



20th June 2023

1. In my PhD, titled [REDACTED], I developed an account of “epistemic corruption”, the claim, first introduced by [REDACTED], that our social environments can degrade our characters by facilitating the loss of epistemic virtues or encouraging the development of epistemic vices. My knowledge of, and expertise in, virtue epistemology contributes to the project in several ways. First, if radical doubt involves the presence of vices such as a lack of courage and a fear of freedom, as [REDACTED] contends, then my account of epistemic corruption provides the project with the conceptual resources to articulate how we can come acquire epistemic vices from our social environments. Second, by attending to the (mal)development of character, my account can help the project track the ways in which our environments can undermine personal transformation and the cultivation of virtues. This will help the project address its guiding hypothesis that scepticism is not just an intellectual problem, but an ethical one that concerns the doubter’s character.

I have developed these themes in my published work. My article “[REDACTED]” (*Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, 2022) argues that our online environments can encourage a vicious attitude I call “intellectual cynicism”. I claim that this cynicism not only disposes one to distrust online source of information, but that it stems from a more general doubt about our ability to acquire perceptual knowledge from videos. My article “[REDACTED]” (*Synthese*, 2023) articulates a sceptical challenge to Duncan Pritchard’s anti-risk virtue epistemology. I claim that deepfake videos prevent our perceptual faculties from operating as reliabilist epistemic virtues, which leads Pritchard’s account to a form of local scepticism about knowledge from videos.

Going forward, I plan to investigate how we can ameliorate the development of character vices. In the articles above, I have begun developing the concept of a trained digital sensibility, which relies on cultivating certain character virtues such as intellectual perseverance, courage, and humility. Since I have deployed the concept to combat cynicism and scepticism online, and fake news and conspiracy theories proliferate online, I believe my research plans not only support the project’s aims of demonstrating that scepticism is an ethical problem, but they can importantly vindicate [REDACTED] conception of knowledge as requiring moral and intellectual virtues. Given my research expertise and knowledge, I am well-placed to help the project achieve its aims.

2. My capacity to supervise PhD students is evident from my time volunteering on the [REDACTED] Philosophy PGR Drop-in sessions, which I co-founded. This scheme provided undergraduate and postgraduate students with an alternative means to discuss their work and essay plans, as well as gain advice about their studies. An important reason why I co-founded this scheme was because I noticed first-year PhD students not only found it difficult knowing where and how to begin their research, but how they could effectively manage their time. As such, I designed the drop-in sessions with aim of providing these students with the

advice, skills, and confidence to comfortably engage in their own research. Across the academic years 2021-2023, I have been offering guidance and supervision to philosophy PhD students at the University of [REDACTED]. Amongst other things, I have helped students create personal research plans, write funding applications, make the most of their supervision meetings, and digest the feedback they receive on drafts of their work.

In addition to this scheme, I have been a Teaching Affiliate for the past two years on a range of modules, including a compulsory first-year module “Mind, Knowledge, and Ethics”, a second-year module “Social Philosophy”, and a second-year Politics module “Social and Global Justice”. An important duty in these positions was to hold weekly office-hours for my students. During these meetings, I developed my abilities to offer constructive feedback on draft essay-plans, communicate complex philosophical ideas to students, and teach students how to analyse and break down these ideas themselves. My success here is reflected in the fact I was awarded Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy in 2022, which demonstrates my commitment to improving my pedagogical skills. In light of my teaching and supervisory experience, I am not only capable of supervising the work of the PhD researchers on the [REDACTED] project; I would be able to offer them insights that aid their more general academic conduct.

3. I have amassed a wealth of experience organising academic conferences and workshops. In 2020, I co-organised the annual [REDACTED] postgraduate conference. As a co-organiser, one of my key responsibilities was to review over forty abstracts and deliberate with my colleagues which six submissions would be selected for the conference. In addition to this, I helped to organise the keynote speakers for the conference. These tasks were made all the more difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that the entire conference was moved online for the first time. The smooth-running of the conference was a testament to my ability to work effectively in a team. Given that the conference was organised by PhD students, it required me to identify when a colleague was overwhelmed with work. By sharing duties in this way, I was able to help the organising committee develop and operate better.

During the pandemic, I co-ran a bi-weekly reading group on virtue and vice epistemology with a PhD student from the University of [REDACTED]. This culminated in a [REDACTED] workshop, which I helped organised with my co-host. More recently, I co-organised the [REDACTED] conference at the University of [REDACTED]. In addition to reviewing submissions in a timely manner, I arranged the programme, and wrote successful funding applications to the *Aristotelian Society*, the *Analysis Trust*, and the *Mind Association*, which totalled approximately £1,200. This funding helped me arrange the travel and accommodation for our two keynote speakers, one international and one national. I also helped ensure the event was BPA-SWIP Good Practice Scheme compliant. I am also able to organise my own research and work to a tight deadline. Through effectively managing my time, I was not only able to write up my PhD thesis but publish two articles and co-author a book chapter. To assist the editors, my co-author and I had to ensure that we submitted our research by the set deadline.

I also possess desirable digital skills. My digital literacy skills allowed me to smoothly broadcast the events of the conferences above on Twitter and other social media sites. I can also maintain and update websites. For example, I recently helped renovate the website for

the [REDACTED], which required me to update decade-old information and provide new content and resources in its place. As Research Fellow, I would continue to undertake these tasks effectively.

4. There are several reasons why I am applying for the position of Research Fellow. First, I specialise in the intersection of ethics and epistemology in ways that complement the project. My doctoral research offers an account of “epistemic corruption”, which investigates how our social environments can degrade our characters by facilitating the loss of epistemic virtues and encouraging the development of epistemic vices. If radical doubt involves the presence of vices, as [REDACTED] contends, then my research not only provides the project with the conceptual resources to articulate how people come to develop vices, but how those vices contribute and relate to radical doubt. Since epistemic corruption attends to the maldevelopment of character, my research expertise also allows the project to track the precise ways in which our environments can affect personal transformation and undermine the cultivation of virtues needed for knowledge on [REDACTED] conception.

Second, an influential way of explaining the problematic nature of belief in conspiracy theories and fake-news is by appeal to epistemic vices. As such, my background in virtue epistemology means I am very familiar with the literature on problematic epistemic phenomena. Moreover, much of my published work applies insights from virtue epistemology to deceptive online media in the form of deepfake videos, which have been increasingly used to spread misinformation and doubt. Importantly, my research has led me to develop resources to combat the sceptical risk of these videos online, which I would like to continue to develop as a Research Fellow on the project. Given that deepfakes are a relatively novel technology, I am developing a national reputation as a scholar who relates virtue epistemology to emerging technologies.

Third, I am able to communicate new and complex philosophical information in accessible ways. This is borne out in my ability to write public philosophy. For example, in 2021 I wrote an article on scepticism and AI for the website *Open for Debate*, the public philosophy blog run by Cardiff University’s Philosophy Department. I have also benefitted from contributing to public engagement activities. In September 2022, I presented my research at the Royal Institute of Philosophy-sponsored Public Philosophy Festival in Cardiff. My ability to communicate complex, both verbally and in writing puts me in a strong position to bring the [REDACTED] research to a broader and inter-disciplinary audience in the press or on social media, which I would undertake as Research Fellow.

Finally, I am applying to be a Research Fellow on the project because I wish to continue investigating the relationship between virtue epistemology, epistemic corruption, and scepticism. Although my previous research engages with this theme, it has done so largely within an Anglo-American framework. Given that Kierkegaard’s conception of knowledge requires certain virtues, I am not only interested in learning more about his philosophy, but in the insights that contemporary virtue and vice epistemology can learn from him. In light of the considerations above, I believe that I am an ideal candidate for the role of Research Fellow on the [REDACTED] project.