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

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Propositions

accompanying the thesis

The scholarly self under threat:

Language of vice in British scholarship (1870 – 1910)

1. Ideals of scholarly selfhood in late Victorian and early Edwardian scholarship were often defined negatively, in terms of the vices that scholars wanted to resist.
2. British scholars around 1900 believed that the threats that vices posed to the scholarly self could only be neutralised through the cultivation of a balanced constellation of scholarly virtues and through a love of truth.
3. Definitions of the ideal scholar were unstable and contested: the language of vice provided the means to demarcate, debate and contest such definitions.
4. Because Victorian and Edwardian scholars never considered vices to be oriented only towards epistemic goals, historians may prefer the more inclusive category of ‘scholarly vices’ over ‘epistemic vices’.
5. The emerging body of scholarship on scholarly selfhood shows the importance of incorporating the perspective of the self into histories of scholarship, because ideals of selfhood shape scholarly cultures.
6. So far, historians of scholarship have focused too exclusively on isolated traits of character, while this study shows that historical actors regarded their own character traits not in isolation, but in relation to each other.
7. If it is true that modern epistemology is driven by fear, as Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison claim, then historians should do well to better historicize the fears that shaped modern scholarship.
8. Understanding models of scholarly selfhood requires historians to trace non-scholarly models of selfhood as well (e.g. the artist, the politician, the priest, or the soldier) because they served as reference points for the construction of scholarly personae.
9. The persona of the academic historian increasingly resembles that of the entrepreneur.
10. The slow scholarship movement offers an inspiring example of how the vices fostered by the neoliberal university can be resisted through a collective feminist ethics of care.
11. In Dutch academia, the virtues of the teacher are undervalued in comparison to the virtues of the researcher.
12. It is a commonplace for scholars to address the importance of personal friendship, but, as this dissertation has shown, commonplaces often codify the truth in a very powerful way.