenth-century present and served an important function: by reframing Newton or Bacon in a particular way and stressing different aspects of their life and work, identity-work was performed. The category of vice is, obviously even more so than 'Newton' or 'Bacon', a time-honoured category, and individual vices have a rich history of their own. Studying the shifting meaning and usage of such vices in nineteenth-century intellectual debate will likewise require me to show how a reinterpretation of vice in a particular context performed identity work.

Secondly, to understand the contexts which give meaning to the discourse of vice, my cultural approach to the history of knowledge requires me to use rather thick descriptions of vice-language in action. To understand meaning and usage of discourses, thorough descriptions of contexts are paramount. For the British context, luckily, there are many examples of such thick descriptions of scholars in action. A great example of a study offering such a thorough account of a scholar's life, while at the same time honouring broader historiographical and theoretical questions, is Stuart Jones' monograph on Mark Pattison (1813-1884).[71] Jones uses a

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70 For Newton, see: Richard Yeo, 'Genius, Method and Morality: Images of Newton in Britain 1760-1860', *Science in Context* 2 (1988) 257-284; Patricia Fara, *Newton: The Making of Genius* (London: Macmillan, 2002); Rebekah Higgitt, *Recreating Newton: Newtonian Biography and the Making of Nineteenth-Century History of Science* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); and Richard Bellon, 'There is grandeur in this view of Newton'. For Bacon, see: Richard Yeo, 'An Idol of the Marketplace: Baconianism in Nineteenth Century Britain', *History of Science* 23:3 (1995) 251-298. For Faraday, see: Geoffrey Cantor, 'The scientist as hero: public images of Faraday', in: Michel Shortland and Richard Yeo (eds.), *Telling Lives in Science: Essays on Scientific Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 171-194. For a similar study on the history and reinterpretation of objectivity in the nineteenth century, see: George Levine, *Dying to Know.* Other seminal works on the cultural history of British science include: James Secord, *Visions of Science. Books and readers at the dawn of the Victorian Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Dawson and Lightman (eds.), *Victorian Scientific Naturalism*; and: Smith, *The Science of Energy.*

71 Stuart Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England.*

biographical approach to the life of Mark Pattison to rethink some of our ideas about 'intellect', 'character', and the idea of the university. His in-depth study of Pattison's life and thought brings to light its enormous complexity, and shows that only such thorough accounts can help us understand the meaning of complex concepts such as the 'don' or the 'research university' for historical actors. At the same time however, as Heather Ellis has observed in a thorough review of Jones' work, the biographical approach actually limits an understanding of Pattison's thought vis-à-vis broader Victorian intellectual debates.[72]

Monographs comparable to Jones' *Mark Pattison* –at least in terms of ambitions– are Jim Endersby's biography of Joseph Hooker (1814-1879) and Paul White's biography of Thomas Huxley (1825-1895).[73] Both monographs take a biographical approach while endeavouring to answer a broader question: White is interested in the meaning of the 'man of science', while Endersby focuses on scientific practices and shows how complex 'professionalisation' was to people like Hooker. Like Jones's book, both monographs are admirable studies: they are very successful in showing the complexity of their cases and the problems this complexity of meaning raises for broader historiographical narratives. However, like in Jones' case, it is hard to rise above the particulars of Huxley's and Hooker's cases: biographies necessarily operate at the micro-level of individual meaning, while, as I have argued earlier, ideals of scholarly selfhood function in interplay between micro, meso and macro-levels.

In this study, as mentioned, I will focus on this interplay between broad traditions of thought, regulative ideals of groups, and individual meanings. In chapters 3 and 4 especially, I will focus on the individual side of this equation and adopt a perspective that verges on the biographical

72 Heather Ellis, 'Review of Jones, H. Stuart, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don*' *H-Albion, H-Net Reviews* (2008).

73 Jim Endersby, *Imperial Nature: Joseph Hooker and the Practices of Victorian Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008); Paul White, *Huxley.*

by looking closely at individuals engaged in debates in which accusations of vice were central: the context of controversy that I mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, I constantly seek to combine this focus on specific individuals with a broader analysis of group ideals and cultural models of what it takes to be a scholar. The same goes for chapter 2, which will focus on the interplay of very generic processes of moral instruction and the moulding of one particular scholar's morality. Chapter 1, on the context of memory culture, will, finally, lean more heavily on the group side of the equation, but again, I will make use of individual thick descriptions as they are offered by other scholars.

Thirdly, studying vices in Victorian scholarship demands a transdisciplinary approach to the history of scholarship. As argued earlier, the language of vice was not at all restricted to one particular discipline: the threat of vice was felt across all kinds of disciplinary, social and institutional boundaries. And if the scholarly language of vice was indeed embedded in broader Victorian conceptions of public morality, it make no sense to focus on just one scholarly discipline. Instead, this study will trace conceptions of vice across disciplines as diverse as physics and Shakespearean scholarship.

My research therefore ties in with a broader trend in the cultural historiography of scholarship that seeks to deconstruct the divide between the two cultures –the natural sciences and the humanities.[74] A vocal proponent of this trend in historiography is Rens Bod, whose monographs cross conventional national, disciplinary and chronological boundaries in an effort to show the interrelations between almost all kinds of knowledge

74 The term 'two cultures' is based on C.P. Snow's Rede Lecture, later printed as: C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959). Historians often distinguish a third culture, the social sciences. See: John Brockman, *The Third Culture: Beyond the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

production, which Bod defines as the search for patterns and principles.[75] The potential of such approaches is enormous: it opens up new questions and brings to light new interrelations between subjects that were previously only studied separately.[76] Bod's is not a lonely voice, nor was he a pioneer: over the past decades, many scholars have endeavoured to look across the boundaries between the natural, social and human sciences, and between different disciplines.[77] Methodologically, many of these scholars focus not on specific ideas or theories, but compare practices, personae, identities and

75 Rens Bod, *A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). There are many predecessors to Bod: an earlier revision of C.P. Snow's two cultures was offered by Theodore Porter and others in a special issue of *History of Science*: Theodore Porter (ed.), 'Two Cultures?', *History of Science* 43:2 (2005). Of course, C.P. Snow was criticised already in his own days. For Snow and other perspectives on the two cultures, see: Fabian Krämer, 'Shifting Demarcations: An Introduction', *History of Humanities* 3:1 (2018), 5-14.

76 Bod even goes as far as to say that the search for patterns transcends easy dichotomies. He claims, in fact, that 'from a practice-based point of view, the divide between the humanities and the sciences is nonexistent': Rens Bod, 'Has There Ever Been a Divide? A *Longue Durée* Perspective', *History of Humanities* 3:1 (2018) 15-25, 24. For a more recent boundary-crossing approach that focuses on the transfer of 'cognitive goods': Rens Bod, Jeroen van Dongen, Sjang ten Hagen, Bart Karstens & Emma Mojet, 'The flow of cognitive goods: A historiographical framework for the study of epistemic transfer', *Isis* 110:3 (2109) 483-496.

77 There are numerous examples: Peter Burke has written a two-volume social history of knowledge, which discusses knowledges in plural, while John Pickstone's concept of 'ways of knowing' and Ian Hacking's 'styles of reasoning' have been picked up by historians as tools to look beyond strict disciplinary lines: Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*: *From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012); Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing*; Ian Hacking, 'Styles of Scientific Thinking or Reasoning: A New Analytical Tool for Historians and Philosophers of the Sciences', in: K. Gavroglu, J. Christianidis, and E. Nicolaidis (eds.), *Trends in the Historiography of Science.* Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science 151 (Dordrecht: Springer, 1994) 31-48.

methods (things that travel more easily across disciplinary boundaries).[78]

This was much needed, as Lorraine Daston and Glenn Most have argued: 'current ways of conceptualising both the history of science and the history of the humanities have imposed anachronistic divisions among the great regions of knowledge and thereby obscured commonalities that are deeper, broader, and more enduring than this or that case study'.[79] In other words: by focusing on precious details, we might miss the more important bigger picture –you miss the tree when you stare at a leaf with a microscope. Daston and Most argue that one way to transcend this microscopical view is through a focus on practices: practices connect common contexts and are usually more enduring and widespread than classifications of knowledge.[80]

Practices offer one way of revising disciplinary divisions, but recent scholarship has attributed a similar role to notions of scientific identity and persona.[81] Daston and Otto Sibum have argued that the very existence of the persona of the 'scientist . . . resists the multiplication of identities even at the disciplinary level, not to speak of the level of the individual.'[82] Numerous new studies have supported this view of Sibum and Daston, either through the in-depth analysis of specific case studies of scientific personae, or through

78 The field is burgeoning: there are many new research projects in the history of science that problematise or altogether ignore disciplinary demarcations. One Scandinavian example is Johan Östling's group, see: J. Östling, E. Sandmo, D. Larsson Heidenblad, A. Nilsson Hammar, & K. Nordberg (eds.), *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018).

79 Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, 'History of Science and History of Philologies', *Isis* 106:2 (2015) 378-390, 381.

80 Ibid. 389-390.

81 It is important to note, though, that much of the scholarship on personae and scholarly identities does not specifically aim at transcending disciplinary boundaries. Rather, concepts like personae move across those boundaries easily and offer arguments for bringing down the barriers in effect.

82 Daston and Sibum, 'Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories', 4.

further empirical and methodological refinement.[83] What all studies have in common, though, is an approach to the history of scholarship that does not take the boundaries between disciplines or scientific cultures as a given, but transcends those boundaries easily whenever their subject demands it.

This dissertation's focus on the language of vice thus ties in neatly with the often trans-disciplinary research into themes like scholarly identity and personae. Virtues and vices, as Jo Tollebeek and Herman Paul have argued, serve as markers of disciplinary identities, but, at the same time, the language transcends these disciplinary boundaries.[84] The language of virtue and vice was used in intense discussions about what it meant to be a specific kind of scholar (in this sense, it even disciplined), while it was also commonly used across all kinds of boundaries: social, national and disciplinary.[85] This offers a double benefit to the historian interested in the history of scholarship and disciplinarity: the widespread discourse of vice offered a common tongue to a diverse range of scholars, but, simultaneously, notions of vice were constantly appropriated and negotiated to serve more specific disciplinary aims. A cultural approach to vices in the history of scholarship should therefore historicise the boundaries between disciplines and the role that vices played in that process.

Finally, my focus on the meaning and usage of vice language allows me to draw from a very diverse range of source material. Cultural historians have successfully drawn a broad range of less-studied sources into the history of science, ranging from objects and practices, to diaries

83 Key texts are: Herman Paul, *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Herman Paul, 'What Is a Scholarly Persona?'; Ian Hunter, 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher', *Modern Intellectual History* 4 (2007) 571-600; and Irmline Veit-Brause, 'The Making of Modern Scientific Personae: The Scientist as a Moral Person? Emil Du Bois-Reymond and His Friends', *History of the Human Sciences* 15 (2002) 19-49.

84 Jo Tollebeek, *Men of Character;* Paul, 'The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany'.

85 While at the same time, this discourse helped to enforce those boundaries.

and letters.[86] Where more traditional histories of scholarship study sources that relate primarily to scientific output, new trends in the cultural history of scholarship bring into focus other types of sources, because other questions are asked: if we want to know about the gendering of historiography in nineteenth-century Britain, it makes no sense to exclusively study men's professional histories.[87] Likewise, if we want to know what vices meant to individual scholars, or how specific groups of scholars sought to defend their ideals of scholarly selfhood against other groups, it makes no sense to exclusively study their magnum opuses, since many of the answers to those questions will not be found there. Instead, such questions force me (or any historian for that matter) to draw from a much broader range of sources, including less obvious sources such as journals, correspondence, diaries, draft letters, scribbles on envelopes and short notes.[88] Additionally, a cultural approach to the history of scholarship offers a new perspective on well-known sources such as 4obituaries and methodological manuals. By focusing on anecdotes, commonplaces, aphorisms and other shorthands, sources like the obituary can be used more productively, as this dissertation will show. Such figures of speech, as Steven Shapin has argued, often codify moral or epistemic heuristics for dealing with problems of the scientific

86 Peter Galison, 'Ten Problems in History and Philosophy of Science', *Isis* 99:1 (2008) 111-124; Suman Seth, 'Review: The History of Physics after the Cultural Turn', *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 41:1 (2011) 112-122; John F.M. Clark, 'Intellectual History and the History of Science', in: Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (eds.), *A Companion to Intellectual History* (Chichester: Wiley, 2016) 155-169.

87 For a brilliant analysis of this process of gendering and the importance of source selection, see: Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

88 For correspondence, see: Peter Burke, 'The Republic of Letters as a communication system: An essay in periodization', *Media History* 18:3-4 (2012) 395-407; Erika Krauße, *Der Brief als wissenschaftshistorische Quelle* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 2005); Willemijn Ruberg, *Conventionele Correspondentie: Briefcultuur van de Nederlandse Elite, 1770-1850* (Nijmegen: Van Tilt, 2005).

self.[89] In the following paragraphs, I will discuss my source material in more detail, while relating it to individual chapters.

Chapter outline and sources

This study consists of four substantial chapters. In short, chapters 1 and 2 focus on the relationship between ideals of scholarly selfhood and the language of vice, while chapters 3 and 4 deal with charges of vice and the clash between different ideals of scholarly selfhood. The order of these chapters corresponds with the two arguments I sketched earlier in this introduction: 1) vices were considered by all as threats to the scholarly self, 2) yet there was no agreement about what good scholarship actually was. In other words: the common ground is dealt with in chapters 1 and 2, while the dissent is dealt with in chapters 3 and 4.

The first chapter analyses Victorian and Edwardian academic memory culture between 1870 and 1910. Academic memory culture, as I will explain, is a rich source of information for scholars interested in ideals of scholarly selfhood. Important academic *rites de passage* (e.g. deaths, anniversaries, retirements, professorial inaugurations) in this period were often celebrated or remembered textually (through obituaries, commemorative volumes, retirement addresses, inaugural addresses).[90] Such practices and products of academic commemoration, as I will argue, served to construct ideals of what it meant to be a good scholar. In effect, they also defined what a bad scholar was.[91] Virtue and vice were central

89 Steven Shapin, 'Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example', *Social Studies of Science* 31:5 (2001) 731-769. For a more thorough description of aphorisms, see chapter 2.

90 For an overview of such commemorative practices, see: Pnina G. Abir-Am and Clark A. Elliott (eds.) 'Commemorative Practices in Science: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Collective Memory,' *Osiris* 14 (1999). Chapter 1 will discuss the historiography on academic memory culture in more detail.

91 Or vice versa, as I will show that the ideal scholar was more easily defined by referring to the shortcomings of other non-ideal scholars.

categories in this process of constructing ideals of scholarly selfhood.

More specifically, as I will argue on the basis of a large corpus of obituaries, Victorians and Edwardians identified six distinct dangers as the main threats to the scholarly self: uselessness, enthusiasm, prejudice, money, fame, and distraction. Additionally, chapter 1 argues that writers of obituaries not only identified these dangers, but also offered remedies for dealing with these ills. The six dangers could be dealt with by cultivating 1) a balanced constellation of virtues, and 2) a heartfelt love of science. Or, to return to the metaphor of mountaineering: walking the narrow ridge of virtue required Victorians and Edwardians to maintain balance and follow their inner compass.[92] Chapter 1 focuses on the common ground I described earlier: agreement about the fact that the moral project of scholarship required virtuous practitioners to keep vices at bay.

Chapter 2 picks up the themes from chapter 1, but will depart the ideal world of academic memory culture. The common ground –fighting against vice– is still central, but this second chapter asks where and how Victorian scholars were socialised into the moral economy of Victorian scholarship that described the pursuit of knowledge in terms of virtue and vice.[93] If there was a consensus on these matters, where and how did Victorians and Edwardians learn what virtue was, and what vice was? I will explore this question by analysing one case of socialisation into the moral universe of Victorian scholarship: the case of the young Edward Frankland (1825-1899). Frankland would later become one of the foremost British chemists, but grew up as an unlawful child in a petty middle class household in rural Lancashire. Frankland's personal archive for his period of scientific socialisation is rather rich, so we know a lot about the dynamics of moral instruction in his case. I have studied Frankland's diaries of the 1840s, read his correspondence during these years and even got to know the children's literature admired by young Frankland. Interestingly, these

92 See note 58 in this introduction.

93 See: Lorraine Daston, 'The Moral Economy of Science', *Osiris* 10 (1995) 2-24

sources are full of allusions to character, virtue, and especially vice. Chapter 2 analyses these sources and contends that the process of socialisation into the moral economy of science overlapped for a large part with more generic processes of moral instruction in Victorian Britain. Scholarly socialisation, I will argue, both built on more fundamental moral attitudes about virtue and vice, and shaped moral attitudes about vice. Frankland had been warned about avarice throughout his childhood, but it was his later chemical teachers who taught him about the sources of avarice in his specific vocation. This analysis of Frankland's moral instruction shows how scholarly attitudes towards vices were often drawn from or built on more general ideas about vice. As such, this chapter offers one clue for bringing together the two historiographies that I spoke of earlier: the historiography of moral instruction and the historiography of epistemology.

The following two chapters focus on dissent rather than consensus. Scholars agreed that good scholarship relied upon scholarly selves that could withstand the threat of vice, but they disagreed fundamentally about what good scholarship looked like. Where the first two chapters described and analysed how the discourse of vice helped to construct ideal-types of scholarly selfhood, chapters 3 and 4 will show how the boundaries of such ideals were enforced and how the language of vice was employed in debates about what it took to be a scholar.

Chapter 3 will show how the discourse of vice was used to fight out debates about what kind of science should be pursued in Victorian Britain. The main character of this chapter is Peter Guthrie Tait (1831-1901), a Scottish energy physicist. Central will be Tait's controversies with other men of science: John Tyndall (1820-1893), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), and Clement Ingleby (1823-1886). Central to many of these debates was the role of the imagination in Victorian science. As such, this chapter builds on a theme touched upon already in chapter 1: the danger that enthusiasm posed to the virtuous pursuit of science.[94] In these debates, I will show,

94 See chapter 1, the section on 'Enthusiasm'.

Tait consistently attacked the epistemic vices of his opponents, not only to discredit their views on scientific matters, but also to attack their ideals of scholarly selfhood. In Tait's controversies, we can see clearly how the discourse of vice was used to demarcate the boundaries between different conceptions of what it meant to be a 'man of science'. Besides this major point about the function of the discourse of vice, chapter 3 shows how ideals of scientific selfhood were projected on historical figures, like Newton, Leibniz, or Bacon. Tait's patient and disciplined 'Newton' was shorthand for a different type of scholarship than Tyndall's courageous 'Newton'.

Where chapter 3 will deal primarily with vices in relation to different conceptions of science, chapter 4 will zoom in on 'social' vices: traits that obstruct the process of scholarly cooperation, and, in effect, the collective pursuit of knowledge.[95] In doing so, this chapter also builds on a theme that is mentioned already in chapter 1: threats to the ideal of communicability.[96] The main character of chapter 4 is Frederick James Furnivall (1825-1910), literary scholar and founder of many literary societies. I will focus specifically on Furnivall's conduct in the New Shakspere Society, a society he dedicated to the professional study of Shakespeare. Since its inception in 1873, the New Shakspere Society was plagued by controversy, not in the least part due to the 'ungentlemanly' conduct of its founder. This chapter analyses the controversies of Furnivall in the context of the New Shakspere Society and argues that it was Furnivall's social vices that led to its downfall. By being rather impossible to work with, Furnivall threatened scholarly cooperation. As such, chapter 4 shows how the discourse of vice was not restricted to 'epistemic' discussions like Tait's in chapter 3. It also illustrates

95 The distinction between epistemic and social vices is one of degree: social vices can thwart the acquisition of knowledge as well, especially if we consider knowledge acquisition as a collective process. I will discuss the distinction between epistemic and social vices in more detail in chapter 4. For knowledge acquisition as a collective process and the epistemic harms of 'intellectually arrogant behavior', see: Alessandra Tanesini, 'I – 'Calm Down, Dear': Intellectual Arrogance, Silencing and Ignorance, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 90:1 (2016) 71-92.

96 See chapter 1, especially the sections on 'Uselessness' and 'Distraction'.

how the discourse of vice was embedded in broader Victorian attitudes about gentlemanliness.

Chapter 4 is followed by a general conclusion, in which the question posed in this introduction is answered: why were late Victorian and early Edwardian scholars so preoccupied with matters of vice? I will suggest new routes of inquiry and turn to follow-up questions that this study has generated.